"TECHNICALLY, I'M THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH THE GROUP": THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CLASSROOM CULTURE OF READING AND WRITING IN AN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

by

Ginny Ramirez-DelToro

B.A., Duke University, 2001

M.A., Winthrop University, 2010

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

The School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2017

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This dissertation was presented

by

Ginny Ramirez-DelToro

It was defended on

March 13, 2017

and approved by

Ellice Forman, Professor Department of Instruction and Learning

Katrina Bartow Jacobs, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Instruction and Learning

Scott Kiesling, Associate Professor, Linguistics Department

Dissertation Advisor: Amanda Godley, Associate Professor, Department of Instruction and

Learning

"TECHNICALLY, I'M THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH THE GROUP": THE

DEVELOPMENT OF A CLASSROOM CULTURE OF READING AND WRITING IN

AN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

Ginny Ramirez-DelToro, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2017

This dissertation reports on how features of interactions and instruction contributed to an elementary classroom culture of reading and writing that students and their teacher worked together to develop. Positioning theory informed analysis of participants' interactions as they used texts in social and academic ways. The theory of figured worlds and the sociocultural theory of literacy drove data generation during the eight months spent collecting data in a second grade classroom and during coding and analysis. The research answers the following questions: How do interactions, routines, and rituals in the classroom develop a classroom culture around reading and writing? (a) What kinds of interactions take place between the teacher and the students? (b) What kinds of interactions take place between students? (c) What routines and participation structures become an important part of classroom activities?

Findings on the teacher were that her expectations for student interactions fostered storylines of care and respect among students; she used specific terms of address to position students academically and socially; and her expectation for participation led students to engage in talk during literacy instruction that demonstrated consistent agreement with and acceptance of

each other's contributions. That talk did not include purposeful argumentation or challenging of each other's ideas. Findings about students were that they brought academic talk into social spaces; they brought social talk into academic spaces, and they used language from various sources to engage in simultaneously social and academic positioning.

Findings align with existing research on how teachers' positioning can foster positive student interactions during reading and writing instruction, and how students' positioning during reading and writing is social and academic. This study also contributes insights about how teachers can engage students in respectful, inclusive participation and dialogue to create space for everyone to discuss texts without silencing.

Implications for practice urge teachers to take up forms of talk like those that the teacher in this study used to foster among students care for each person's worth, and to extend that care as students and the teacher interact in developmentally appropriate critical literacy practices with texts to consider representations of race and gender.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE

Thank you, Jace Miguel, Luke José, and Josh for your patience, love and humor. I could write a whole other dissertation about you all, but instead I'll just write that our family is the most important thing in the world to me. And fun. Always fun. I love you, Josh. Jace Miguel y Luke José, los adoro, mis nenes.

Thank you, Mom and Dad (Mami y Papi) for continuing to put up with me well into my thirties! There's no question you really do love me unconditionally. And that same love and time you give to Jace and Luke is all I needed to be able to focus as I worked on this. I quite literally will never be able to thank you enough. For everything. Los quiero tanto.

Migue y Ché, it took me a little while, but I finally get to join your funny-doctorate-hat photos in mom and dad's house! You were my best friends and my heroes growing up, and as I wrote this dissertation, I often thought to myself, "I may never have beaten them in one-on-one, but I have beaten at least one of them in chess and I will catch up with them on this." So, thanks for indirectly pushing me along… as well as directly by teasing me about my lifelong dissertation. Mercilessly. Constantly. I finished! Los quiero, hermanos.

Katie, thank you for being such a loving aunt to Jace and Luke and playing with and feeding those two so that I could defend this without worrying about them running through like streakers on a basketball court.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to examine how primary grade students use talk, texts, and other tools in the classroom to negotiate social and academic interactions in relation to literacy learning. Over the course of any given school year, a teacher and students interact in ways that foster and build upon a particular classroom culture. Within the culture of a classroom, aspects of reading, writing, and talking become more or less central or valued as students learn and interact. In order to explore this social and cultural perspective on literacy and learning, this study focuses on one second-grade classroom and asks the following questions:

How do interactions, routines, and rituals in the classroom develop a classroom culture around reading and writing?

a. What kinds of interactions take place between the teacher and the students?

b. What kinds of interactions take place between students?

c. What routines and participation structures become an important part of classroom activities?

Through answers to these questions, this study provides insights into how children use discursive interactions to negotiate their place among peers as readers and writers. Why such negotiations matter is inextricably bound to the work of teaching literacy and researching literacy learning. Within classrooms, children are the objects and subjects of a range of actions related to speaking, reading, and writing at particular moments and places. More broadly, the way children

1

use language to try to make sense of academic content and social interactions during classroom instruction is a major part of the development of different cultural worlds.

These cultural worlds can refer to ways that students or students and their teacher interact throughout the school day as a whole group. They can also refer to ways that students interact in smaller circles or in pairs. As they interact, children establish, maintain, or contest rules for participation that relate to learning (Wortham, 2008). By compliance with, or challenges to these rules for participation, children learn socially acceptable or desirable actions and language for community membership. In interaction, whether they intend to or not, children present themselves as certain kinds of people. For example, some children refer to video games frequently and talk about their involvement with these games. Similarly, other children talk about books that they read, sports that they play, or other activities that they enjoy. How children define themselves through their talk is important to the culture that they co-construct and to the kinds of transformations that they enact as they continue to shape that culture. Children in the classroom also apply their interests and forms of knowledge to how they determine and talk about what they read, and to how they determine and talk about what they write. The teacher's linguistic and gestural cues contribute to what students understand as appropriate and valued in the context of school. Thus, as classroom community members interact and participate in concurrent academic and social ways, these members enrich and complicate their dynamic cultural worlds.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

For this research, I draw on three interrelated theoretical frameworks to investigate how students and their teacher co-constructed a classroom culture, how that culture evolved over time, and how that culture emphasized and constrained certain academic literacy practices. These three frameworks are figured worlds, positioning, and sociocultural theories of literacy. The frameworks complement each other in ways that usefully inform understandings of how literacy practices in classrooms relate to children's social experiences. This work contributes to research that examines how children's interpersonal communications in the moment and over time shape and reshape elements of the classroom culture and literacy learning (Dyson, 1993). In particular, this study explores the complexity of the ways in which students position themselves and others as friends, readers, and writers through the use of cultural and semiotic tools. Likewise, the combined use of these frameworks provides evidence of concrete aspects of interaction in the moment and over time that solidify or alter literacy learning routines. In the next section I unpack these theoretical frameworks and concepts and also define key terms like literacy, culture, identity, interaction, acts and agency.

2.1   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1   Figured Worlds

In their seminal text, *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) introduced the concept of *figured worlds* as an alternative to the concept of *culture*. The scholars described figured worlds as "socially produced, culturally constructed activities" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 40). They argued that figured worlds or cultures can only come into being through ways people talk and act toward one another and how such talk and actions are perceived, received, and accepted or rejected. Holland et al. used observations of a range of interactional activities and contexts in order to demonstrate what figured worlds were and how they were co-created through the social efforts of participants. Two kinds of figured worlds that the authors described at length were Alcoholics Anonymous and romance and attraction in college settings.

Holland et al.'s (1998) descriptions and accounts of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) demonstrated that its very existence is dependent upon participants' willingness to become alcoholics. That is, prior to joining AA, people may have drunk for different reasons, but, until their behavior became problematic to others or themselves, the label, alcoholic, was not likely to be seriously applied. However, once others began to point out problem behaviors that occurred as a result of alcohol consumption or the person began to notice negative changes in his or her daily life, a shift in identity occurred when the person joined AA and was expected to openly claim alcohol dependency or alcohol influence over his or her life. That person had to, thereby, become an alcoholic by assuming that identity marker, which was not previously assumed.

The figured world of AA continues to maintain that once a member, always a member. Members of AA participate in a series of similar interactions as they acculturate into what it means to claim alcoholism and face it with openness. They learn through participation in AA meetings how to tell their "personal stories" and to engage in other rites of passage that require them to adopt a particular mindset toward alcoholism. Everyone's AA experience may be unique, yet Holland et al. showed that AA participants adhere to both spoken and unspoken guidelines and ways of communicating within this community.

An important interactional activity in the figured world of AA is to continue to share one's personal story. Though Holland et al. explained that there is no template, if you will, for telling one's personal story of recognizing alcoholism and learning how to deal with it, members appropriate certain features of the personal story that they have heard and read as told by other members. These features relate in important ways to the figured world of AA as part of a person's identity, as a community of which a person will always be a member, and as a form of social support wherein members help each other cope and try to thrive in the face of an illness.

Another kind of figured world that Holland et al. (1998) described is that of women's romance and attraction in college settings. These figured worlds of romance and attraction share features such as how women talk about romantic partners (in these cases mostly men) and what women are expected to know about the world of romance and how to behave in that world. In their descriptions of women's talk about romance and attraction, Holland et al. described common labels women use to categorize kinds of women and to self-identify. One woman, Susan, (p. 109) used identity markers such as "socialite" or "hippie" in describing two distinct kinds of self between which she felt torn. Regardless of the degree to which women participate in the figured worlds of romance and attraction, participation in these worlds and the

construction thereof is consistently dependent upon social interactions, how women perceive and label those interactions, and how these labels reflect women's sense of identity, values, and expectations for romance.

Notably, the figured world of AA and the figured worlds of romance and attraction share key elements. One shared element is that they are bound to social experiences, interactions, and to language that ascribes behavioral, physical, and emotional attributes to people. Another shared element is that participants in these worlds can enter, remain in, leave, or return to them, and degrees of participation can be marked through the act of recounting experiences or personal stories. Thus, these figured worlds are enduring to the extent that participants and non-participants recognize talk and behavior that constitutes willingness to be a part of that world or to reject that world. Some figured worlds, like AA, assume an identity as a community of which people willingly become a part and that has specific moments and places to meet as a community. Other figured worlds, such as romance and attraction in college settings, are not marked by specific locations or membership communities but derive their existence through the talk and compared or contrasted experiences of people who live, study, and socialize in shared spaces. Finally, both forms of figured worlds are dynamic and continue to be defined and redefined according to social conventions, cultural perceptions, and historical events.

Holland et al.'s (1998) ideas about figured worlds stem from several disciplinary fields, and have contributed in significant ways to educational research. Urrieta (2007) pointed out that the theory of figured worlds is especially useful for educational researchers who take a sociocultural approach to learning. Such an approach, as Vygotsky (1978) described, suggests that humans learn and develop through interaction with others and with the tools of a given culture (Rogoff, 2003). Culture, as Rogoff described it, "is not static; it is formed from the efforts

of people working together, using and adapting material and symbolic tools provided by predecessors and in the process creating new ones" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 51). In this way, from both a figured world perspective and a sociocultural perspective, the use of materials and tools provided by predecessors, such as reading printed books in a classroom, represents learning and the forming of a particular culture.

Material tools or artifacts (Holland et al., 1998) are a particularly important aspect in the theory of figured worlds because they mediate human action. Cole (1990) considered cultural artifacts *ideal* "in that they contain in coded form interactions of which they were previously a part," and *material* in that "they exist only as they are embodied in material" (p. 91). Tools or artifacts play an important role in the classroom because students use them to make sense of daily events and to guide their behavior across situations. For example, for the teacher and students in this study, an important time of each day was the very beginning of the day when they met as a class for morning meeting. Morning Meetings consisted of four parts: Greeting, Share, Activity, and Morning Message. Each of these four components was an artifact that mediated students' actions throughout each Morning Meeting. During Morning Message, students used ideal artifacts of interaction in order to shape the meeting in ways specific to their classroom. They not only learned what was expected of them during Morning Message, but they grew to expect the daily routines. Additionally, they co-constructed their own form of interaction during this time and the routines that immediately followed it. After reading the message aloud together, the students and Mrs. Cooper recited the Pledge of Allegiance. What initially began as one student doing a hand gesture salute after the pledge eventually grew into all students doing this and also loudly exclaiming, "Salute!" Whatever the original intent of the student who began this daily custom, his actions were influenced by some set of cultural understandings or views he

7

had learned. When other students began to join him and they continued this throughout the year, their interactions were coded with layers of social and cultural meaning. Additionally, Mrs. Cooper did not join, encourage, or discourage this custom. Students acted together for the custom to take root and remain present throughout the school year. In terms of ideal and material artifacts, the morning message became material through the written presence of the teacher's words on the screen, and this message took on greater significance when the teacher and students read and discussed it together. It also came to represent the moment in time just before the Pledge and the students' organically generated salute.

Thus, Morning Message was a tool of Morning Meeting that students used to interact with each other and their teacher to bring unique meaning to this daily unit of time. Elements of Morning Meeting that Mrs. Cooper emphasized—which were specific to the four components of Greeting, Share, Activity, and Morning Message—guided students' actions. Through how they participated in routines like those that comprised Morning Meeting, students co-constructed their own new routines. In sum, the figured world of Morning Meeting changed over time through how students used the available ideal and material artifacts in order to transform those artifacts into new ones that reflected their particular classroom culture.

Throughout this study, I use the term *classroom culture* rather than *figured world* even as I draw on the theoretical assumptions of Holland et al.'s (1998) work. Thus, as I make sense of and operationally define culture, I believe it important to first of all note that the term *culture* exists because there are demarcations between different groups of people determined by how they communicate, dress, walk, and in general live through the symbolic and material resources available to them. Though technically a noun, the word culture is more verb-like (Heath & Street, 2008) in that culture is socially enacted and constantly informed by changes in the

meanings ascribed to semiotic and physical features of daily life. What gives significance to symbols and materials is how people use them or redefine their use in interaction, as well as what they come to represent through a history of actions.

In this study, *culture* functions as a verb that describes how the members of this classroom *cultured each other and themselves* through their use of artifacts for, of, and during interaction. As they cultured each other, the students in this study enacted what I refer to as their classroom culture.

Members within a classroom community culture each other and themselves through the routines, structures of participation, and symbolic and material tools available to them. Most classroom cultures are fairly bounded physically in terms of membership and space because there is generally one teacher and one group of students who are members of one class in one particular classroom. From there, however, what kind of classroom culture they develop is much more abstract, and understanding or describing that culture is dependent upon observing how members interact and what kinds of things influence those interactions. It is also important to consider that children in a classroom setting are labeled students or learners, and what it means to be a student or learner is bound to the particular classroom in which those children are members. To be a student or learner in any cultural group, regardless of the setting, requires understanding and accepting expectations for behavior, talk, dress, and interaction with others.

My interest in the theory of figured worlds lies in its focus on how social interaction is mutually interdependent with the ideas and goals of individuals, groups, and sub-groups. Holland et al. (1998) focused on the role of interaction in the formation of individuals' identities or social positions. Because figured worlds are "socially produced" and "culturally constructed activities" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 40), their existence relies on interaction. Interaction is when two or more

people communicate messages to each other intentionally or unintentionally through verbal and nonverbal markers. Any interaction requires that two or more people acknowledge each other's presence, even if that acknowledgement comes in the form of purposeful silence. Interactions between students and between students and their teacher can be identified through obvious or subtle cues. By studying what is happening in those moments, literacy education researchers can make sense of how participants in a given classroom use symbolic and material tools to advance social and academic agendas.

The concept of figured worlds provides an organizational frame for understanding how children have agency to shape classroom culture and literacy practices even within the rules and routines of formal schooling. Figured worlds, as described by Holland et al. (1998), come into being through participants' efforts to make sense of their present contexts by using knowledge and beliefs developed through similar past experiences. Thus, figured worlds are dynamic even while being built upon personal and collective histories of people in a given place and time. As people redefine the figured worlds in which they interact, they create new histories that they take with them and aspects of which they hand down. Participation in figured worlds may be voluntary or simply a matter of circumstance. Yet no matter what the reason for participants' presence what they say and do and how they relate to others can either perpetuate a certain social order or contest it. I use figured worlds in order to systematically explore the kind of social work children do in the classroom and how their social efforts become integrated with their academic pursuits.

2.1.2 Positioning

In this study, I also draw from positioning theory to help analyze specific interactional moments through which the classroom culture was created. While existing studies have attended to positions and positioning within classroom literacy instruction in support of other theories (Bausch, 2007; Dyson, 1993; Godley, 2003; Lewis, 1997; Orellana, 1996; Zacher, 2008), few studies specific to literacy instruction, or conducted within literacy instruction contexts, have been grounded in positioning theory or used positioning theory to drive analysis (Reeves, 2009; Vetter, 2010; Yoon, 2008). Positioning has been defined as "the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (Davies & Harré, 1999, p. 37). Positioning is how two or more people in interaction communicate with each other how those people are situated in place, time, and relation to others through their communication. Positioning theory and the theory of figured worlds are closely aligned, although figured worlds are identifiable through a history of interactions over time, whereas positioning theory provides a way to analyze in-the-moment interaction. Note the repeated term, *interaction*. Positioning theory and figured worlds share the notion that interaction is where identity and culture happen. Positioning theory is often used to study identity with an emphasis on how identity evolves through interaction. Thus in positioning theory identity is not static. It is dynamic and continually reaffirmed or challenged depending upon the nature of in-the-moment and over-time interactions. Like culture, identity is more verb-like; it operates as something that people *do* as opposed to something that *is*.

In this study, I refer to *positions* instead of *identities* to describe the ongoing ways that students and teacher engage in situating selves and others across contexts and events. Even with the understanding that identities are negotiated in interaction, the term *identity* evokes processes

11

of defining the self or of attributing unwavering characteristics to others. In place of these notions, scholars have carefully articulated more productive ways to talk and think about identity. For example, Wortham (2004), found Holland and Lave's (2001) "thickening" to be a useful way to conceptualize identity, and he explained that thickening happens "when an individual comes consistently to be identified in one way, in an institutional context that also solidifies as individuals get identified" (p. 165). Wortham explored how someone can come to be identified as a "recognizable type of person" (p. 165). In a study of how one middle school student gradually shifted from an identity as a good student to one of an outcast in the classroom, Wortham found the following:

> Stable individual identities emerge when various actors draw on multiple resources to establish an emergent, provisionally stable identity in a given context. Over an academic year in a classroom, for example, students sometimes become recognizable types of people. Such local identities emerge as teachers and students draw on institutional resources, habitual classroom roles, the curriculum, and other resources to position students in recognizable ways. (p. 165)

Rather than talk about the students and teacher in my study in terms of their stable individual identities or their local identities I discuss how participants position each other, how an individual positions him or herself, and what kinds of positioning moves are repeated over time. For instance, I demonstrate how students are positioned as "good writers" or "friendly" through interactions with other students and the teacher during literacy learning time.

For example, the teacher in my study, Mrs. Cooper, directly addressed the students as "authors." The students, upon being positioned as authors, in time and through interactions, took up this position by placing books that they had written on the classroom shelves alongside books

written by well-known published children's books authors. They also took up the position of author by using a time of day known as academic choice to collaborate with peers on co-authoring and co-illustrating books. This is one example of the relationship between positioning as it happens in particular moments of the day and the figured worlds or situated cultures that evolve through repeated positionings over time. Another example can be seen with a student named Matthew. In student interviews, his peers described him as "really smart" and an "expert" on animals. On more than one occasion during whole-group share, even Mrs. Cooper referred to Matthew as the "resident animal expert." Over time, Matthew began to bring in books he had read to share with classmates, and eventually he brought in books he had written. His peers expressed interest in what Matthew shared, and over time, he grew from being positioned in these academic ways to being positioned as someone with whom peers wanted to collaborate when writing. Thus, Matthew was positioned favorably both academically and socially as the school year progressed.

In this study, I look at how such positions relate to the developing classroom culture, or figured worlds, of literacy. These figured worlds of literacy include mutually interdependent academic and social positions. A child may try to position herself as a certain kind of student: for example a smart student, a responsible student, a creative student, a funny student, or even a student who tries to go relatively unnoticed. At the same time, she may try to position herself as a certain kind of reader or writer, be that a proficient reader, a reader who prefers or is knowledgeable about certain genres, a writer who amuses her audiences, or a writer who crafts original stories. Whatever positions students may attempt to take up or to resist, (through the use of descriptors or different moments of social interaction, for example) are realized as part of their dynamic classroom community and its norms, practices, and expectations for participation.

Positioning theory provides a useful analytic framework for examining the spaces in which students interact and alter or maintain their social networks because each of the three elements of the theory of positioning—position, force of the speech act, and storyline—offers a clear way to recognize the obvious as well as subtle actions and reactions between students. For this reason, the process of positioning is accomplished through the *joint construction* of these three elements and often visualized as a triangle (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).

Position addresses the in-the-moment enactment of a person's ways of relating with other people and things. A position may be literal (for example, where a teacher positions herself spatially in relation to students). A position may also reflect an approach or attitude that a person takes, similar to a stance, in relation to something or someone else. Such a position could be accomplished through verbal or nonverbal communication. Thus, people can position and be positioned. Similar to the term *culture* (but in a way that is perhaps more readily accepted in speech), the term *position* can function as a noun or a verb, which lends it a linguistic affordance that, for example, the term *stance* does not have; people cannot stance or be stanced. Finally, a person can also position someone else in a particular way during the course of an interaction. With these explications in mind, consider the following example from my study. Mrs. Cooper often positioned herself physically among students within a circle and sitting on the ground at their level. During these moments, she frequently referred to herself and the students through the pronoun *we*, and she participated as one of them, thereby positioning herself as an equal member of the community. Furthermore, she positioned them as worthy of being heard.

Recall also the figured world of AA. In Holland et al.'s (1998) study, people attending an AA meeting took positions relative to their experiences with alcohol. They called themselves alcoholics so that they could position themselves as functioning members of AA. The term,

position, which can be used as a verb or a noun, suggests more adaptability than the more commonly used social term, *role* (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). As interlocutors negotiate the positions that they consider necessary or appropriate within a given context, they affirm or negate their and others' participation within that situation. Thus, the members of AA in Holland's study did not assume roles. Each member positioned him or herself in relation to other members and their shared struggles.

In the same way that a person may find it difficult to take a position in a given situation, or may knowingly or unknowingly position others in certain ways, a person studying positioning may not easily be able to discern particular positions. When trying to describe the position that someone involved in an interaction is taking, a researcher bears the burden of fully describing the context of the interaction and all possible positions that interlocutors could take, assign, or attempt to take or assign. Some contexts lend themselves more easily to taking up and assigning positions. For example, a teacher may be able to easily position herself as an authority on different content area disciplines, whereas students must do work to achieve certain positions among their peers. These positions may be academic in nature, that is, related to content area disciplines or they may be social in nature, that is, related to relationships with others. Positions may also be both academic and social. For example, Matthew shared with his peers a series of books that he typed and put together at home. The act of writing and putting together books was, in their developing classroom culture, an important one academically. At the same time, Matthew's peers enjoyed his stories and expressed eagerness to read them and talk with him about them. Thus, Matthew became positioned through interactions and the culture or figured world of the classroom in both academic and social ways as a writer. In examining how Matthew

became positioned, the elements of force of speech act and storyline must also be carefully examined, in particular as they contribute to distinct moments of interaction.

The second part of positioning theory is the *speech act*. A speech act is what an utterance *does*. For example, a speech act may make a declarative remark, answer a question, make a request, offer an apology, ask a question, elicit an emotional response, and any number of other possible forms of doing that a person's utterance could reflect. In order for a *speech act* to exert *force* in an event, it must be heard and in some manner acknowledged, whether by being accepted, disputed, or discussed (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). It is through some form of acknowledgment that a speech act can come into being. Upon being realized, one speech act leads to other speech acts that contribute to how an interaction progresses. When a speaker, for example, invokes past interactions in order to position him or herself in the present, the force of that person's speech act can be to give form to or alter the form of a figured world. For example, the first time that Matthew shared with his peers a story he had written at home, he showed the book and briefly described it but did not read it. Subsequently, a female student's speech act invoked the students' already established positions as authors (recall that the teacher addressed them as "authors"), as well as Matthew's already established position as an avid reader and a smart student, by requesting to the teacher that Matthew's book be placed on the bookshelf that, until that point, had only been used for published children's book authors. No student-written books had ever been placed on that shelf. However, this female student's speech act had the *force* of prompting other students to express agreement with her idea and thereby convince the teacher that this idea was a good one. Matthew's book became the first of many student-written books that would be placed on that shelf. Had the force of the female student's speech act been different--for example, had the teacher replied that Matthew could show it to the class again later

rather than place it on the shelf—then the figured world of authorship and readership in the classroom would have assumed a different form. Likewise, the force of the speech act on Matthew was that he agreed to place his book on the shelf, when he could have denied the request. Thus, established positions are important to speech acts and to the force of speech acts during interactions and moment-to-moment positioning.

Storylines, the third element of the positioning theory triangle, can be likened to figured worlds, although a distinction does exist between the two. Storylines are situated in moments that grow into a shared history between members of a community, in this case a classroom community. That shared history forms the foundation upon which figured worlds are built. Holland et al. (1998) explain their view of storylines as "seem[ing] to be the taken-for-granted unfolding of particular activities such as instruction," noting that "there are many storylines associated with figured worlds" (p. 297). Identifying and following storylines over a period of time can help to shed light on precisely how figured worlds and members' interactions are mutually constituted. Examining and understanding storylines also supports the identification of precise moments in which existing figured worlds are disrupted. Identifying these moments is accomplished by studying individuals' discursive interactions in order to develop an operational description of the figured world that is unfolding. Importantly, something that complicates the construct of a figured world is how it can simultaneously impose itself on a person or group of persons while also being imposed upon. Within a figured world, people also have different degrees of agency in that something that poses risk to one person can be an everyday occurrence to another. How people choose to deal with a given risk is part of their in-the-moment storyline.

Holland et al. (1998) demonstrated this in a fascinating account of a Nepalese woman who literally climbed an exterior vertical wall in order to both adhere to and subvert what were

considered socially appropriate actions for her social caste. Her storyline was twofold: on one hand she was an invited interviewee and on the other hand she was a conflicted lower caste member. Researcher and co-author Debra Skinner, though an outsider to Nepalese society, was considered a member of a higher social caste. Skinner had invited the woman over to her house to conduct an interview on the upstairs balcony of the home. She had been doing this for quite some time and was known to welcome persons from all castes into her home. Had she strictly followed socially prescribed manners of behaving in Nepalese society, Skinner would not have allowed persons who were considered members of lower castes to enter her home, as this was frowned upon and considered a form of pollution to the food being prepared in higher caste members' homes, Generally there was only one way into the home and people had to walk by the hearth to go upstairs. What was an acceptable action to members of a higher caste was rife with social risk to the interviewee.

In a move that was both complicit and agentive, the Nepalese woman used the storyline of invited interviewee in order to avoid disrupting her other lower caste member storyline. Rather than stay out of the home altogether, she climbed up the side of the house. The figured world of social castes and their accompanying standards of behavior had a stronger hold on her than on other interviewees who were lower caste members but had complied with Skinner's wishes for them to enter her home. She felt imposed upon by the storyline of preserving the cleanliness of the food, but she also felt socially compelled to grant the interview, thus even as an imposed upon member of her society she exerted agency over the situation. Her figured world with regard to caste systems had developed in such a way that she was willing to put herself at physical risk in order to avoid that which she considered a greater social risk.

Each of the three elements of positioning holds equal weight in its importance to describing and interpreting the situation. Similar to the chicken and the egg argument, one cannot take a position without a speech act and the force of that act or without a storyline that both governs and is governed by people's actions in the moment. Identifying each interlocutor's position, the force of a speech act, and the working storyline is a form of microanalysis that helps to generate thick description of an event and the figured world as it unfolds. The example of the Nepalese woman's positioning also relates to an inherent part of any interaction and is therefore inseparable from positioning and figured worlds' power.

2.1.3   Power

In order to productively explore the co-evolution of positioning and figured worlds, power must be addressed and operationalized. For my study I define power as the ability to influence developing storylines in ways that are personally beneficial. It is hierarchical and context-specific in that a person or group of persons can exert greater influence than others within and over a storyline depending upon the place, time, and situation. Though power is present and continually shifting in all interactions, it is not necessarily something that people wield intentionally over one another. Rather, power is enacted through how interlocutors position themselves and others, including how they mediate given cultural tools according to time and place (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007; Wertsch, 1998). Although, Cornelius and Herrenkohl point out, the word *power* can evoke certain ideas, perhaps of forcefulness or control. Yet, as these scholars argue, and with which I agree, power is more complex than simply force or control. Power certainly may have elements of force and control, but it can also take muted forms— forms in which positions of power are not overtly noticeable.

19

Instead, power may stem from who has more knowledge about the topic at hand or ability to use a pertinent tool, which could be a physical tool or a semiotic tool like language.

To make this idea more concrete, consider the different settings and related activities in which children are expected to participate over the course of a school day. Who has access to power may depend in large part on experience and/or natural inclination with regard to endeavors that are physical, musical, artistic, academic, and social. Additionally, the extent to which other children and even teachers acknowledge someone's propensity for doing something is a necessary element in how power shifts, which child or children hold power, and what that power signifies. Like figured worlds, power is necessarily based in interactions. Power negotiation is situated in the context of a larger community and what goals are important to the members of that community.

For example, in a literacy-related classroom setting a student who is known to be a prolific reader is likely to be able to speak without interruption or to be sought out by peers, thereby gaining power over developing storylines, at least in a context relevant to reading. Having power in a reading-related setting can confer upon a student a position of knowledge. Other students and even the teacher are likely to accept that student's ideas or statements without question. Furthermore, that student is likely to gain and demonstrate confidence as a speaker and participant as a result of others' language and actions toward him or her. That balance of power can quickly shift if the context is one in which a different form of knowledge or ability level is valued. People mediate power through the ways they value and use the social and cultural tools available to them in a given place and time. Additionally, the relationship between power and position is highlighted as an important one in Cornelius and Herrenkohl's (2004) description of power as "existing on a balance scale, with situational factors causing the positions of persons in

an environment to constantly shift and change with the potential of being tipped in different directions" (p. 469). In interaction, people rely upon discursive features to negotiate and recognize power or lack thereof. Who talks, who listens, whose speech is acknowledged and how, and accompanying forms of body language contribute most reliably to understanding and being a part of shifting positions of power. Children may have more or less power in social or academic pursuits, although these need not be mutually exclusive.

I must acknowledge my perspective as a researcher in making claims on who appears to have power in any given instance. How I generate data and what claims I make about findings afford me a position of power over the window to this classroom that I give readers. This position confers upon me the ability to influence what information to share with readers from all of the different interactions I observed and documented in the classroom. Through this simple act of selecting what to analyze and report I interject my own bias and shape the storylines of this study. This bias is based in what frameworks I consider important and how I use those to interpret and to determine what counts as data. With this in mind, one reason I use positioning theory in this study is to offset any misinterpretations on my part. Positioning theory challenges the researcher to look closely at speakers' positions, force of speech acts, and storylines, as well as to first report what has happened and then make substantiated and theory-supported interpretations.

To link the theories of figured worlds and positioning to literacy learning, I turn to sociocultural theories of literacy that view literacy as a social practice as the third framework informing this study.

2.1.4 Sociocultural Theory of Literacy

A sociocultural approach to literacy, like figured worlds, suggests that literacy is not a static set of practices but something to which social interaction and communication is inherent. This conceptualization of literacy is distinct from the view of literacy that traditional schooling often takes. Street (1995) proposed two views on how literacy is seen as autonomous and ideological. An autonomous view of literacy considers it a static skillset to be acquired through learning various skills; people are either literate or illiterate. An ideological view considers literacy as a social practice. As Street explained, literacy as social practice recognizes multiple literacies rooted in contexts related to time, place, and socially derived hierarchies of whose literacies are most valued. I subscribe to an ideological view of literacy and examine the socially driven reading and writing practices that the members of a classroom community use. These practices and how participants use and change them contribute to the classroom culture of literacy.

Drawing on sociocultural theories of learning that posit that humans learn and develop through interaction with others and with the tools of a given culture (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978), and Street's (1995) ideological theory of literacy, a sociocultural approach to literacy can be explicated as the mutual interdependence of three important elements: *participants*, *practices*, and *cultural tools*. The historical and ongoing oral and written practices of persons and groups rely upon, re-appropriate, and develop new cultural tools. In any given community, members (participants) use semiotic and material cultural tools in ways that determine what particular literacy practices are most valued. Identifying and engaging in—or even distancing oneself from—valued literacy practices involves complex positioning work in the moment and over time. Additionally, different literacy practices are likely to be valued more or less depending upon the context and group of people involved.

To contextualize these ideas, consider classroom-based literacy practices related to writing a story. An autonomous view of literacy would focus on traditional school-based practices for story writing. Learning how to write a story might involve practicing a prescribed set of elements. Students might be given writing prompts or a list of several topic choices from which to choose. How they learn and what they learn would not take into account the social context, rather each student's finished story might be measured against one checklist of items and skills. Students would likely come to believe that there is a clearly wrong and clearly right way of writing. Notions of what correct and good writing look like would be culturally biased in favor of children who have grown up in environments that mirror the school's academic and social culture, although no account of cultural bias might be considered or acknowledged. Additionally, academic authority of what story writing should look like would likely reside with the teacher and curriculum.

Seen through an autonomous perspective on literacy, the *practices* of story writing are understood as something that people do in complete isolation. On the other hand, through an ideological view of literacy the practices of story writing are understood as social, shaped by the resonating implications of historical events and how *participants* use *cultural tools* to negotiate meaning. An ideological view of literacy would recognize that students who perhaps struggle with grammatical conventions in standard English or whose oral storytelling traditions do not mirror those of a prescribed format of clear beginning, middle and end may be following a different cultural practice of story writing and telling. They may have unique stories, interesting character development, and rich descriptions to share. However, if the quality of their writing is judged according to criteria that have been developed within a specific culture, these students may never grow to see themselves as capable writers or creative thinkers.

In the classroom where I conducted my study, literacy as social practice, as it pertains to writing, was evident through students' interactions with each other and with Mrs. Cooper. Indeed, unique practices evolved as participants used features of their classroom culture to place increasing value on talking about their writing. In connection with the exchange of ideas and feedback they experienced through talk, collaborative writing became a common practice when students had free time to read or write independently, or to work on something else altogether. Over time what evolved was a culture in which students expressed desire and excitement to work with one or more friends to co-write a story. They developed rules within their small groups and partnerships on things like who would write, who would illustrate, and who would hold on to the unfinished story until the next time they met. Yet tensions and friction also emerged as some children demonstrated feeling slighted if their friends worked with someone else. In this way, part of the culture surrounding academic writing became about alliances. Additionally, children incorporated into their collaborations things they had learned from other books, as well as things they did away from school like playing video games or sports. It was not uncommon for a story topic to stem from a unifying factor. For example, Madison and Mia, who may not otherwise have had motivation to write together, began to collaborate over fairy stories. What to include in drawings sometimes sparked animated talk, debate and laughter. Some students kept their collaborations strictly within the confines of their group, while others proudly placed them in a box where authors could expand their audience to anyone among their peers interested in reading their stories.

With regard to literacy, an examination of the classroom cultural community can shed light on what students learn to do and to value as readers, writers, and speakers. In exploring socially and politically contested views on what is literacy, Scribner (1984) offered a definitive

statement about literacy—that literacy is not something we develop individually. Rather, she wrote, "the single most compelling fact about literacy is that it is a *social* achievement…Literacy is an outcome of cultural transmission" (Scribner, 1984, p. 7; original emphasis). Drawing on Scribner's statements, this study will seek to characterize the literacy culture that a group of students and their teacher together shaped and reshaped over the course of the school year.

Although this study does not have an explicit focus on cultures outside of school in which students are participating members, it offers a hypothesis about how the influence of outside cultures may also have contributed to shaping and reshaping elements of the classroom culture. Because students began each school day by sharing things about their weekend, upcoming plans, and other things they had done, home cultures became an important part of the classroom culture. Students and the teacher used their experiences, norms, and routines away from school in order to position themselves in relation to others. They also used these home cultures in different ways as they socialized with peers and as they engaged in reading and writing practices. During student interviews and during students' share time, it was not uncommon for students to talk about family members, pets, sports, traditions, celebrations, and more. An important element of sharing was the subsequent questions that peers could ask sharers. These topics of discussion frequently served as the basis for students discovering things they had in common with classmates. When time to talk and to ask questions was limited, the teacher often encouraged students to resume these discussions at a later point during the day. Thus, students' cultural lives away from school were not just incidentally brought into the classroom culture, rather they were brought in daily in a purposeful, literacy- and dialogue-driven manner.

Scribner's (1984) description of literacy as achieved socially and as culturally transmitted clarifies the relationship between literacy and positioning. Students' social negotiations toward

taking up certain positions influence and are influenced by their literacy practices and the evolving classroom culture. Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that persons learn through social interaction how communities define members and also that how communities define members is influenced by members' and non-members' interactions over time. Specifically, Lave and Wenger wrote:

> Activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of a broader system of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons. The person is defined by as well as defines these relations. Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. (p. 53)

Communities of practice and the positions afforded or denied community members constitute each other. Membership within a classroom culture, as such, entails individual and group efforts to take up certain positions alongside peers.

In discussing positioning in literacy learning, Bomer and Laman (2004) wrote, "students are, even as they engage in 'school work,' also engaged in the life work of negotiating power, privilege, and closeness with the others around them" (p. 420). Positioning theory offers researchers a way to examine how such negotiations help students establish, or try to establish, subject positions related to literacy learning. The social and emotional implications of students' positions toward literacy and as doers of literacy shape learning. Bomer and Laman argued that attending to these implications can enhance the design and implementation of instructional contexts.

Finally, literacy practices are mutually interdependent with individuals' participation in cultural groups in and out of the classroom. Specifically, the ways people socially negotiate positions as members or non-members of those groups relate to how they approach reading and writing (Hall, Johnson, Juzwik, Wortham, & Mosley, 2010; Scribner, 1984). Children engage in important positioning work as they make sense of reading and writing practices. Furthermore, as Corsaro (1992) explained, the cultural routines in which children participate involve interpretation and appropriation of information from the world of adults. By studying the figured worlds of the classroom and positioning between children in literacy spaces, adults may gain new insights into how children use the written and spoken word to shape their classroom culture. Theoretical investigations have focused on figured worlds and children's play (Barron, 2014), but we stand to gain unique insights on children's literacy development by examining the figured worlds through which children participate in the classroom.

Children's play shares important similarities with children's literacy practices. During play, especially during improvised games, children use material and semiotic cultural tools to negotiate rules for participation. Though initially the product of cultural tool use, the rules eventually *become* the cultural tools that children use to monitor play. Additionally, the rules provide sufficient structure for children to use them creatively and either change or enforce them as they negotiate unexpected events during play. Similarly, literacy as a social practice also necessitates the use of cultural tools to negotiate rules for participation. Because these rules provide structure for how to interact in particular contexts and moments in time, they can be equated with storylines. As storylines of classroom participation structures gain acceptance over time and become recognizable figured worlds, they also become tools that members draw upon and can use creatively as they engage in literacy practices. For example, when Matthew brought

in the book he authored at home to share during Morning Meeting, he and his classmates were participating under the rules for Morning Meeting Share that they and their teacher had constructed together over time. When the female student asked if Matthew's book could be placed on the bookshelf, she used the existing rules for interaction to propose a new (implicit) rule for interaction under which students could give and have access to each other's authored books. Together, the students and teacher used the rules that structured Share time and what the bookshelf represented to develop a new Share space that became an important part of the reading and writing practices among children in this classroom.

2.2   RELEVANT LITERATURE

Examining how members of a classroom community co-construct literacy practices that are specific to the classroom culture requires a look at the relationship between social and academic identities. Social identities can be characterized by considering such things as how children get along with others, language or cultural backgrounds that are considered unique within the classroom community, knowledge children have of things beyond academic content matter, and particular interests or abilities that children demonstrate or discuss. Academic identities can be characterized by considering the ease or difficulty children demonstrate as learners of disciplinary content matter. I use the word *demonstrate* to clarify that academic identities are subject to what children say and do as they engage in disciplinary content activities; the descriptor *academic identities* is not a way to define children's abilities to learn. As children interact in academic settings like a classroom, they communicate verbally and nonverbally.

These communications offer evidence of important messages about what children think about themselves, what they think about others, and what they want others to think about them.

Importantly, this social and academic identity work is intertwined, since the ways children present themselves and are perceived academically make their way into the social positions to which they have access or from which they are excluded. Likewise, the ways children are regarded socially make their way into academic positions they can take or be denied. By examining children's use of "oral and written language genres," "kinds of discourse traditions," and "relationships enacted with others," Dyson (1993) presented a compelling argument for what she described as the "link between composing a text and composing a place in the social world" (p. 7). Note that Dyson extended the concept of 'composing a text' (p. 7) to something that can also be done orally, not just in writing. Dyson's words resonate with educators and researchers who seek to better understand how students' attempts to *compose a place in the social world* relate to learning and how this knowledge can enhance instruction.

Dyson's argument about how individuals try to "compose a place in the social world" (p. 7) is comparable to the notion of agency—a notion that was a major focus of Holland et al.'s (1988) work. Holland et al. theorized how agency is linked to identity. When exploring children's words and actions in classroom literacy contexts, teachers and researchers do well to consider children capable of purposeful or agentive self-composition. Holland et al. attempted to make sense of agency in identity, writing that:

> identities are improvised—in the flow of activity within specific social situations—from
> the cultural resources at hand… In this continuous self-fashioning, identities are hard-
> won standpoints that, however dependent upon social support and however vulnerable to

change, make at least a modicum of self-direction possible. They are the possibilities for

mediating agency. (p. 4)

Holland et al. included within their description of the improvised nature of agentive

identity work the cultural tools that are available for use. Material and semiotic cultural tools are

used to develop and are developed through the culture that is unique to a given classroom. The

studies in the next section offer important insights about how students can use the cultural tools

available to them as they enact literacy practices. As evidenced by these studies, the ways

students use cultural tools to engage in social positioning is related to the kinds of learning

opportunities that take shape.

2.2.1 Student Positioning and Culture in the Classroom

In a number of studies, Dyson (1993; 2003; 2006) has illustrated how students use literacy

activities and relevant material and symbolic tools to negotiate belonging and to monitor

adherence to social expectations. Dyson and others (Dyson, 1993, 2003; Leander, 2002, 2004;

Wohlwend, 2009) have shed light on the ways students use different kinds of artifacts related to

culture, race, academic content matter, and language in order to enact identity and social

positions. Recall that artifacts, in that they are material and symbolic tools, can serve to mediate

human action. Wohlwend (2009), for example, captured the subtle ways in which children use

the cultural tools available as they work to achieve social goals among their peers. She

explained:

A mediational means represents an abstract way of making meaning—a cultural tool—

that people use to participate in a set of social practices (e.g. writing, drawing, playing)

with material instruments (e.g. pencil, crayons, puppets) and surfaces (e.g. paper, puppet,

30

stage) for crafting messages (Wohlwend, 2009, p. 230).

By gaining in-depth understanding of how early elementary school students used the cultural tools in the classroom, Wohlwend (2009) also found that children's moment-to-moment and daily interactions lent themselves to the making of histories that in time also became cultural tools for students to use as they made sense of social and academic positions. In other words, in using cultural tools, students made cultural tools or they gave new meanings to the cultural tools already in existence.

Leander (2002) found that the high school students in his study used cultural tools, or artifacts, in order to construct identity artifacts. He explained that for his study he was particularly concerned with "tracing how artifacts-in-use function to make identity itself think-like" (p. 199). Leander's goal was to help readers understand how the participants in his study used features of their interactions, in particular the dynamics of building on each other's comments and movements, to attach a type of identity to one student in particular. Leander analyzed an episode in which a group of students used material tools (such as a banner) and symbolic tools (such as language and talk among students about a black female student's use of the term "honky" (p. 214)) in order to identify that female student, Latanya, as acting "ghetto" (p. 200). Through the verbal and nonverbal exchanges between Latanya and other students, artifacts of "ghetto"ness were attributed to Latanya and when she tried to counter the identity of "ghetto" and to distance herself from related artifacts of acting "ghetto" she was further positioned as such. Leander (2004) later reexamined the event by analyzing students' descriptions of what happened, and found that students used different cultural artifacts in order to arrive at the agreed upon identity artifact of Latanya acting "ghetto." Additionally and importantly, the terms "honky" and "ghetto" connoted racial perceptions of whiteness and

31

blackness that contributed to how Latanya and the other students engaged in social positioning. Indeed, much can be said about how some white students used prevailing attitudes about race to position Latanya unfavorably, as well as how some black students were complicit in this group mentality whether by what they said or what they did not say.

As students interact in classroom communities of practice, they draw upon and construct cultural resources in the form of ideologies related to race, gender, and power that serve to support or constrain students' attempts to position themselves in relation to peers and to literacy practices (Bausch, 2007; Dyson, 2006; Godley, 2003; Zacher, 2008). Elementary (Bausch; Dyson; Zacher) and high school students (Godley) alike are influenced by ideologies based in institutional discourses that make their way into in-school discourses. These ideologies, because they are manifested in language, can be considered resources that students use in order to position themselves toward peers as well as toward their writing and reading practices.

Bausch (2007) noted that the kinds of literacy practices around text talks that are valued in school may place girls at an advantage over boys if the selected texts depict characters whose conflicts are emotional in nature. In student small group literacy circles, the third grade boys in her study expressed dislike toward the more feminized discourses of discussing feelings. Instead, they preferred plots driven by action and infused with humor. Bausch argued that these boys were acting in accordance with gender ideologies they had learned over time about what is valued in boys' talk with each other. The study's findings also demonstrated how dominant ideologies about what constitutes proper text discussions in classrooms can lead to teachers indirectly valuing one group of gender ideologies over another. This can be problematic because students' identities are strongly linked to their gender ideologies but also to the extent to which they engage critically with a text. At issue in Bausch's study, she explained, was that although

the ways that the boys talked about texts did not align with the expected participation structure for text talks in their classroom, *what* the boys said, in particular the student on whom she focused her case study, did align with the expected text talk structure. Bausch demonstrated how her focal student, Dave, complied with "the classroom's book talk protocol of speaking about the text, voicing opinions, and making connections, but not in the expected manner" (p. 201). Dave and other boys showed that they comprehended the texts and could discuss them knowledgeably, but their talk showed that they viewed the texts unfavorably and preferred to use the literature circle time socially. Unlike the boys, the girls talked at length about the texts and they aligned themselves emotionally with the text and each other. Thus, the teacher-selected texts unwittingly afforded the girls in the study ways to talk about the text that were more in keeping with the classroom expectation for text talk participation structures. Bausch advocated for educators to reflect on personal beliefs about what constitutes productive talk about texts and what can be gained from attending more to the content of students' words than to the delivery of those words.

Zacher (2008) described how the upper elementary school students in her study used cultural and social capital (and the storylines inherent within that capital) in order to negotiate power and social status. The specific incident she analyzed was a public classroom literacy event in which the author and reader of his fictional homework story, along with the classroom audience and, importantly, their teacher, positioned two other students among them: one as a hero and another as a villain. These positions reflected the hierarchy within the boys' group of peers. Zacher pointed out the power of such literacy events, or performances as Blackburn (2003) referred to them, to either reinforce or disrupt hierarchical standings among students. In literacy events, the academic world of a text and the social world of interaction intersect in complex ways. Positioning theory affords a useful way to examine the complexity of literacy

events and the agency of students and teachers in these events. Careful analysis of interaction during literacy events may reveal different and more equitable ways for members of a classroom community to be agentive.

In her high school based study, Godley (2003) argued for increased awareness of how gender ideologies can grant power to some students over others as they engage in positioning in the literacy classroom. Power over classroom discourse as it relates to content matter is not necessarily linked with grades or even with linguistic mastery over content; rather it is linked with who is perceived and positioned to have mastery over content and/or over the social structures of participation in the classroom (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004; Godley, 2003). As these scholars and others have demonstrated through analyses focused on student positioning, perception of mastery in these classrooms was strongly connected with peer relationships and how these either leveraged or constrained students' participation.

One particular instance of power positioning through language can be found in Godley's (2003) study, where a male student acknowledged a female student's response to his questions/critiques of her argument by assuming an evaluative stance (which would presume power) toward her through his words, "All right. That's fine" (p. 282). Because students do constant social and identity work, they are likely to be sensitive to the language of their peers. Even if a student does not analyze what aspect of another's utterance has positioned him/her in a certain way (which arguably is usually the case), the effects of that utterance may still be felt. The concerns here are social and academic in that the forming of hierarchies within the classroom may give voice to some, and silence others. Silencing of some students (which certainly need not be explicit) can be detrimental to the construction of knowledge. When *all* students feel like central enough participants to participate consistently and actively, dialogue

can serve as a major vehicle for students to engage in critical thought and reflection, which are necessary for the construction of knowledge.

Among younger children, the complex interweaving of gender, language, social positions, and literacy practices is also evident. Dyson (2006) discussed findings from her study in a first grade classroom in which one boy's ideologies about masculinity shaped his feedback to another boy about his writing. Specifically, Lyron, the feedback giver, corrected Brad on his use of the phrase, "I like" (p. 27), in reference to a male friend. Lyron suggested to Brad that he add "for a friend" in order to avoid the confusion of anyone thinking Brad was attracted to this male friend. For boys in this class, the phrase, "I like", could only be ended with a girl's name, whereas, for girls it was acceptable and not considered a sign of attraction to say that they liked other girls. Additionally, Dyson found that the teacher pointed out to a student a fix-up in the wording "Me and (Somebody)" (p. 28) where it should have been "(Somebody) and I," a mark of the teacher's ideologies about what is considered correct in written and spoken text. Dyson noted that, unlike the teacher, the students were more attuned to social correctness among their peers. Ironically, placing oneself ahead of another person through the wording, "Me and (Somebody)", could be considered socially as well as linguistically incorrect. For the students in the classroom Dyson observed, however, social correctness was demonstrated through other gendered and social forms of speaking and writing, and feedback from their peers and how it related to their relationships with each other took precedence. Findings such as those in Dyson and Bausch's (2007) studies demonstrate the differences that can exist between students' ideologically based approaches to texts and interactions, and teachers' ideologically based approaches to texts and related interactions. The related positioning work that students and teachers do can lead to shifts in power or uphold power structures that are already in place.

Finally, Orellana (1996) demonstrated how a teacher's attempts to position students toward literacy practices with a critical lens can lead to power struggles among students. Whereas the teacher in Orellana's study wanted students to understand that they could use their voices in powerful ways to effect change, the students used the situated forum as an opportunity to display power over others. Orellana advocated for teachers to not avoid critical approaches to instruction, but to "take steps to mitigate against the most overt power maneuvers, and to invite greater participation by all" (1996, p. 361).

The studies described in this section suggest that relationships between students in literacy classrooms are underscored by who can assume a position of power at any given moment in time depending upon the other participants present, the racial and gender ideologies either accepted or contested, and the goals of those interacting socially. I argue that additionally, as students try to assume certain kinds of social and/or academic identities, they have more success doing so when they deal in social or academic spaces where they consider themselves knowledgeable or expert. If their expertise is considered a form of capital among a given group of people, even children who do not normally have status or power can position themselves more hierarchically, if only for a certain duration of time. This can have a range of implications for literacy learning. The next and final section of this chapter takes a closer look at how teachers can purposely help to shape a classroom culture in which students have greater access to literacy learning opportunities and positions.

2.2.2 Informed Teacher Positioning

As evidenced by Bausch (2007), Orellana (1996), and Zacher's (2008) studies, teachers are instrumental in the kind of positioning that occurs in classrooms. Teachers' language, actions,

36

instructional goals and materials, and the underlying ideologies that inform them, influence how teachers position students. With this in mind, teachers can actively contribute to shaping the classroom culture in positive ways. For example, Rex (2002) explored how a high school English teacher used narrative in order to establish a culture of academic achievement among his students. Within that culture, those who valued achievement sought to be challenged through constructive criticism from their teacher. This narrative served as the backbone of the classroom community's core set of values, and it supported students' agency as purposeful readers and writers.

Teachers can have profound effects on students' positions toward texts by seeking productive ways for students to discuss and write about the books, movies, and other current popular media that interest them. Kristin, the teacher in Dyson's (1998) elementary classroom study, developed useful approaches for dealing with differences between adults and children on what could be considered worthwhile texts and differences between students on how they write about or bring texts to life. Dyson found that through her language and receptiveness to students, Kristin positioned them in ways that helped them develop "authorial agency" (1998, p. 396) and "authorial responsibility" (p. 399). For example, Kristin welcomed her students' interests in writing and performing stories based on popular culture characters like X-Men superheroes. At the same time, she challenged student writers to think critically about not only the content of their stories but also their audience. She held high expectations for them as writers, and she asked questions and offered feedback that supported student dialogue. Students engaged in appropriating well-known stories and characters to explore gender-related issues. They took seriously their jobs as writers, directors, actors and audience members. Dyson's descriptions and findings demonstrate that how a teacher approaches student authorship and exploration of texts

can support students' literacy development along with the social and academic positions they have access to and take up.

3.0 METHODS

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Working from a sociocultural approach to literacy, the aim of this study is to contribute to the scholarship on how young children engage in positioning as they interact during classroom literacy instruction. In doing so, I examine the relationship between student and teacher interactions and literacy practices. By combining the frameworks of figured worlds and positioning, my study offers a useful lens for examining how elementary school students and their teacher can, through the interrelatedness of their daily moment-to-moment interactions, construct a classroom culture of reading and writing. The following questions guided this research study:

How do interactions, routines, and rituals in the classroom develop a classroom culture around reading and writing?

a. What kinds of interactions take place between the teacher and the students?

b. What kinds of interactions take place between students?

c. What routines and participation structures are an important part of classroom activities?

3.2   SITE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The names given for the site and for all participants are pseudonyms. The site, Walker Elementary, is a kindergarten through third grade school in a city in the southeastern United States that has a culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse population, a rich history in social activism, and prominent institutions of higher learning. Walker Elementary opened its doors in 2007, and at the time of the study, enrolled approximately 400 students. The school is a public charter school and feeds into a middle and high school, all of which are located together on the same block across from medical research and practice facilities. The racial and socioeconomic demographics at Walker Elementary are not representative of the city in which they are located. Demographic data reported on Walker includes the middle and high school into which the elementary school feeds. 71.6% of the students are White, 18.4% are Black, 4.1% are Hispanic, 3.0% are Asian, 2.6% are Two Races, 0.3% are American Indian, and 0.1% are Pacific Islander. 18.7% of the students are eligible for free lunch, while 0% are available for reduced lunch.

What initially interested me in Walker Elementary was its use of the Responsive Classroom Approach Model and of project work. However, those were not focal areas of this study, as such a focus would have risked reflecting a programmatic evaluation. I gained access to Walker by contacting the principal and explaining my research interests. The principal recommended two teachers who were considered highly effective among faculty and parents at Walker, in particular for their abilities to communicate positively with students. In order to collect data for longer periods of time and for an extensive duration, I focused on the classroom of just one of these two teachers.

The participating teacher is Julia Cooper. Her second grade classroom at the time of data collection consisted of 21 students. Of these 21, the parents of 17 children gave informed consent

for their children to be in my study, and all 17 children gave informed assent. Of these 17 children, ten are girls and seven are boys. 11 are Caucasian, three are African American, two are biracial, and one is Asian. Of the remaining four students who were not participants, two are Mexican-American, one is African American, and one is Caucasian.

Because of the friendship Julia and I developed and how I view her as a teacher and a person, I am aware that bias about Julia's teaching may enter into my language in describing her and her classroom. Therefore, in order to be as transparent as possible about this implicit bias, to consistently keep myself aware of it, and to report only what I observed and heard I refer to her as Julia when I write about our conversations and interviews. When I write about her interacting with students, I refer to her as Mrs. Cooper. I hope that this naming also helps readers when they read transcript segments and my interpretations to quickly discern who the teacher is since I refer to all of the students by first-name pseudonyms.

Julia expressed interest in the nature of this study and explained that she often reflected on her teaching in order to challenge herself to develop space in her classroom for students to take increasing ownership over their learning while also building a community of respectful individuals who felt safe taking risks with and in front of one another as learners. As I continued the process of data generation and analysis, I kept Julia informed about my interpretations in order to hear her own interpretations and hopefully enable this study to incorporate a collaborative element between a teacher and a researcher.

3.2.1 Setting: Walker Elementary

As the principal at Walker has explained to me, the Responsive Classroom (RC) approach suggests that teachers spend approximately the first six weeks laying the groundwork for all

instruction and non-instruction related procedures throughout the school day. When parents have expressed a concern with this in the past, the principal has discussed with them the social and academic benefits of this approach. She has told parents that the RC approach is an important part of Walker's school culture, and has let them know that they may certainly choose to send their children to a different school, but if they want their children here, they must support the approach and its related premises.

All grade levels at Walker Elementary use the Responsive Classroom Approach as their curricular base. In this framework, the focus for teachers is to interact with students and teach them to interact with each other in ways that build a positive classroom and school community based in mutual respect and accountability as well as academic achievement. Because of the whole-school and individual teacher goal to implement an approach that could support students' social, emotional, and academic learning simultaneously (Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, Baroody, Curby, Ko, Thomas, Merritt, Abry, & DeCoster, 2014), this was a unique setting for investigating student positioning and the interactions of academic and social subject positions.

3.3   METHODOLOGICAL PRODEDURES

This study applies ethnographic methodology and uses a sociocultural analytic lens to understand student interactions during literacy instruction. In conducting ethnographies, researchers attempt to better understand the culture and cultural knowledge of a particular group of people. With regard to methodology, two important ideas emerge from how Hatch (2002) and Heath and Street (2008) described features of ethnography. First, Hatch noted that when writers describe their work as *ethnographic* their "intent [is] to represent cultural knowledge in some form" (p.

21). This study aims to interpret and represent classroom cultural knowledge with a focus on the classroom culture surrounding literacy. Second, Heath and Street advocated that in ethnographic work, the term, culture, should refer to culture as a way of doing rather than being. As noted already, both authors "think of culture as a verb rather than as a noun" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 7). To view culture as an entity in motion is to assume a significant ideological perspective. From this perspective, the classroom culture forms and is formed by relevant figured worlds as it responds to how individuals and groups interact and negotiate positions and relationships.

One affordance of studying figured worlds and positioning, along with related concepts of culture, identity, power, agency and interaction, through ethnography is that researchers have a flexible scope through which to explore questions that they have before, during, or after spending time in the field. Because ethnographic studies generally consist of multiple methods of data collection for an extended period of time, they lend themselves to the development of a more in-depth focus on a specific subset of the data collected and generated. For example, researchers like Bausch (2007) and Hicks (2005) developed case studies and narrative analyses, respectively, from ethnographic data.

The complex nature of figured worlds and positioning can be understood by exploring the cultural situatedness of interactions as they occur within different contexts. For example, Bausch (2007) took a case study approach (though she did not specifically label it as such) to examine potential conflicts that may have existed between valued school literacies and the kind of talk in which boys engaged during literacy activities. She wrote:

> The goal of this article is to invite the reader to lean in a little closer to the literature conversations (book talk) surrounding his reading and to reflect upon the ways a book

talk curriculum may maintain, sustain, and at times constrain, the literacy identities of

participants. (Bausch, 2007, p. 200)

Thus, she used ethnographic data in order to zoom in on one third grade boy in particular and

examine how culturally valued gender norms for talk played out in a classroom setting.

Hicks (2005) used narrative accounts from a larger ethnographic study in order to analyze

how fourth grade girls living in poverty developed a cultural way of using horror texts to deal

with and talk about the horrors they encountered in their own lives while still avoiding direct talk

about these real-life horrors. Through her study, Hicks did not impose her voice on the

participants and their realities. Instead, she used this ethnographic work as a platform for

participants' voices to communicate their cultural knowledge. Through participants' own words,

Hicks was then able to—as accurately as possible—make interpretations about how the girls'

identities related to the literature they selected. What Hicks was able to highlight through her

study was how what children choose to read and what they talk about can initially go unnoticed

as kids being kids, so to speak. Upon closer inspection of children's choices and conversations,

however, complex cultural constructions become evident. This is frequently the work of

ethnographic classroom studies.

Dyson's (1993) ethnography in kindergarten through third grade classrooms shares a

common thread with those of Bausch (2007) and Hicks (2005), in that she presented evidence

that sustained time with and attention to children in classroom settings revealed complex cultural

negotiations. By actively seeking to understand the cultural worlds children navigated, Dyson

was able to bring to light that, erroneously, the writing practices of the urban elementary students

she observed were not valued among formal school writing practices. Dyson wrote:

44

The observed children illustrated how oral folk traditions and popular culture may serve as child resources for school literacy.…Children's diverse resources may more readily support their entry into school literacy if the classroom teacher has a dialogic—rather than a dichotomous—vision of cultural traditions. (p. 224)

The ethnographic work of Bausch (2007), Hicks (2005), and Dyson (1993) has demonstrated that with the affordance of flexibility in exploring the highly contextual nature of positioning comes another affordance of enabling researchers to more convincingly make a case for closer and more sustained time with and attention to the cultural (or figured) worlds children navigate in classroom settings. When children's words stop falling on deaf ears and start being listened to through ethnographic methodologies, previously unnoticed issues as well as complex work that children do in and out of the worlds of adults can come into focus. Additionally, through the findings they generated by how they combined theory and methodology, Bausch, Hicks and Dyson were able to suggest practice-based applications for classroom instruction. Thus, an ethnographic study can do more than describe a cultural landscape, as it can also allow for practical implications to be considered.

Ironically, however, with this affordance of calling for possible applications of findings comes what I consider to be the greatest limitation of ethnographic methodology, a nagging sense of uncertainty that anyone outside of a cultural group can ever truly become enough of an insider to report insider perspectives accurately. Complicating this is the importance ethnographers place on trying to remain non-intrusive (Heath & Street, 2008) as they become part of the setting in which they are observing and possibly participating in more or less peripheral ways. Although Hicks (2005) referred to research with critical aims, her point that it is difficult "to get 'inside' of a community when one enters that community as an outsider" (p. 185)

applies to all ethnographies and relates to the qualitative research goal and dilemma of capturing members' meanings. In ethnographic research, which requires that the researcher develop trusting relationships with people who are aware that the researcher's presence in that community will likely be short-lived, gaining sufficient trust to recognize the true meaning behind people's behavioral and linguistic interactions can be a difficult undertaking. Over the course of my study, I tried to gain students' trust by being unobtrusive in my daily presence. I welcomed brief conversations with them when the time was appropriate, and participated in activities when invited to do so. Mostly, I tried to position myself as a learner as well. The teacher also did this when she first introduced me as "a student like [them]" (08-12-2014) when I began my observations. I also continued to be a presence in the classroom throughout the school year, even though when I reached the point of saturation my observations became less frequent.

In order to productively include my study participants' words and interactions, I closely examined student and teacher discourse. In conducting ethnographic studies, many researchers use discourse analysis. As I have found and as others have demonstrated, discourse analysis aids in the examination of positioning and literacy learning. In their review of discourse analysis in literacy research, Rex, Bunn, Davila, Dickinson, Ford, Gerben, Orzulak, and Thomson (2010) described three "units of scale" (p. 96) of literacy discourses that speak to the situated nature of language in use. They used the terms micro, macro, and meso to distinguish three forms of discourse that constitute each other in physical as well as more abstract spaces. Micro discourses in research on literacy instruction are located in spaces like classrooms in which talk between members is an element of structured literacy practices. Macro discourses are institutional in nature. With regard to literacy, they are constituted by global spaces in which talk determines literacy-related policies, access to literacy resources, and what literacy learning looks like. Meso

discourses, as the name implies, are located on a plane between micro and macro. These are found in spaces inside and outside of schools where members of local communities and neighborhoods gather for different purposes and in so doing enact versions of macro discourses, thereby informing micro discourses. For my study, I was able to gather explicit information about micro discourses through the talk in student and teacher interactions. Macro discourses (for example, the ideologies and policies that influenced how the principal described things like the school's curriculum and mission statement) made themselves visible in micro discourses of talk through classroom meso discourse participation structures like morning meeting. Because they attend to the complicated interdependence between cultural meanings constructed through moment-to-moment interactions and cultural worlds shaped over time, these three levels of discourse also align helpfully with my combined frameworks of figured worlds, positioning theory, and sociocultural theory of literacy.

For my study, in order to identify what literacy practices participants negotiated as valuable in their classroom culture of reading and writing, I looked closely at specific features of talk during interactions. For example, when students gave each other feedback on writing, I looked at if and how their language reflected words that their teacher and other students had used (and what ideas were inherent in those words).

I also noted when students used language or ideas from specific texts in conversation with each other. Student discourse during literacy learning in the classroom, which one would initially examine at the micro level, offers a productive space through which to examine how students negotiate literary identities as they position themselves and others. Bakhtin's (1981) framing of spoken and written language as dialogic makes possible, yet also complicates, theoretical and analytical explorations of how students of all ages engage in talking about texts

47

and writing their own (Dyson, 1993; Rex, 2002). Speakers and writers, intentionally and unintentionally, position themselves in some way to listeners and readers. As in Bakhtin's conceptualization, even a person thinking out loud with no one else around is engaging in dialogic interaction since the attempt to negotiate meaning is situated in some social endeavor. A social endeavor need not refer to something in the future, rather may be rooted in a past interaction or experience. When a listener hears a speaker attach language to a concept, that concept can take on new meaning for the listener. From that social endeavor between speaker and listener, new ways of thinking about a given concept and related ideas can take form. When a teacher, for example, models thinking aloud while reading or writing, she invites her students to listen in on what would normally be a conversation she would have with herself. This is a unique form of dialogic interaction, and one that occurred frequently across different contexts in my study.

From the start of the school year, Mrs. Cooper and the student participants in my study engaged in different forms of thinking aloud. These think aloud opportunities afforded students with ways to verbalize ideas and, subsequently, to make academic and social choices. An important and often shared perspective on discourse analysis is that since it leads to claims about behavior and the factors that shape and are shaped by behavior, the most rigorous discourse analysis studies follow participants for some extended period of time. For example, Mercer (2008) examined the temporal nature of what may otherwise be dismissed as disconnected events in classroom dialogue. Mercer's investigation using data collected over time from several primary grade classrooms in the United Kingdom made a compelling case for the historical influences implicit within any discursive interaction between teachers and students and between students.

Thus, as with ethnographies and microethnographies, time in the field shapes the nature of discourse analysis as a methodology. This extensive time can serve as both an affordance and a limitation. It affords researchers with ways to connect moment-to-moment interactions with patterns of interaction over time, but it also challenges researchers to seek ways to realistically spend sufficient time collecting, organizing, and analyzing that data. For my study I benefitted from repetition. I conducted repeated video viewings and repeated note-takings (for example, taking "field notes" of an observation while watching video even though I had previously taken field notes in real time). I also worked both forward and backward in time, and tried to visualize myself as a detective looking for clues to a scene under investigation. In observing interactions I frequently asked myself such questions as: *What led up to this?; Why did he/she/they say that?; Have I missed something?; How often does this happen?* Finally, because I applied discourse analysis methods to examining moment-to-moment positioning, I was able to situate linguistic interactions within the cultural (figured worlds) that evolved over time.

3.4   PARTICIPANTS

3.4.1 Students

The students in my study were all second graders. In conversations with each other they expressed a range of interests. These interests included their families, animals, sports, movies, books, art, travel, science, video games, and fashion. Although not all of the students in the class had been at Walker Elementary the year before, all of those whose parents gave informed consent (and who themselves gave assent) had been in one of the first grade classes at Walker.

49

None of my participants were new to this school. Most had at least one sibling, and siblings who were of age to attend Walker did. Over the course of observation and analysis, I focused more on some students' interactions, language, and actions than others' as I considered my research questions. However, as a result of how *all* students contributed to shaping literacy practices, eventually the classroom culture grew into one that valued writing as a form of social interaction.

3.4.2 The teacher, Julia Cooper

School administrators recommended two teachers, a first grade teacher and a second grade teacher, for my preliminary observations during my initial meeting with them. One of those teachers was second grade teacher, Julia Cooper. Julia, a young Caucasian female, described to me her path toward teaching, which she considered different than many other teachers since she had not originally intended to go into teaching. Her interest in becoming a teacher began after she completed her undergraduate degree in journalism and worked for a year with a youth empowerment organization in a large city in California. Following this experience, she applied to Teach for America and was selected to teach in an urban setting in a Midwestern city. She earned her Master of Education degree and has worked with high school students, middle school students, and at the time of the study was in her fourth year at Walker Elementary. Julia expressed that she firmly believed in equitable educational opportunities for all learners. She also told me that she advocated the premises of the Responsive Classroom (RC) approach, despite some of her initial reservations. In particular, she had trouble justifying to herself spending the school's expected amount of time on developing routines and procedures. Prior to my study, Julia had attended and also led numerous workshops on the RC approach. Consequently, the principal and other staff members at Walker described her as highly effective at supporting

students academically, socially, and emotionally, and as a teacher whom many parents had requested for their rising second graders.

3.4.3   Researcher

I consider myself as a researcher participant because my presence in the classroom had an effect on the classroom community. The students and teacher welcomed me and although I was generally able to keep a low profile in much the same way that a very quiet student might, there were times when my presence became more noticeable, for example as someone with whom a student or the teacher wanted to share something or as someone to whom a group of students wanted to restrict access to their conversation. I also had longer conversational instances with all student participants and the teacher during the times I conducted one-on-one interviews. With my research questions, theoretical frameworks, data collection methods, and approaches to analysis, I function as a participant who reports on and therefore frames for outsiders the culture of reading and writing in this classroom in particular ways.

3.5   DATA GENERATION

For data generation (Graue & Walsh, 1998), I used several methods in order to triangulate interpretations I made. I attempted use the phrase data generation rather than data collection in adherence to Graue and Walsh's argument that data:

> can be seen along a continuum that describes a way of looking at the world. At

one end of this continuum is the view that researchers collect preformed data and then make valid inferences from these pieces of evidence.…At the other end of the continuum is a much more interactive/generative view of data.…Data are not 'out there' to be collected by objective researchers. Instead, they come out of the researcher's interactions in a local setting, through relationships with participants, and out of interpretations of what is important to the questions of interest. Data to one researcher are noise to another. (p. 72)

In making claims about classroom culture, figured worlds and positioning, this perspective of data as interactively generated by all participants, including the researcher, aligns well with the theoretical underpinnings of the research at hand that valued literacy practices are derived through social interactions among all participants and how those participants culture each other and themselves. Whatever I label as data is dependent upon personal philosophies including my research interests, how I have interpreted and connected existing literature, and what methods I use and why.

The methods used in this study include conducting observations over the course of a full school year, video recording, interviewing, taking field notes, and collecting semiotic and material artifacts. Semiotic artifacts include such things as hand gestures and nonverbal forms of communication that the students learned to do with each other and with the teacher. The students and teacher used these semiotic tools socially in order to demonstrate attentiveness to a speaker and avoid interrupting that person. They were also used in order to promote accountability, for example, for upholding the rules. Material artifacts included such items as student work, student drawings and notes for the teacher or each other, and resources in the classroom that pertained to literacy learning and to expectations for student actions.

The bulk of the observations conducted for this study took place Monday through Thursday over a period of five months. From the first day of school in early August through the first week of January following the winter break, I videotaped, observed, and made jottings about interactions in the classroom from the beginning of each school day through reading and writing. The teacher, Julia Cooper, also welcomed me into her classroom for the open house at the beginning of August the week before the start of classes so that students' parents and I could meet and they could ask me any questions they may have had about the study.

During data generation and simultaneous analysis, using triangulation of (what I determined to be) data and data sources was crucial in interrogating my interpretations of discursive interactions. Triangulation involves the gathering and analyzing of multiple sources of information about a study's participants and setting in order to determine if the findings from these different sources align with or contradict each other. In a qualitative study like this one, which focuses on discursive interactions, triangulation supports the credibility and rigor of the research. Triangulation was among the techniques for establishing credibility that Lincoln and Guba (1985) urged. The credibility of a qualitative study is the extent to which the findings are a truthful account of the data collected and analyzed within particular frameworks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Rigor is what drives a researcher to use particular techniques for establishing credibility because rigor, as I understand it, is how thorough and transparent a researcher can be in establishing but also noting the flaws in the use of certain methods of data collection and analysis. Among the sources I triangulated with video recordings and transcriptions were student and teacher interviews, student writing, student drawings, material and symbolic features of the classroom, and specific books that the teacher used as model texts and/or that appeared to

53

intrigue students to the point of being the topic of excited discussion or the source of inspiration for a student-written story.

3.6   OBSERVATIONS

I began my observations as a non-intrusive observer. I sat in the back of the classroom, and allowed students to grow comfortable with my presence. Over time, I occasionally walked around and looked at things they were working on. I also attended an in-school writer's celebration on a Friday and brought snacks for students to enjoy during this time, and I attended a project celebration one afternoon and participated in the same way that parents did by walking around and asking students questions about their life cycle projects. During the spring semester, even though I reached a saturation point—which means that additional data collection would be redundant for the purposes of my specific research questions—as far as observations during Morning Meeting and writing and reading blocks, I observed recess and Academic Choice Time three to four days a week, in order to get a better sense of students' social circles. By observing them during Academic Choice Time on Fridays, when they were allowed to work with others, I saw unique aspects of the intertwining relationships among student social positions, academic identities, and the developing culture of literacy in the classroom.

3.6.1   Video Recording

Prior to the start of my time in the classroom, I had envisioned being able to move the camera as needed in order to zoom in on different moments of classroom instruction and student

interactions. However, during the open house the week before the start of classes, as I spoke with the parents of one of the students who would be a participant in my study, they explained to me that he had a very strong reaction to having a camera pointed at him. For this reason, I determined that in order to support his learning and comfort level and to enable the classroom culture to flourish without any intrusion on my part, I would keep the camera in one spot at the back of the room throughout the daily segments of video recording. Also, in accordance with the proposed parameters of my study for approval from the Institutional Review Board, I uploaded all video recorded footage to a computer with no internet access in order to protect the privacy of all participants and any non-participants who may have been inadvertently captured on film. In the process of developing codes and themes, I viewed and reviewed the film with my research questions in mind and written on an index card that I taped over my work area. Additionally, in field notes, I frequently made notes to myself to transcribe a particular segment of talk; therefore, when I viewed those days, I paid careful attention to those segments in anticipation of what I might still have wanted to transcribe.

3.6.2   Field Notes

Prior to typing field notes, I made thorough jottings of what I observed each time I was in the classroom. These jottings helped me to note aspects of any given day or situation that might not be captured on video. For example, I might have observed an interaction between two students in the hall or off camera, and that interaction could somehow find its way to a different discursive event in the classroom. In the jottings, I also made note of my own interpretation of a particular interaction, and posed questions about how what I saw might relate to my theoretical framework and research questions. However, as Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) advised, I also tried to

"jot down concrete sensory details about actions and talk" (p. 32) so that I could paint a picture of how participants positioned themselves and each other in relation to the situation at hand. After each observation, I typed up my field notes and made things of interest to me stand out by doing such things as highlighting, changing font color, bolding sections, or placing asterisks by particular words or sentences. Within field notes, I sometimes transcribed sections of talk if I was certain that I had documented them with precision when they occurred in the moment.

Jottings, field notes, and analytic memos were especially useful in developing codes and themes. Writing analytic memos, essentially a way of talking to oneself in writing, was a beneficial accompaniment to transcription and coding. Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that analytic memos can be used to make sense of codes and to reflect on all aspects of a study. Memos can support researchers in exploring the relationship between theory and data that strikes them as meaningful. I drafted analytic memos approximately every two weeks during the fall semester, and continued to draft these as I observed students throughout the spring during recess and Academic Choice Time.

3.6.3   Student and Teacher Interviews

I conducted three interviews with all students: one in mid-October, one at the beginning of January, and a final interview in May (see Appendices A, B, and C). For the comfort level of all participants and in hopes that they would speak openly without feeling the watchful eye of a camera on them, all interviews were audio recorded and not video recorded.

I designed the interview questions to be open-ended and to give students an opportunity to talk about their reading and writing preferences along with some social aspects about their classroom community. Because I developed a brief protocol but left each interview open to

follow-up questions, the interviews were what Rubin and Rubin (2012) described as unstructured. I also included in the protocols for each of the three interviews an option to draw. In their discussion on ways that adults can approach the interview process with children, Tammivaara and Enright (1986) noted, "Young children generally find *doing* something *with* something and talking *about* that something to be easier, more comfortable, and more interesting than only talking about something that isn't physically present" (p. 232, emphasis in original). Clark (2005) advocated for having children draw as part of obtaining interview data from children that lends itself to more fully understanding children's perspectives on their experiences and the world around them. Even as an adult, given the choice, for example to describe the street where I grew up or to draw the street where I grew up and describe both the drawing and the street, I would be able to give a more concrete description of the street and my experiences living there through a drawing *and* description as opposed to description alone.

For the first interview, I wanted to get a sense of their social circle without explicitly asking them to tell me about it, so I asked students to draw who they play with during recess. For the second interview, I gave students two options of what to draw: either their favorite part of Morning Meeting, or a character or scene from a book that they really enjoy. For the third round of interviews, I developed questions with a much more focused approach to investigating the frameworks of my study as well as the routines, literacy practices and participation structures that I had determined to be significant through initial rounds of coding field notes. Thus, for the third student interview, I developed questions about Morning Meeting Share, Writing Mini-Lessons, Independent Writing Time, Sharing Writing, and Academic Choice Time. I selected two categories for each student since asking questions from all of these categories would have led to unrealistically long interviews. For each category, I continued the pattern of asking students to

draw something related to the given line of questions. For all three sets of student interviews, I consistently followed up on drawings by asking students to explain what they had drawn. I also gave students the option of not drawing if they did not want to, which only one or two students took each time but did so consistently across the two interviews. Finally, during the student interviews I positioned myself as a learner hoping to get students' explanations and thoughts on aspects of the school day and on reading and writing. In this way, my goal was that students would talk candidly with me and not feel that there were right or wrong answers I was expecting them to give.

In designing the questions for the three rounds of interviews, I was cognizant of the goals that Mrs. Cooper told me she envisioned for the classroom community—one that avoids hierarchies or exclusion among peers. For this reason, I did not want to draw students' attention to social circles in terms of inclusivity, exclusivity, or preference. I also wanted to get a sense of what kinds of literacy practices students valued, what material artifacts they used in support of those practices, and how they were able to talk about themselves as readers or writers. Developing questions that would be neither closed nor too abstract in nature was a difficult undertaking, and I also did not want students to perceive my questions as in any way evaluative. I wanted to continue to position myself as a curious learner. For the first round of student interviews, my goal was to get a better sense—from students' own words—about their attitudes toward reading and writing and toward the school day in general. I was also interested in hearing how they described what they did during instructional reading and writing. The intent behind obtaining this kind of information for the first round of interviews was to triangulate students' responses with what I had begun to note as trends in the classroom community's participation structures and routines during literacy-related moments of instruction.

Prior to the second round of student interviews, I had begun to identify times during the school day (such as Morning Meeting) in which students had brought literacy into social spaces. They had brought books related to in-school topics, short articles related to out-of-school activities, and their own written stories to share with classmates. I had also noted times when students' interest in particular texts: 1) had fostered social connections among participants, and 2) seemed related to student-authored texts. With this in mind, I designed the second round of student interviews to explore students' talk about Morning Meeting and about what kinds of books interested them. Additionally, I included questions designed to get a sense of how students saw writing and reading in relation to one another. My goal was to triangulate this interview data with observational data in order to identify ways that student interactions with each other, with their teacher, and with texts were shaping the classroom culture around reading and writing.

For the third round of student interviews, I had been collecting and examining data throughout the duration of the school year. This interview protocol, thanks to feedback from my dissertation committee, was my most effectively developed. First, I identified categories of instructional time during the school day that I considered data-rich (in relation to my research questions) as a result of time spent on field notes, analytic memos, videos, previous interviews, and initial generation of codes and themes. These categories were *Morning Meeting Share*, *Writing Mini-Lessons*, *Independent Writing Time*, *Sharing Writing*, and *Academic Choice Time*. Next I identified five ideas that are central to the frameworks of figured worlds and positioning (identity, cultural tools and significance, agency, interaction, and situation). By identifying these ideas and then posing a question for each one about how that idea was evident in data I had collected, I then was able to interrogate myself on what I hoped the student interviews would help me to learn more about my instructional categories *and* the framework-related ideas.

Answering my questions positioned me to develop clear interview questions. Finally, I had to select what questions I would ask which students.

As with the first two rounds of student interviews, I interviewed all students. However, the third interview protocol was substantially longer than the other interview protocols and I could not realistically ask students all of the questions. This determination was not difficult, since my field notes and analytic memos helped me to identify those instructional categories in which different participants' language and actions were most significant. For example, in my notes and memos Matthew's participation had stood out during *Morning Meeting Share* and *Academic Choice Time*. Thus, I asked him the interview questions I had developed under these categories.

After the second round of student interviews, I conducted the first of two interviews with the teacher, Julia Cooper (see Appendix D). This one was also semi-structured with a protocol and space built in for additional questions that might come up over the course of the interview. For this interview, I wanted get Julia to talk about her path to becoming a teacher, her priorities as a teacher, her attitudes about teaching reading and writing, her feelings about and experiences with Walker's curricular ideas, and her thoughts about the students. My goal was to triangulate her responses to my interview questions with the routines and participation structures she emphasized each day, with how she communicated with students, with how she approached writing and interacted with students as a writer, and with the texts that she selected and how she interacted with students as a reader. I conducted a second interview with Julia in May (see Appendix E), after having completed the third round of student interviews. As with the third interview protocol for students, I used the categories *Morning Meeting Share*, *Writing Mini-Lessons*, *Independent Writing Time*, *Sharing Writing*, and *Academic Choice Time* in order to

organize my questions. I also added the category *Student Literacy Learning*. By using a similarly organized interview protocol with Julia, but making it specific to her as the teacher, my goal was to have consistency in how I obtained a more complete picture of how all participants (student and teacher) contributed to shaping the classroom culture. In addition to triangulating the final student interviews and final teacher interview with other data sources, I could also triangulate the interview data between interviews in order to identify where students' thoughts and perspectives aligned with their teacher's and where their thoughts and perspectives differed from their teacher's. Unlike the student interviews, I asked Julia *all* of the questions I had developed. Because there were six categories, with a total of 38 questions that averaged out to approximately ten per category, this final teacher interview was conducted over the course of three different meetings with Julia. The time and number of interviews was also impacted by the amount of thought and talk she put into answering each question.

3.6.4   Semiotic Artifacts

Semiotic artifacts are linguistic and other symbolic representations that are formed through interaction. Although they are not physically tangible objects, semiotic artifacts are cognitive tools that enable action or communication. For example, from the start of the school year, Mrs. Cooper taught the students hand motions they could make as ways to respond to someone speaking without interrupting that person. Throughout the school year, students used one of these hand motions in particular to form and strengthen social bonds. Words or phrases can also become semiotic artifacts. I generated a list of ongoing semiotic artifacts through what I included in field notes and what I observed during repeated video viewings after observations. In order to analyze the list, I developed and defined codes for the category *Semiotic Artifacts (of*

61

Interaction) and then grouped listed artifacts under the most logical codes. The aforementioned hand motion fell under the code 'Social' because when students used it they were doing primarily social work. As I examined the examples listed under different codes for the *Semiotic Artifacts* category, I considered how students used them to engage in positioning in specific moments of interaction. From there, I focused on those semiotic artifacts that endured throughout the year and how they related to other interactions, routines, and rituals students used to construct a classroom culture around reading and writing.

3.6.5   Material Artifacts

Material artifacts are physical objects for which people determine meaning, value and use through interaction. Throughout my observation periods, I often took pictures of learning resources that Mrs. Cooper developed as well as student-made artifacts such as stories in their writing folders and drawings they made for Mrs. Cooper. Along the side panels of her desk and filing cabinet as well as on the wall behind her desk Mrs. Cooper displayed the many forms of artwork and written messages that students made for and gave to her. Mrs. Cooper also used objects like anchor charts and posters for students to have as a reference for interactions or for students to have as a reference for reading or writing purposes (Appendix G and H). Generally, Mrs. Cooper and the students made these anchor charts together through interactive discussion.

I generated lists of material artifacts from field notes, photos, and repeated video viewings. In order to analyze the list, I developed and defined codes for the category *Material Artifacts (of Interaction)* and then grouped listed artifacts under the most logical codes. Anchor charts that the students and Mrs. Cooper made together to have as references for reading and writing strategies fell under the code 'Academic' because they were material artifacts of

interaction that served a primarily academic purpose. As I examined the examples listed under the *Material Artifacts* category, as with semiotic artifacts, I considered how students used them to engage in positioning in specific moments of interaction. From there, I focused on those material artifacts that either had a significant impact on an interaction and therefore endured in their effect, or those artifacts that endured in use throughout the year in order to consider how students used them in relation to other interactions, routines and rituals as they developed a classroom culture around reading and writing.

3.7 ANALYSIS

Because this study reflects an attempt to build on to theories of the social negotiation of classroom culture and the ways social positioning and academic literacy learning interrelate, I borrowed from Green, Skukauskaite, Dixon, and Córdova (2007) in order to establish a mindset for how to organize information for the purpose of analysis. Similar to Green et al.'s consideration of "two interrelated angles of analysis" (2007, p. 119), this study examined the broader level of the classroom culture under construction by considering the figured worlds in action, while at the same time taking a detailed look at moment-to-moment interactions and positioning moves that reflected the storylines that shaped and were shaped by figured worlds.

The angles of analysis in this study were temporally connected; in over a period of a few weeks, some significant shifts in student interactions and positions as well as in elements of the classroom culture and related figured worlds occurred. Within that longer period of time, the storylines of shorter time periods contributed in important ways to the larger-scale shift.

3.7.1 Focal Students

In seeking to answer my research questions, I watched video, listened to audio, looked at physical artifacts of student work and symbolic artifacts of their interactions, took field notes and wrote analytic memos, and in the process several participants emerged as focal students. Of these students, some were consistently more vocal than their peers. Other students became more vocal or assertive in ways I had not anticipated. Still others demonstrated consistent kinds of actions that led me to identify the students as assuming unique positions among their peers and in the overall classroom community. Those students on whom I focused more of my analyses positioned themselves socially and academically in ways that contributed significantly to shaping the classroom culture of reading and writing. Some of these students, for example, brought literacy into social spaces.

My focal students were diverse in terms of ethnicity, race and gender; I did not obtain information about students' socioeconomic status and therefore did not address this. My goal was to twofold. I wanted to remain true to the nature of my research questions such that the students whose interactions and talk I determined to most closely examine would be the ones who had been instrumental in shaping the classroom culture of literacy socially and academically. I also wanted to represent diverse student voices because ethnicity, race and gender cannot be removed from discourse at institutional and local levels. For this reason, research on the developing culture of a classroom should include the voices of students from a range of demographic groups. Otherwise, a study can risk silencing some and empowering others.

My analyses revealed interesting conversations between students, which included comments from girls and boys, with respect to gender. With respect to ethnicity and race, I noted

interactions that related to languages other than English. Students' own words and interactions, however, did not highlight racial divides or tensions. That does not mean that race was not present. During the time of my study, the Black Lives Matter movement was in its nascent stages, so it did strike me as interesting that as talk about police and civilians made its way into all forms of media, it did not make its way into this classroom. Although Mrs. Cooper selected texts that depicted demographically diverse characters, current events were not discussed other than when students shared things they had done or were going to do. Finally, although I selected a group of six focal students (described in Table 1) and spent more time examining these students' talk in my analyses and findings, I also attended to how other study participants shaped certain interactions and developments. Even study participants who were not directly involved in an interaction—but who witnessed the interaction—could influence that moment by either becoming involved or remaining silent.

Table 1. Focal students' demographic characteristics and social and academic positions

Student	Gen-der	Race/Ethnicity	Social Position in relation to peers	Social Position in relation to teacher	Academic / Literacy Position
Hailey	F	Asian descent	Self-described and described by other classmates as smart and nice; self-described enjoyer of sports; appropriated academic dialogue language ("I want to add on to what Zoe said.")	Self-described good student with good grades; at times reminded Mrs. Cooper of things she had said the students would do; one of the first girls who "broke into" playing kickball at recess	Avid reader; often used high level vocabulary; described by Mrs. Cooper as having made progress from being safe writer

Table 1 (continued)

Madeline	F	African American	Often gave words of encouragement to peers; also expressed a desire to be given words of encouragement; described herself as a "fashionista"; demonstrated attunement to and concern for people's feelings	Mrs. Cooper described Madeline as kind and caring, especially toward her classmates, and her way of encouraging classmates as "adult like"; experienced some challenges avoiding speaking out of turn; Mrs. Cooper told me that Madeline once asked if she could sit somewhere else so that she could "make better choices"	Seemed highly aware of my presence, and question to me ("How are we doing?") suggested she believed I was evaluating; described by Mrs. Cooper as one of the students who had shown greatest progress in reading and writing since beginning of year

Table 1 (continued)

Matthew	M	Caucasian	His parents informed me prior to the start of classes that he is on the spectrum of what are considered autism-related behaviors (does not like having cameras directly on him); got along well with peers; was considered very smart by peers, and positioned as an expert on animals	Mrs. Cooper described him as doing very well socially because of the consistency of school structures and routines; Mrs. Cooper considered him an expert on animals, and once referred to him as "our resident animal expert"	An avid reader (described himself similarly), especially books about animals; gained confidence as a writer over the course of the school year, and brought to school, to share with peers, books he had written at home

Table 1 (continued)

Nathan	M	African American	Self-described as friendly; smiled often; during indoor recess often took a leadership position by standing in front of peers as they followed dance moves on children's dance videos	Mrs. Cooper spoke fondly of how kind Nathan was to others; she also shared with me that his father once contacted her to request that he perhaps be moved to a table with some male students in addition to female students (was concerned that Nathan needed more male interaction during the day)	Met grade level standards for reading and writing; when students had choice to work with peers to write during academic choice Nathan took up an organiza-tional leader position

Table 1 (continued)

Nicholas	M	Caucasian	At start of school year but with decreasing frequency, Nicholas missed school or arrived late (mother reported to Mrs. Cooper that he did not feel he had friends and missed his closest friend, who was in another second grade class); described himself as a "gamer," and video games often entered his talk with peers	Mrs. Cooper expressed to me her frustration with Nicholas's absences and tardies—met with his mother about this and also received support from administrators (for example, if he was tardy and they walked him to the classroom, they expressed to him how happy they and Mrs. Cooper were that he was at school)	Began to participate more during reading and writing lessons as year progressed (possible that participation coincided with making friends); Mrs. Cooper described him as mostly on level as a reader, but not a particularly strong writer

Table 1 (continued)

Zoe	F	Caucasian of Puerto Rican descent	Spoke often during class discussions; on a couple of occasions was positioned among small groups as an expert in Spanish because she is bilingual; was also positioned by peers as someone who could help them with their writing (her stories were considered funny and creative)	Mrs. Cooper expressed fondness of Zoe and her mother, and of Zoe's creativity	Mrs. Cooper described Zoe as far above grade level as both a reader and writer

3.7.2 Coding

As I began the coding process, in order to visualize a systematic way to move through it, I kept

in mind Green et al.'s (2007) discussion on levels of analysis. These levels illustrate the

relationship among episodes that span longer and shorter time periods, for example a few months, a few weeks, a few days, and a few instructional moments. I underwent several iterations of coding. For the first round, I generated codes that represented a moment in time (or a shorter time span). These came from field notes on specific days, transcripts, and interview data. As I looked at data across longer periods of time (my analytic memos), I identified recurring codes, which I organized under broader themes. For example, I coded individual instances of students using self- and other-descriptors like "smart," "good writer," "animal expert," and "gamer." I later developed the theme *expert positions* in order to describe what I saw these descriptors doing in terms of positioning work in the moment and over time. As I continued this process with other codes and themes, it became apparent that I would need to be able to make sense of how codes related to social and academic work students were doing in interaction. My reasoning for this was that I theorized that the intersections of social and academic talk and activity were the spaces where significant cultural developments were taking place in this classroom.

What constituted academic talk and activity versus social talk and activity in this study was determined by traditional ideas about disciplinary content. Thus, times of day (and what was done within those times) that were reserved for writing instruction, reading instruction, mathematics instruction, science instruction, and project work instruction were considered academic. By "reserved for" I mean times that were included on the posted daily schedule and to which Mrs. Cooper referred when transitioning from one thing to another. Times during the day that were reserved for social interaction were considered social. These included Morning Meeting, snack time, lunch and recess. Making this distinction between *academic* and *social* facilitated the process of identifying when social talk entered academic spaces and when

academic talk entered social spaces. However, the juxtaposition admittedly oversimplifies these two notions, because the academic and the social are implicitly bound to a school setting in that people (social beings) come together at school for formal instruction (academic purposes). It may also perpetuate underlying expectations for school settings to emphasize academic over social, something that I explore further in my implications for research, in the final chapter. The tension between attending to academic learning and social learning became evident as I coded the data, in particular when positioning codes overlapped across both academic and social positioning. Here (in Figure 1), I provide a visual representation of my entire coding process across four rounds of coding. In the subsequent description of that process, I progress inward through the concentric circles. The outermost circle represents the first round of codes, and circle in the center represents the final round of codes. Through multiple rounds of coding, I was able to zoom in from numerous codes, many of which were isolated instances or unproductive in terms of identifying aspects of the developing classroom culture of literacy, to fewer codes and to specific themes that relate to my theoretical framework and research questions. As I describe my coding process, I also articulate how I operationalized the key concepts, *position*, *storyline*, *power* and *literacy* in order to productively code my data.

KEY TO CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

O = round of coding

⬤ = rereading, note-taking and synthesizing in between rounds of coding

• First Round of Coding:
- coded all data
short time spans

• Second Round of Coding:
- collapsed initial codes into emerging themes

longer time spans

• In between Second and Third Rounds of Coding:
- identified how/where themes fit within instructional categories
1. Morning Meeting Share
2. Writing Mini-Lesson
3. Independent Writing
4. Sharing Writing
5. Academic Choice Time
- generated categories that aligned with research questions and theoretical framework
1) Students; 2) Teacher; 3) Instructional Activities; 4) Participation Structures; 5) Semiotic Artifacts of Interaction; 6) Material Artifacts of Interaction

• Third Round of Coding:
- coded all data within the six categories aligned to research questions and framework

short time spans

In between Third and Fourth Rounds of Coding:
- identified elements of positioning within coded instances of interaction

• Fourth Round of Coding:
- collapsed codes from Third Round of Coding by determining which codes recurred together across three or more instances and participants

Figure 1. Visual representation of coding process

As noted previously, my first round of coding looked across all data. I coded transcripts from instruction and from student and teacher interviews, my field notes, and artifacts from the classroom (including photos of student work, posters along the walls, and anchor charts that students and Mrs. Cooper developed together). These codes were focused more on brief description of interactions and related artifacts, rather than use of the language of my theories or research questions. I took notes on codes as well, as a preliminary way to generate themes. Because I coded everything, my notes focused on short chunks of time, from in-the-moment interactions to instructional lessons, to a day, and occasionally a week. Codes included as much description in as few words as possible, including non-speakers' potential contributions to an interaction. For example, I sometimes coded the teacher and students as *witness*. Some other

examples of codes were *student self-descriptor*, *student other-descriptor*, *popular culture connections*, and *showing kindness*. Although I did not use my theoretical framework to guide this round of coding, I did attempt to begin identifying instances of positioning between Mrs. Cooper and the students and between students. These codes were often followed by a question mark, such as: *teacher positioning students academically, socially, or both?*; and *[student name] positioning self or others?* The question mark in these instances of coding reflected my uncertainty during those early stages of data analysis over how to operationalize positioning for my study.

An instance of positioning can shift quickly. It is both the result of previous positioning moments and the precursor to future positioning moments. Because positioning reflects the triadic relationship between position, storyline and force of speech act, in order to describe the positioning that is occurring at any given moment of interaction, these three elements must be identified. The challenge in identifying any one of the three elements is to determine an entry point toward identification. That is, does one first identify the force of speech act, the position, or the storyline? How can just one of the three elements be identified without at least a vague linguistic conceptualization of the other two? As I coded, I realized that my first inclination was to focus on the speech act (or non-act in the case of silent forms of talk that the students and Mrs. Cooper used). The speech act served as a way to examine the positioning move as a result of something and to link the force of said speech act to the next positioning move. However, I did not conduct ongoing microanalyses of these moment-to-moment shifts in positioning. Instead, I sought to identify the position or positions related to a speech act as part of a particular storyline within which participants were interacting. For example, students who used supportive talk with their peers positioned themselves as kind and as good "friends" within the storyline of the

classroom as a caring community. Identifying specific positions and storylines was something I did more consistently in later rounds of coding.

For the second round of coding, I tried to collapse codes into emerging themes. To generate these themes, I focused across longer spans of time, for example two weeks, one month, two months, and on. With my theory about cultural developments occurring at the intersections of academic and social activity in mind, I tried to identify where or how the various themes I generated (*safe kindness*, *expert positions*, *affiliations*, *borrowed ideas*, *writing rehearsal*, and *conversational positioning*) appeared in the five instructional categories (the same ones I used to structure the third student interview protocol). Those categories were *Morning Meeting Share*, *Writing Mini-Lesson*, *Independent Writing*, *Sharing Writing*, and *Academic Choice Time*. Although this convergence of themes and categories was helpful in terms of looking at the data broadly, I needed further iterations of coding that would tease apart more of the shorter-time-span data, identify patterns or breaks in patterns across these moment-to-moment events, and ultimately find developments across longer spans of time. Thus, more rereading and synthesizing had to occur in between the second and third round of coding.

First, I reread all field notes and took brief notes on what stood out. I tried to read each day of notes as if I had not yet observed any other days. Next, I reread all analytic memos (with those new notes in hand), and compared what had previously stood out to what stood out this time around. During the observation and data collection period, I had written analytic memos every two weeks, based on field notes, so I was able to add new reflections to earlier ones. As I reread these analytic memos, I made notes on patterns that seemed to emerge across time. I also noted what potential codes I had considered in the past in order to determine which, if any, were

still applicable. Next, I reread various transcripts in order to note incidents during which seemingly important interactions had taken place and what had been said by whom.

Afterward, I generated categories that aligned with my research questions and theoretical framework. These categories were: *Students*, *Teacher*, *Instructional Activities*, *Participation Structures*, *Semiotic Artifacts (of Interaction)*, and *Material Artifacts (of Interaction)*. Because the *students* and *teacher* made use of *semiotic and material artifacts of interaction* to do positioning work within the *participation structures* in place for *instructional activities*, I anticipated overlap between the codes and examples across these interdependent categories. Nonetheless, I decided to code the categories separately so that I could look closely at significant features of each category and then determine the major themes that ran across all categories. Although I coded for each category on its own, the *Instructional Activities* category was ultimately the overarching one because its subcategories provided the organizational scheme for generating findings to my research questions according to the major themes. The subcategories for *Instructional Activities* were Morning Meeting, Writing, Reading, and Academic Choice. Each one of these instructional times of day and their corresponding activities lent itself to particular participation structures and the use of certain semiotic and material artifacts, and as a result to interactions between participating students and teacher that contributed to the development of the classroom culture of literacy.

With this in mind, I began my third round of coding. For this round, I did not code chronologically but within the six categories of *Students*, *Teacher*, *Instructional Activities*, *Participation Structures*, *Semiotic Artifacts (of interaction)*, and *Material Artifacts (of interaction)*. As I grouped and defined codes under the appropriate categories, I consistently referred to my research questions, which were posted directly over my computer. When the

codes under different categories supported each other, my work toward interpreting this and successfully answering my research questions began to take shape. For example, the following tables, Tables 2 and 3, show samples of codes from the *Students* category and the *Teacher* category that demonstrate one aspect of how this classroom culture evolved. Students initially received sufficient direction and choice to gain confidence and agency as members of their classroom community. The teacher used responsibilities talk in ways that encouraged students to understand not only what were their responsibilities but also that those entailed being considerate toward others and to urge each other to do the same. The column labeled 'Relationship to Research Questions' served as a space where I could directly address how the enactment of this code was relevant to my study and what kinds of connections I saw to other data sources. Based on these overlapping codes and similar overlap seen across instructional categories, one storyline that emerged as significant to the classroom culture because of its continuity across categories was "collective responsibility."

Table 2. Students and urging considerate actions

Category	Code	Definition	Example	Relationship to Research Questions
Students	Urging considerate actions	Anytime a student challenged peers to be more considerate toward others	Madison urged peers to be quieter around the caterpillars to not scare them; Hailey requested that girls not waste soap in the bathroom	An important aspect of this code is that individual students feel compelled to and confident in addressing peers on matters that affect others. This classroom culture values accountability to the community, or collective responsibility.

Table 3. Teacher and responsibilities talk

Category	Code	Definition	Example	Relationship to Research

				Questions
Teacher	Responsibilities Talk	Language the teacher used in which she discussed (and often emphasized or had students discuss) everyone's responsibilities at different times during the school day, including her own	"Why is it important that we…?"; teacher's use of the words *jobs*, *responsibilities*, and *choice*	I think that the teacher's responsibilities talk language was directly related to codes for students' interactions, for example, 'Urging considerate actions.' This is important and relevant because it demonstrates continuity and the co-construction of a certain kind of

Table 3 (continued)

				classroom

				culture to which members agree to subscribe.

Tables with samples of all categories and codes used in my analysis are included in Appendix F for reference.

From the codes I generated for the more in-depth iteration, I examined in detail specific linguistic features such as pronoun use (in particular the teacher's) in order to get a sense of how often first-person, second-person, and third-person pronouns were used and at what moments. Additionally, I looked closely at what phrases students picked up on from each other and the teacher (for example, when they said things during discussions like, "I would like to add on to what _____ just said," and when they, in unison, said the word "Salute!" and made the accompanying motion after the Pledge of Allegiance). Also, I looked for evidence of students appropriating specific positioning language that the teacher had used to address them, such as "authors," "readers," or "writers." I was interested in finding out if, how, and possible reasons why such language would be limited to use only by the teacher or would be picked up by students. Either finding would suggest that classroom culture functions as a product and vehicle of locally and institutionally derived ideas about what language students can use when addressing peers. It also helped me to explore further how members of the classroom community engage in positioning at intersections of academic and social talk and activities.

In order to examine positioning more closely, I wanted to explicitly consider the three intertwined elements of position, force of speech act, and storyline by identifying them as accurately as possible across multiple interactions. This would be a time-consuming process, but

one that would yield a theory-driven form of analysis and would also enable me to hypothesize about which storylines, over time, became central to this classroom's figured world around reading and writing. As noted previously, the speech act (verbal or non-verbal) was usually the entry point into examining the three elements of positioning. Through the combination of the definitions and examples for each code that I developed, I was able to identify the positioning elements within the coded brief moments in time. Subsequently, determining how each code, its definition, and the examples were all related to my research questions enabled me to more clearly see similar or overlapping storylines within different times of the day and across longer spans of time. In-the-moment storylines that were related to each other could be merged into larger storylines that were foundational to the developing figured world, or classroom culture. Thus, I was able to create a dialogue of sorts across different categories and codes, which was crucial to pulling those codes and examples back together into meaningful threads.

For example, under the category *Instructional Activities*, I had the subcategory Morning Meeting. One of the codes that I developed for Morning Meeting was *encouragement*, which I defined as marked by times when students, the teacher, or students and the teacher made comments or gestures that offered encouragement to sharers. This code speaks directly to the code *nonverbal communication* under the category *Participation Structures*, as well as to the code *showing kindness* under the category *Students*. Finally, under the category *Semiotic Artifacts* was the code *hand gestures*, an example of which was the "silent sizzle" hand gesture. Students used silent sizzle to communicate encouragement as part of the storyline of what it looked like to be an audience member, specifically an active listener and a good friend, when someone was speaking. They positioned themselves as supportive peers and they positioned the speaker as valued. Silent sizzle was preceded by a speaker's speech act, which may have been to

pause for a long moment in the middle of a thought or to say something in a way that suggested uncertainty or embarrassment. The force of that speech act was for listeners to recognize the speaker's momentary challenge and give that peer silent sizzle. Through their interactions, students purposefully used a semiotic artifact of a participation structure that was part of the instructional activity of Morning Meeting. Over time, they extended the use of this semiotic artifact into other instructional activity contexts, as they began to use silent sizzle to offer each other encouragement when sharing ideas, writing, and thinking during reading and writing instruction. A larger storyline that in this classroom, everyone was expected to give each other support for participation became a significant aspect of the classroom culture. This frequently took the form of social support for academic participation, in the case of my study, for participating during literacy-related activities.

The following figure (Figure 2) shows positioning as a wheel with three spokes (storyline, position, and force of speech act). Because positioning moves can shift instantly, this figure is comparable to a freeze frame of the positioning wheel that would otherwise be in motion. The figure shows how the code "hand gestures," which falls under the category *Semiotic Artifacts (of interaction)* and the related positioning make sense together. Immediately following, in Figure 3, is a depiction of four categories (*Instructional Activities*, *Participation Structures*, *Students*, and *Semiotic Artifacts of Interaction*) from which unique codes contributed to the development of one major storyline. Under each category, I drew a unique positioning wheel in motion, with the goal of creating a visual display for how unique positioning instances can come together to create a history of interaction in ways that foster the development of a consistent and larger storyline of a classroom community of care. My goal in developing these two illustrations was to demonstrate how even though positioning occurs from moment to moment and can shift

in countless ways, researchers can pause and analyze positioning moments, especially when there are field notes and video and audio footage available for examination. These pauses can reveal how positions and their related storylines can be held constant or changed through the force of speech acts or other non-verbal forms of communication.
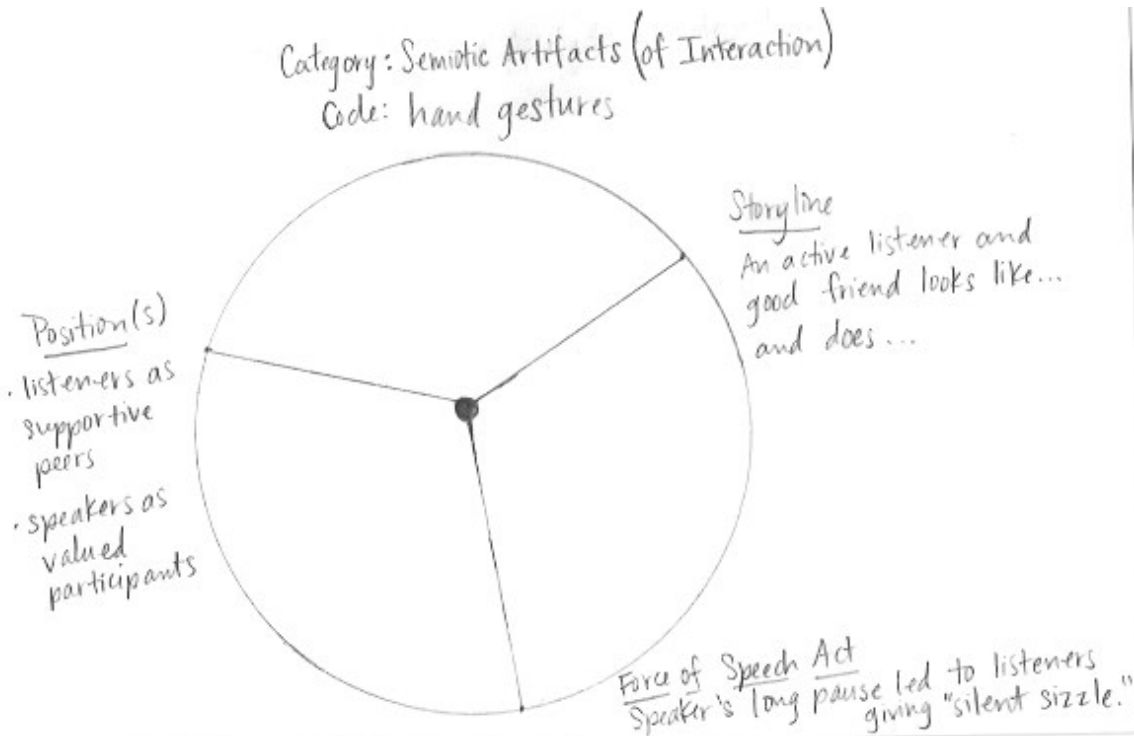
Figure 2. Positioning wheel freeze frame

The following text appears as handwritten labels within the figure:

Below each category is a positioning wheel in motion. To the right is an enlarged version of that wheel.

3 Spokes in Positioning Wheel

storyline

position

force of speech act

Categories

Code

Instructional Activities (Morning Meeting)

→ encouragement

Participation Structures

→ nonverbal communication

Students

→ showing kindness

Semiotic Artifacts of Interaction

→ hand gestures

Larger Storyline

In this classroom everyone was expected to give each other support for participation, which fostered a classroom community of care.

Figure 3. Convergence of positioning toward storyline of community of care

For my fourth and final round of coding, I collapsed codes in order to generate the major themes that would ultimately drive my findings. To do this, I determined student codes that recurred together across three or more students and three or more times, for example, *Showing Kindness + Non-verbal Communication*. In order to combine teacher codes, I looked for those that recurred together three or more times, for example, *Alignment of Self with Students + Words of Encouragement*. This stage of the coding process also enabled me to determine what theories generated from my dataset were the most relevant to my research questions, as well as which ones usefully connected to existing research.

The following table (Table 4) shows the ways in which I operationalized key concepts for coding, including *positioning*, *storylines*, *power*, and *literacy*. Subtleties of these concepts, at times, became more visible upon more careful reflection. For example, power is something that can be easily recognized when a figure in power calls attention to their position, either by

85

directly noting their authority or by using it forcefully. Alternately, someone's talk or actions can give the appearance of equal positioning when, in reality, the imbalance of power has remained unchanged. An example of the subtle presence of power, in which Mrs. Cooper inadvertently reinforced the authority of academic talk over social talk in a school setting is discussed in the next chapter, Chapter 4.

As I established codes and conducted analysis using the key concepts of my research questions and theoretical framework, I considered the notion of non-examples of concepts like *positioning*. In my interpretation of positioning, people are always doing some form of positioning, even when they do not actively participate. Non-participation is a form of positioning oneself as an outsider or as an uninterested insider. However, there were participants whose positions essentially became non-examples in my study, in that their positions did not drive my analysis of the developing storylines. Such non-examples were useful to consider because their identification served as a point of contrast by which I was able to determine what I considered most relevant to answer my research questions. Future analyses of the same interactions might enable me to analyze positioning by focusing on the less vocal members of the classroom community. For this dissertation though, non-examples of positioning were those that neither observably promoted nor challenged the existing storyline. To clarify, during one interaction that involved writing group members, Nicholas, Jack and Matthew, another member named Ryan was also present. However, Ryan's talk and non-talk fell outside of the existing storyline, which at that moment, dealt with negotiating friendship and membership during writing collaborations. Unlike Matthew, Ryan was neither brought into nor brought himself into the unfolding conflict between Nicholas and Jack. Although he was part of this writing group, Ryan neither promoted nor challenged the storyline.

Table 4. Key concept descriptions for coding

Concept	Definition	Operationalized Definition	Examples
Positioning	An interaction in which a person uses verbal, nonverbal or semiotic systems to directly or indirectly identify another person or him/herself in a particular way in relation to the context (i.e., calling someone a "good writer" in a classroom setting).	Evidenced by interactions between two or more people during which at least one person is (through some communicative form) implicitly or explicitly placed in a particular position that aligns with a developing storyline within the classroom context.	1. Terms of address ("authors"; "real readers") 2. Pronoun statements ("Mine is ish"; "He was being mean to *me*.") 3. Nonverbal gestures (silent agreement, connection, silent sizzle)
Storylines	The unnamed yet understood norms/expectations of a community expressed through the positions that community members take up or reject through features of their interactions.	Evidenced by language and interactions that favored particular ways of acting and talking. Often, more easily identified/labeled through observation of consistent positioning moves.	Storyline of classroom community of care was made increasingly visible through talk, non-talk, and positions that demonstrated students supporting each other's participation.
Power	The ability to influence developing storylines in ways that are personally beneficial.	Evidenced by conflict, which could be either directly established between two or more people through features of their talk, but also indirectly noted through features of talk that are conditional or point out a difference.	Nicholas: Hey, Jack. Matthew wants to know why you don't want to be my friend anymore. = Nicholas believed that Matthew had more influence to coax a response from Jack.

Table 4 (continued)

Literacy	Ideological view of literacy, which posits that literacy is rooted in contexts related to time, place and socially derived hierarchies of whose ways of using words in writing, reading, and talk are most valued;	Evidenced by students' reading or writing of texts across instructional (and, occasionally, non-instructional) times of day and their talk about those texts.	Nicholas: Technically, I'm the one who came up with the group. Jack: No. Nicholas: Yah-huh. The writing group. = Nicholas explicitly labeled their group as "the writing group." Student writing collaborations became central to this classroom's culture of literacy.

3.7.3 Transcription

Transcription requires a plan for how to present speakers' language, what features of discourse to include (such as pauses, variation in intonation, etc.), and how to format the transcript in order to represent participants and the situation without bias. Ochs (1979) argued that more attention must be given to the process of transcribing children's language and related behavior than has historically been the case. Although more researchers have taken up this issue since Ochs's work was published, her argument remains salient. Each component of a transcript, Ochs explained, can lead to interpretations about speaker hierarchy, content relevance, what is important to participants, and what is taking place.

As I transcribed data from observations and student and teacher interviews, I initially developed a two-column transcript that had on the left the pseudonym of the person speaking and on the right their words. The transcript flowed vertically in a chronological way. By glancing

quickly at the left-hand column of the transcript I could see who spoke most frequently, and who spoke for longer periods at a time. Later, I developed additional columns, depending upon what I wanted to examine more closely. For example, I added a third column with 'Notes' where I simply jotted down my impressions of what was happening. As I progressed with data analysis, I applied codes and positioning terminology to transcripts.

3.7.4 Discourse Analysis

To examine video recordings and transcripts I used discourse analysis. Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, and Shuart-Farris (2005) and Erickson (1992) note that discourse analysis is a way of perceiving more so than a method or series of methods. The use of discourse analysis generally presupposes a belief that people use language to act on the world, and that cultural, social, and historical influences make their way into language use. A sociocultural perspective on classroom discourse analysis assumes language is "a cultural and psychological tool for getting things done" (Mercer, 2005, p. 138). Thus, after transcribing, I read and reread transcripts and highlighted words and phrases, or lexical items and bundles. Herbel-Eisenmann, Wagner, and Cortes (2010) define lexical bundles as "three or more words that frequently recur together, in a single group, in a particular register" (p. 24). Words and word groupings, in particular those that recur together with frequency, can position people and things in particular ways. For example, it was helpful to examine when Mrs. Cooper used inclusive pronouns like *we* and *us* within lexical bundles and how she used them. In order to more fully understand when she used inclusive language and if there were certain lexical bundles that she used frequently or at given times of the day, I scanned transcripts across instructional activities, identified specific lexical bundles (and who spoke them), and conducted frequency counts of those lexical bundles as one way to

89

determine how Mrs. Cooper's language might have related to student uptake, or lack thereof, of what she was trying to engage them in doing.

4.0   TEACHER FINDINGS

4.1   MRS. COOPER'S "KIND KIDS"

Throughout the school year, Mrs. Cooper positioned the students in ways that contributed to a classroom culture of respect in which each individual's contributions were to be valued. During small and whole group work, her comments focused primarily on students' social interactions and participation in support of their confidence as academic participants. However, absent from the classroom culture were consistent interactions in which students challenged each other on aspects of their writing or on comments made during whole group discussions about books.

Similarly, Mrs. Cooper selected and used texts that encouraged values of acceptance, kindness, creativity and persistence. She did not use texts as tools for challenging social norms. She focused on helping students understand that authors make choices when they write, but she did not discuss those choices as disputable. On occasions when students challenged each other and the opportunity arose to talk about different perspectives on issues pertaining to gender or to media portrayals of people or characters, Mrs. Cooper urged respect for differences of opinion but moved on. Because Mrs. Cooper had already done positioning work toward students conducting productive argumentation and analysis and students were thereby well prepared to engage in respectful discussions, the absence of storylines of reading, writing, and discussions that challenged the status quo was notable. During my end-of-year interview with Mrs. Cooper

she was critical of the lack of debate and content-related challenging in her own teaching that year.

The structure of this chapter traces the development of a classroom culture in which storylines of respect and community of care dominated talk between the teacher and the students. In the next section, I describe the expectations for talk and interaction that Mrs. Cooper set and worked with students to consistently maintain from the first day of school onward. Following that section, I look closely at specific terms of address that Mrs. Cooper used with students, for example, "kind kids," and how these terms positioned students socially and academically. Finally, I will provide evidence of my claim that Mrs. Cooper laid the groundwork for productive argumentation, but did not navigate students toward or through situations in which they could be positioned in opposition to one another for the purposes of debating their different perspectives.

4.2   INTRODUCING MORNING MEETING AS PURPOSEFUL

Throughout the school year, each time that Mrs. Cooper introduced a new routine to students, she either explained the purpose of that routine or initiated a discussion by asking students what they thought was the purpose. On the first few days of school, as she taught students the expectations for Morning Meeting, her particular word choices in response to students' answers and to their questions contributed to shaping storylines of positive social interactions. Mrs. Cooper explicitly told students the importance of Morning Meeting and its various components, and she explicitly told students how they should participate during Morning Meeting as they spoke to each other and sat or moved around the room. For each Morning Meeting component—

Greeting, Share, Activity, and Message—Mrs. Cooper first explained and modeled what to do, then had students volunteer to model it for their peers, and finally had everyone participate. Along the way, she engaged students in talking about what they noticed about such things as their peers' body language and voices as they spoke to each other.

On the first day of school, with the students and herself seated in a circle on the area rug, Mrs. Cooper said to them:

> The Greeting is a really important part of Morning Meeting because it's a chance for us to start the day together and say hi to each other. So this morning we're going to pass a high five around the circle to our neighbor. As we do this, we're going to turn and sit knee-to-knee, eye-to-eye, with our neighbor. (08-11-2014)

She then modeled it with Nicholas, who was next to her, and thanked him, telling him that he had done "awesome." Next, Mrs. Cooper asked for two volunteers to model the Greeting for everyone. After two volunteers, Zoe and Rose, had demonstrated the Greeting, Mrs. Cooper followed up by saying, "They did a really great job being brave and modeling that for us. Who can raise their hand and tell us something you saw Zoe and Rose do really well with their greeting?" An I-R-E sequence (Mehan, 1979) then took place, with Mrs. Cooper calling on students to comment on the things that Zoe and Rose did and Mrs. Cooper responding to each comment. Before she had all of the students pass the greeting around, Mrs. Cooper said to the class, "There's one more thing I want to ask you about. And you all just did this. When it's not your turn to be greeted, and you're, and the rest of the class is passing it around, what's your job? What do you think you should be doing?" Thus, she not only set expectations for how speakers should participate, but also for how non-speakers should participate.

4.2.1   Establishing Collective Norms for the Classroom Community

Mrs. Cooper's focus on setting up expectations through attention to details of talk and non-talk contributed to developing storylines of respect, collective responsibility, and a classroom community of care. Through the amount of time spent on discussing appropriate and thoughtful social interactions, students' treatment of each other with mutual respect became a major learning objective. In Mrs. Cooper's classroom, bringing students' attention to appropriate social interactions continued through Morning Meeting and extended into the entire school day.

To further demonstrate this pattern, here is an example from Morning Meeting Share on the same day (08-11-2014), in which Mrs. Cooper prompted students to think about ways that they could communicate non-verbally while someone was speaking, in order to avoid interrupting the speaker. After telling students that for Share they were going to tell each other their favorite ice cream flavor, Mrs. Cooper said, "If Olivia says cookie dough, and I haven't gotten to share yet, but mine is cookie dough too, instead of saying, 'Yeah, me TOO!' (looks over at a Non-Participant who is making a hand motion), NP is showing us something else we can do." The gesture, which she called *silent agreement*, is done by putting up a fist in front of one's chest, then sticking out the thumb and pinky and waving those forward and back by bending the wrist forward and back. Mrs. Cooper taught all of the students how to do this, and emphasized that silent agreement would let them express a shared interest or idea with a friend who was speaking without interrupting. This is a form of communication that all the teachers at Walker Elementary used as part of the Responsive Classroom Approach model. Throughout the school year, the students in Mrs. Cooper's class frequently showed each other silent agreement at other times during the day in addition to Morning Meeting. As evidenced by this example, Mrs. Cooper did not wait for an interruption to occur. Presumably, based on her knowledge about how

94

students interact, she knew that some of the children might verbally exclaim agreement, thus she proactively addressed that possibility by giving the students a strategy for respectful and active listening.

On the second day of school (08-12-2014), Mrs. Cooper continued to discuss the "importance" of the various Morning Meeting components, but this time she urged students to "take a little think time" to consider *why* the specific ways that they interacted during this time were so important. Thus, she challenged them to think beyond accepting her definition of appropriate social interactions and to instead ponder and talk about *why* they should talk and listen to each other in particular ways. For example, in response to Olivia's observation about how Mrs. Cooper modeled the greeting, Mrs. Cooper said to the class, "Why is that so important, to keep our hands and our body in our own personal space? I want everybody to take a little think time (puts pointer finger up to temple)." After a brief I-R-E sequence, Mrs. Cooper had the students go around the circle on the area rug and greet each other. Following the whole class participation in the Greeting, Mrs. Cooper transitioned into the Share as follows:

> Before we start our share, I want to talk about why we share at school. So I want you to think, take a little think time on your own. Why do you think we take the time to share about ourselves during Morning Meeting? We could be doing math or reading or writing, but instead we're sharing. Why do you think we do that (with pointer finger held up to temple)? Let's share out a few ideas. There might be more than one answer, and that's quite great! Who wants to share some of their thinking? (08-12-2014)

The above example once again speaks to the idea that Mrs. Cooper emphasized respectful, caring social interactions as learning objectives in and of themselves. She even

pointed out that the class took time out of the day to share because it was essentially just as important as doing math, reading, and writing.

Mrs. Cooper's choice of words implied that the social work students did in sharing with each other held the same level of importance in this classroom as academic work. As a brief conversation continued, Mrs. Cooper further demonstrated her attention to care and respect among students. When she asked who wanted to share some their thinking, Madison raised her hand, and the following exchanges took place:

Mrs. Cooper: Madison, do you want to share some of your thinking? Let's put our eyes on Madison.

Madison: So that we get to know more about each other.

Mrs. Cooper: (makes the silent agreement hand gesture) Does anybody have another reason that we do share? Olivia. Let's put our eyes on Olivia. Olivia.

Olivia: So we could learn more about another person we don't know well and make new friends.

Mrs. Cooper: (again, makes the silent agreement hand gesture) That's great. Does anybody else have another reason we do share? (calls on non-participant, who gives a response, to which she again gives the silent agreement hand gesture) Absolutely. And I don't know about you, but show me some silent agreement if you agree with this reason. Sharing is fun. I think it's really fun to get to tell people about me, and it's also really fun to get to hear about all my other friends. Does anyone agree with that? (Students show silent agreement.) Yeah, it's pretty fun.

For both Madison and Olivia, Mrs. Cooper said to everyone, "Let's put our eyes on… ." A significant aspect of her word choice was that although she made an imperative statement, she did so using inclusive pronouns. Thus, her words seemed more like an invitation than a command to the rest of the class to join her in showing respectful attention to Madison and then Olivia by looking at them. She also made the silent agreement hand gesture to the three students who spoke, which demonstrated respect and attention.

Finally, when she wrapped up the conversation, Mrs. Cooper emphasized the "fun" in sharing about herself and in "get[ing] to hear about all my other friends." The phrase "get to" (do something) is used to highlight a unique opportunity to participate in a special event. Thus, Mrs. Cooper's choice of words contributed to shaping the storyline of a caring classroom community whose members—"friends"—had the unique opportunity each day to engage in social interaction for the purpose of getting to know more about each other. Furthermore, "fun" had a special place in that classroom community in that the fun of Share would be a permanent participatory structure every day for the remainder of the school year.

Another question posed by Mrs. Cooper that highlighted the value of community was, "Who could tell us why you think that's so important for us to keep our hands in our laps? Why might that be important for our community?" In examining this question, I immediately noticed that Mrs. Cooper did not finish with the word *important*, as in "Why might that be important?" She added three words that, combined, carry significant meaning: *for our community*. First, the preposition *for*, I argue, implies something different semantically than would the preposition *to*—even if the difference is a slight one. If the words were *to our community*, the implication would be that the importance of students keeping their hands in their laps was assumed to already be in place, or, perhaps, that the importance was imposed on students by some outside

authority. On the other hand, *for our community* implies that students, by acknowledging that their hands should be in their laps, together foster the development of necessary aspects for building community. In other words, the authority would stem from students' actions. In keeping with this notion is the inclusive pronoun, *our*. Mrs. Cooper did not say *for your community*, *for this community*, or *for this class community*. By using the word *our*, she did two things. First, she positioned students as equal members and participants, or co-owners of their classroom community. Second, she included herself among them, positioning herself and them as equal members and co-owners of their classroom community. Finally, her use of the word *community* positioned the students and herself as a group of individuals who participate together toward common goals and who have shared interests or characteristics. Individuals who are considered members of a community share certain responsibilities to each other as part of the daily functioning of their group.

Mr. Cooper emphasized her position as a community member among the students when, in discussing rules they were developing together, she said, "And, friends, these rules aren't just for you. They're for me too. So when you all are talking I need to have my eyes watching you. I need to have my ears listening to you" (08-12-2014). At that particular moment, she and the students had been talking about what an active listener looks like. Comments like this, in which the teacher explicitly made herself accountable to students, served to foster storylines related to collective responsibility.

4.2.2   Using Pronouns for Inclusivity and Equality

Another way in which Mrs. Cooper fostered storylines of collective responsibility was through her frequent use of inclusive pronouns like *we*, *our*, and *us*. On the third day of school, Mrs.

Cooper continued to discuss with students what the different moments of their day together should look and sound like. As she and the students were talking about everyone's jobs at the beginning of the school day, before Morning Meeting, Mrs. Cooper said, "In the morning when we come in… I'm going to ask that we now also wash our hands. It's important for us to wash our hands because we want to keep each other healthy and safe here at school" (08-13-2014). With the exception of the phrase, *I'm going to ask*, every other pronoun that she used was inclusive. Further, she couched the exclusive *I* within an interrogative request, rather than an imperative statement like *I want you to*. By making the interrogative request one that included her—*I'm going to ask that **we***—Mrs. Cooper positioned her request as something that she and the students could all accomplish together, instead of something that they (but not she) had to do in response to a command. In telling the students, *we want to keep each other healthy and safe*, she set an expectation of care among community members.

4.2.3 Fostering Individual and Collective Pride

Finally, on an almost daily basis throughout the school year, whenever any student spoke too softly for everyone to hear, Mrs. Cooper encouraged that child by saying, "Could you say that again, loud and proud?" Sometimes, she merely said, "Loud and proud," which all students recognized as their cue to repeat, more audibly, their contribution to whatever was being discussed or shared. The words "loud and proud" position a speaker as worth hearing, and the implied message of those words was that their thoughts and ideas were valued and students should demonstrate confidence by making themselves heard. Likewise, the other students who observed these exchanges were positioned to recognize that their peer should be heard, which meant they were expected to demonstrated active listening. The words "loud and proud," and

99

how students responded to these words were, therefore, also instrumental in shaping a classroom culture of respect.

4.2.4 Narrating Positive Interactions

In my first interview with Mrs. Cooper, I asked her to tell me more about the purpose of her talk in the classroom. She described talk as instrumental in giving students explicit models for how to think and interact. As she put it, "I narrate all day long. The *positive* things. So um, 'I notice Mia is…' So it's a lot of looking and being very verbal about the positive behaviors" (01-22-2015). Numerous examples from the classroom data support her statement. Before, during, and after an activity or discussion, Mrs. Cooper frequently gave students feedback about something they had done or said. One day, she wrapped up a discussion with the following feedback:

> Each day it's getting a little better and a little better and I'm really proud of those good choices you're making… We had a really great conversation and I'm proud of the thinking that you shared with your partners and with our whole class. (08-13-2014)

She also informed students of when she was giving them particular "strategies," for example, when she taught them how to make a 'C' with one hand in order to show the person speaking that they had made a connection to something the person said. Further, she taught them strategies for selecting books, for writing, and so on. By telling students that these were "strategies" and asking them throughout the school year, "What strategy could we put in place," or saying, "Let's put a strategy in place," Mrs. Cooper included students in decision making. Yet she included herself as someone who would put in place whatever strategy students selected. Thus, Mrs. Cooper implemented her own strategic scaffolds early on the year, consistently

adhered to them, and as a result, had less need to reference specific strategies as the year progressed, with the exception of asking students what strategies they could put in place.

4.3   TERMS OF ADDRESS

In this section I will discuss the finding that the direct terms of address that Mrs. Cooper used in talking with or to students positioned them in particular ways in relation to each other, to academic content, and to her. Table 5 shows a list of terms of address that Mrs. Cooper either spoke or wrote to students. The terms in both columns of the table are organized by frequency of use, starting with the most frequently used ones and ending with the least frequently used ones. She wrote to students each day in the Morning Message note, and only three times in the course of my data collection did she simply write *Good morning* in the greeting of that morning message. Instead, she greeted them in the morning message with *Hi kind kids*, *Hi smart second graders*, and *Hi real readers*, just to name a few. When she spoke to students at the start of their writing lesson, she almost daily addressed them as *authors* or *writers*. Prior to the start of their reading lessons, she addressed them as *readers*. I also observed her prior to a math lesson, and she was consistent at this time of day as well, addressing students as *mathematicians*. On the few occasions when they made some changes to the schedule and worked on their project in the morning, she addressed them as *scientists*.

Table 5. Terms of address that Mrs. Cooper used with her students

In Conversation	In Morning Message
Friends	kind kids

Authors	smart students
Writers	helpful students
Readers	smart second graders
mathematicians	real readers

Table 5 (continued)

Scientists	life cycle experts
active listeners	hard working students
brave volunteer(s)	rocking readers
	detectives
	cool kids
	friends
	caterpillar caretakers
	butterfly experts
	smart scientists
	rockstar readers

Through her use of the terms of address in the preceding table, Mrs. Cooper positioned students as assuming the identities of the academic or social work they did. When she spoke directly to and with students, Mrs. Cooper most frequently called them either by their names or she called them *friend(s)*. She also often urged students to demonstrate consideration toward each other by saying, "Let's put our eyes on our friend(s)," or "Let's give our friend(s) some sizzle." Consequently, and in conjunction with other aspects of her interactions with students, the

force (when a speech act is heard and then acknowledged through acceptance, dispute, or discussion) of her use of the term *friend* with students was not to position herself and students as buddies. Instead, the force of the term *friend* was to foster a sense of community in which students were expected to be attentive, caring, and helpful toward each other. Though the term *friend* did more social positioning than anything else, it also did academic positioning. As students participated during instructional moments, in hearing the term *friend* and being reminded to listen actively and respectfully to their classmates, students grew to understand that they were expected to treat each other's contributions, thoughts, and ideas with kindness. As the year progressed and which I will discuss in more detail in the next section, the figured world of academic participation, at least as a whole group, was one in which students mostly accepted their peers' opinions and ideas with few instances of challenges.

In keeping with this emphasis on positive social interactions was one of the two Morning Message greetings that Mrs. Cooper most often wrote: *kind kids*. These words positioned students in a straightforward manner, not with the expectation to be kind, but as already kind. Furthermore, students seemed to understand that their teacher not only valued kindness but believed them to be kind; therefore, they were more likely to demonstrate kindness toward one another. The less often used term of address *helpful students*, though similar, added a layer to *kind kids* by connoting helpfulness, which can be a specific way to show kindness.

The other most often used term of address in the Morning Message was *smart students*. I interpreted that the force of these words was similar to the force of "loud and proud" in that they implied that Mrs. Cooper believed in the students as intelligent and capable members of the classroom community. By reading a greeting from their teacher in which she called them smart, the students voiced her written words about them as smart. In alignment with the components

that Wenger (1998) proposed contribute to making learning a social endeavor, students whose teachers consistently position them favorably academically may grow more likely to participate in class discussions and to speak in a "loud and proud" manner when sharing their thoughts and ideas.

4.3.1   Literacy Positioning

Students who believe themselves to be smart are also more likely to see themselves as real doers of academic work and as such consider themselves authors, readers, mathematicians, and scientists (Godley, 2003; Vetter, 2010). Therefore, Mrs. Cooper's terms of address also complemented each other. Furthermore, because she used complementary terms to address students consistently across the school year, the students were more likely to assume corresponding subject positions because the terms of address and what they represented were part of a "history-in-person" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 18) that had taken shape through numerous interactions over time between the students and Mrs. Cooper. Mrs. Cooper used these terms of address purposefully and naturally in writing and talking to the students. For example, when students were working on a writing genre, such as nonfiction texts or small moment stories, they would spend multiple writing workshops crafting their "books." When Mrs. Cooper began writing workshop mini lessons, she frequently said, "As we continue our work as authors." Thus, students were positioned as writers engaged in doing the work of authors in a manner that resembled what published authors do. I argue that what this shows is that Mrs. Cooper, in addition to addressing students in particular ways, infused these forms of address with purpose.

Finally, a form of address that Mrs. Cooper often used with students that relates to the culture of participation that developed over the school year was *brave volunteer(s)*. For example,

during Morning Meeting and when she had students share their writing with each other, she frequently asked, "Is there a brave volunteer who would like to get us started?" Again, the statement in its entirety is what carries a particular meaning. She did not demand that a brave volunteer step forward, nor did she use the words "go first." By asking if anyone would be willing to "get us started," Mrs. Cooper implied that whoever was brave enough to volunteer would be leading the way for everyone. This word choice encouraged students to volunteer because just the act of participating in that manner held value within their classroom community. By volunteering, students would position themselves favorably, because their "brave" action would contribute to initiating class-wide participation. In the development of any kind of classroom culture of literacy, the way students participate is intricately connected with what positions they are afforded toward and through participation.

4.3.2   Thinking about Readers and Writers

In addition to asking for brave volunteers to share their thinking, their writing, or some form of doing, Mrs. Cooper also volunteered students through her talk and was purposeful to do so in ways that positioned the students favorably. For example, she sometimes used meetings on the area rug to share salient conversations and learning moments from one-on-one writing conferences. On one such day (09-10-2014) during the writing lesson, Mrs. Cooper first asked students what good authors do when they revise. After some students shared their thinking, Mrs. Cooper said:

> Another thing I want to add on is something that Emma and I talked about in our conference yesterday. Good authors, when they're revising, they're thinking about the

reader. 'Who will read my book, and will this make sense to my reader? And will they understand what I'm talking about?' [Has Emma share the revisions she made after thinking about her reader, then continues.] So Emma changed her story to make sure it was exactly the way she wanted it so the reader wouldn't be confused. Today, friends, I want you to think about your books and pretend that someone is going to read the story and won't have ever heard you talk about it. So *all* they have is your book.

Through her talk, Mrs. Cooper positioned authors in general as accountable to their readers. By having students reread their stories and think about their reader while doing so, she positioned students to do that same work that "good authors" do. Additionally, Mrs. Cooper modeled for students how to think. By saying aloud her thoughts, "Who will read my book…" she provided explicit language through which students could do the work that authors do. Thus, she not only addressed her students as authors, but she worked on teaching them how to think they way authors think. Also, because she knew that Emma had already made useful revisions, Mrs. Cooper's act of volunteering Emma contributed to storylines of the students as a community of working authors who could learn from one another. Her final comment to students at the end of this lesson was, "Friends, I want you to remember that as we continue our work as authors, it's important to think about our readers." This further solidified the concept that writers have an audience, and, at the same time, it supported the social goals of this classroom community to think about others.

The idea of thinking about the reader is one that Mrs. Cooper and the students also extended to writers. Specifically, thinking about writers was demonstrated by giving feedback that included things the writer had done well, given in the form of compliments. Mrs. Cooper's feedback to students and their feedback to each other never only focused on grammatical or

spelling errors or suggestions to add, omit, or change something. The writer receiving feedback could expect to be told positive aspects of their work, which was also in keeping with classroom storylines of kindness and encouraged-participation from all members. One day (11-19-2014) during a writing lesson, Madison reminded Mrs. Cooper and her classmates about this compliment-giving expectation. Mrs. Cooper had posted on the ActivBoard a sample of writing that was done by a supposedly former student who Mrs. Cooper called Gary. The students had been pointing out grammatical and spelling errors when Madison raised her hand. When Mrs. Cooper called on her, the following exchange occurred:

Madison: Um, I actually want to give a compliment to Gary.

Mrs. Cooper: Oh, thank you, Madison. We did forget to add a compliment for Gary.

Would you add a compliment for Gary?

After Madison gave Gary a compliment, Mrs. Cooper added:

It's tough when we're helping our friends edit. Like we talked about yesterday, we might see other things that we want them to work on, but we don't want to make Gary feel overwhelmed. If we tell him you missed this word and [lists several errors], Gary might feel not so hot about his work.

The above talk demonstrates that the expectation to think about the writer (in particular the writer's feelings) had become one of the storylines of reading and writing instruction. Madison's request to give Gary a compliment forced a seemingly apologetic reaction from Mrs. Cooper, who thanked Madison and included herself as also having forgotten to give him a compliment. She then went on to reiterate that when giving feedback to a writer, they do not want to make their "friends" "feel overwhelmed" or "not so hot about [their] work." The storyline of

107

complimenting a writer was so engrained that it became necessary to compliment a writer who was not even there or known to any of the students.

4.4   THE SAFE TALK OF READING AND WRITING INSTRUCTION

In this section, I will substantiate my claim that Mrs. Cooper's focus on positive social interaction, while effective and necessary, did not extend into how to interact positively while enacting academic debate. For instance, the students in this study accepted each other's contributions during reading and writing, without expressing opposing views or challenges. Mrs. Cooper laid the groundwork toward co-constructing with students a classroom culture in which power struggles and disagreements among peers, if they existed, did not make their way into instructional moments.

Mrs. Cooper did extensive scaffolding work toward helping students interact respectfully and treat each other thoughtfully through active listening. For example, in addition to the silent agreement gesture, she encouraged students to make a letter *C* with one hand to show *silent connections* to what others said, and she taught them to celebrate each other through wiggling their fingers to give *silent sizzle*. Thus, she provided spaces for and encouraged constant communication between students. A strong foundation was in place for respectfully exploring slightly controversial, age appropriate issues.

In order to understand what contributed to the lack of debate among students, it is helpful to consider what Mrs. Cooper and the students did not do with forms of communication. For example, although Mrs. Cooper urged students to make nonverbal gestures to demonstrate alignment and agreement with each other, she never taught the students to show silent or verbal

disagreement with each other. Furthermore, on more than one occasion, gender-related issues arose. Yet, Mrs. Cooper and her students did not venture into these forms of interaction that were more likely to raise controversy.

One incident that lent itself to Mrs. Cooper and the students exploring issues related to gender and popular culture occurred during Morning Meeting Share. Ryan had brought in a small Lego figure to share with his classmates how he and his father had put together a Star Wars Lego spaceship (09-16-2014). The figure was about the size of a plum and Ryan demonstrated how its head and other body parts could pop off. As Ryan held the figure and walked around the inside of the circle showing the Lego to his classmates up close, the following exchange took place:

Rose: It's so cute!

Zoe: (a minute or so later when she sees the Lego up close) How is that cute, Rose?

FS: (softly) Yeah.

Rose: But he has purple.

Zoe: So. *Frankenstein* has purple and you don't think *he's* cute. (Zoe, Rose and some other students continue to comment on whether the Lego figurine is cute or not.)

Mrs. Cooper: (wrapping up Ryan's share) We might *each* have our own ideas and opinions.

Elementary literacy researchers (Dutro, Kazemi, Balf, & Lin, 2008; Orellana, 1996; Zacher, 2008) have called on teachers to engage students in critical talk, reading and writing that challenges "the status quo" (Dutro et al., p. 296) as well as identity labels (Zacher, 2008). To do this, as these researchers note, teachers must willingly and knowledgably initiate conversations

with students that center around sensitive social issues. Mrs. Cooper used texts in the classroom in which characters challenged the status quo of race and gender and labels, but she focused the discussions of those texts on positive messages for student morale. For example, on 08-14-2014, for the reading mini-lesson she did a read-aloud with the book, *Amazing Grace*, by Mary Hoffman (1991). In it, the main character, a young Black girl named Grace, tells her classmates that she plans to audition for the part of Peter Pan in the class play. In response, a dark-skinned male classmate named Raj tells her that she cannot be Peter Pan because she is a girl. A White female classmate named Natalie then tells Grace that she cannot be Peter Pan because she is Black. In the end, thanks to her mother and grandmother's belief in her and thanks to Grace's belief in herself and to her dedication to practicing the lines for the audition, her classmates cast a unanimous vote that Grace should be Peter Pan in the play. The implication, then, is that hard work and belief enable people to accomplish anything, regardless of race or gender. This is a valuable concept for young children, but the book also raises issues that bear discussion beyond hard work and belief in oneself into perceived and imposed limitations as they relate to race and gender.

In discussing the book with the students, Mrs. Cooper focused solely on students' hopes and dreams for the school year. After having read about halfway into the book, Mrs. Cooper asked the students, "So Grace has a hope and a dream she wants to do. Think in your head. What is Grace's hope? What is her dream right now that she wants to do?" Nate replied that she wanted to play the part of Peter Pan in the play. Emma also raised her hand and her comment, though unintelligible on the video (but about which I had written in my fieldnotes), was about Grace's friends who told her that she could not be Peter Pan because she was a girl and because she was Black. To this, Mrs. Cooper replied, "Yeah. And we know we all have differences,

right? And those differences are wonderful. But just because we're different doesn't mean there's something we can't do, right. We can do all those things." Mrs. Cooper had framed the theme of the lesson to be about the students' hopes and dreams for this school year, and, as such, it makes sense that she did not go off topic to explore the issues of race and gender in the book. However, she could have returned to those issues during a later lesson, for example, that examined the choices authors make. Because Mrs. Cooper spent time throughout the year emphasizing authors' choices (something that she also talked about in our end-of-year interview), she could have revisited this text to ask students why they thought that the author, Mary Hoffman, included some of the things she did, such as Raj and Natalie's comments and Nana and Mama's reactions when they learned of these comments. By having students examine Hoffman's choices as an author, Mrs. Cooper might have created a space for some critical talk about issues of race and gender in a way that would have been academically and socially appropriate because students could have positioned themselves as literary critics.

Something of relevance to note, as I weave this narrative about Julia, is that at the time of my data collection in her classroom, the Black Lives Matter Movement in this nation was beginning to gain momentum, and talking with me on one occasion Julia expressed the desire for justice for families of Black youth and adults whose lives had been taken during confrontations with police. She also shared with me one day that she and her husband had spent their Thanksgiving holiday that year traveling to some well-known landmarks from the Civil Rights Movement. Thus, Julia recognized the racial inequalities and struggles that still exist, and she physically explored places that had been historically significant activism sites. The act of selecting and reading *Amazing Grace* certainly exposed her students to issues of race and gender from the perspective of a child. Because those issues were written and illustrated so vividly in

the book, not building in a time and space to have students look more carefully into the gender and race-related comments (and several other parts of the story that Hoffman was purposeful to include) could be seen as a missed opportunity.

On that occasion, or as a follow-up lesson at some point, students could have participated in a reflection and discussion about the problematic nature of what Raj and Natalie initially said to Grace. On other occasions, students demonstrated disagreement with each other, but Mrs. Cooper moved the conversation forward. On 09-16-2014, a disagreement between students arose organically and was based in widely held (but also challenged) societal views about colors and gender, size and cuteness, and the incorrect depiction of the monster of Frankenstein as purple. The disagreement, however, was not mediated in the same way that agreements were. Often, when a student made the silent agreement or connection gesture, that student would have an opportunity to provide more verbal context. In this incident, students did not have a silent gesture to show disagreement, and there was no opportunity to converse at length about their views.

Similarly, another day when Mrs. Cooper displayed several different images as part of a word work lesson, the image of Barbie received excited responses from some girls in the class but disapproving responses from other girls. Then, when the image of Batman was put up, the girls who had expressed disapproval, now expressed excitement. Mrs. Cooper did not follow up on students' responses by asking questions about their perspectives. As with the cute Lego incident, the Barbie versus Batman incident arose organically among students and therefore, carried social meaning but did not become part of the "official" academic interactions of the class. Both incidents might have led to rich discussions about gender stereotypes and different perspectives. In the same vein, both incidents might have led to unproductive talk in the classroom. Teachers of young children are tasked with first and foremost determining what are

developmentally appropriate topics of discussion. Once students are the ones who bring a topic into the classroom, if it is safe enough to discuss but risky enough to generate disagreement, the next task for a teacher may be to ask students and to teach them to ask each other questions that push them to reflect on their thinking and to provide more details on the rationale behind their opinions.

During our final interview, Mrs. Cooper talked about students not engaging in purposefully questioning each other enough during reading and writing, unlike during Morning Meeting. She discussed her role in that, and how she could have done things differently. Of significance is the possible correlation between students asking each other questions for clarification or more information during Morning Meeting and the extensive time, attention, and detail that Mr. Cooper put into scaffolding students' verbal and non-verbal participation during Morning Meeting. Mrs. Cooper said the following:

> I feel like they're very comfortable for the most part like putting an idea out there like sharing their thinking or what they're connecting with. … I want them to be more comfortable, like sometimes kids will say random ass stuff, and in other settings they'll like call each other on it. Like sometimes during Morning Meeting during Share if like someone will say something way out in left field, they'll be like wait what do you mean? You know. No, no, no, no. But in reading, it's more just like okay I'll tell you my idea, you tell me your idea. That's kind of it. I want them to have more of a, well I need to teach them more questioning stems, that's where I'm going with it. I want to work more on how to use questioning stems to push their conversations about books. So I think they're comfortable sharing with each other. They're comfortable um you know exposing

parts of their thinking or their lives that you know, they're feeling connected to but I want

it to go a little deeper. (05-10-2015)

As she reflected aloud on what she felt was missing from students' talk during reading and writing, Mrs. Cooper concluded that part of what was needed was for her to include instruction on conversational questioning. She used terms like *comfortable* and *exposing*, which suggest vulnerability. What can be inferred from her statements is that the very act of speaking up and participating during reading and writing in order to share one's thoughts can be intimidating, and to overcome that risk requires a sense of safety within the classroom community.

Whereas she felt that students had achieved this sense of safety *along with* the ability to press each other for more clarity or information during Morning Meeting Share, Mrs. Cooper believed that this was only partially the case during reading and writing. In these instructional contexts, the students had achieved that necessary sense of safety to participate, but had yet to develop the ability to question each other. She added that something that the students did "really well" was "not judge one another or what they think or what they say or what they read." With this, I am able to triangulate my findings that during instructional times, there was no evidence of students positioning themselves in relation to each other in ways meant to gain or assert power. Instead, the students felt comfortable and safe in sharing their thinking and in supporting each other during reading and writing. Mrs. Cooper connected the teaching of speaking and listening skills during Morning Meeting to students developing the ability to extend each other's contributions into meaningful dialogue during that particular time of the school day. She expressed a desire to figure out how to create a "bridge" from Morning Meeting, wherein students "call[ed] each other" on things, toward reading and writing, wherein students simply accepted what their peers said without question.

In conclusion, Mrs. Cooper focused on creating a respectful and caring environment in her class in which students were encouraged to participate. Mrs. Cooper used words in ways that positioned all students as valued contributors both academically and socially. She did extensive work throughout the beginning of the school year in order to establish Morning Meeting as a time of each school day that was important for all members of this classroom community. She modeled appropriate ways to speak, listen, and move during the different components of Morning Meeting. She also engaged students in discussions about why they did what they did during Morning Meeting. The results of the time that Mrs. Cooper and the students spent on Morning Meeting was that students not only contributed freely, but they also challenged each other's contributions. Thus, students generated meaningful dialogue during Morning Meeting. However, the same was not the case during reading and writing instruction. At those times, students contributed their thoughts and ideas freely, but never challenged each other.

The reason for this difference is unknown, though Mrs. Cooper speculated that she could have focused more instruction on question stems, so that students would take up that kind of questioning language when discussing texts. I propose that another possible reason for the difference may have stemmed from a participation structure that students used during Morning Meeting Share that was never brought into reading and writing instruction. During Share, Mrs. Cooper gave students more authority over their discussion. Whichever student had just shared something called on peers with their hands raised in order to answer questions about what he or she had just talked about or shown. Mrs. Cooper designed Share precisely as a forum in which students contributed, asked questions, responded to questions, and did all of this mostly without her intervention—with the exception that she called on the next person whose turn it was to share. With this in mind, it is possible that had a similar participation structure been put into

place during reading and writing instruction, the students would have engaged in voicing more questions and different points of view during those times as well.

5.0   STUDENT FINDINGS

5.1   "TECHNICALLY, I'M THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH THE GROUP."

The data analysis generated three major findings about how student interactions led to the development of a classroom culture of reading and writing in which students introduced academic talk into social spaces and social talk into academic spaces. Underscoring students' social and academic talk was a consistent expectation of demonstrating respect and care for all members of their classroom community. Through the literacy practices in which the students engaged, they reshaped the originally social expectations of Morning Meeting Share to incorporate academic endeavors, and they reshaped the originally academic expectations of Academic Choice to incorporate social endeavors. Of course, the students did not co-construct their classroom culture without their teacher. Therefore, although I try to maintain the focus on students in this chapter, I also briefly examine how Mrs. Cooper contributed to some of the developing storylines.

5.1.1   Finding

The first finding is that, in this classroom, storylines of joint intellectual curiosity and of student authorship helped to alter the participation structures of Morning Meeting Share. I use the term, *joint intellectual curiosity*, to describe instances in which one or more students (and at times the

teacher as well) engaged everyone in the class in discussion to gather more information about something that was of interest to them. Thus, the *storyline of joint intellectual curiosity* describes how the force of students' and Mrs. Cooper's speech acts positioned speakers and listeners as working together (jointly) in order to objectively examine something about which they were curious. Usually, the topic of discussion pertained to content matter they were learning in school. Specifically, student interactions during Share led to a shift from talk that focused solely on socially driven topics, to talk that included academically driven topics. Additionally, through student interactions around informational texts and student-written fiction texts—brought from home for Share—students took up positions as readers, authors, and idea exchangers. This finding aligns with Dyson's (1993) findings about students, to borrow a term she used throughout that book, "composing" themselves into the various worlds of their classroom through the use of different tools of interaction. Finally, along with the positions that students in my study took up, storylines developed in which the books that students wrote were afforded similar authority to that of published trade books. I will examine this finding in detail in section 5.2.

5.1.2   Second Finding

The second finding, which I will unpack in section 5.3, is that collaborating with peers to write became a major part of the classroom culture. Storylines of mentorship, friendship, and group membership developed along with student individual positions as experts, esteemed writers, leaders, and dissenters. Thus, writing was not confined to particular spaces and times, nor was it an activity that students separated from other academic and social areas of their school day. Rather, writing afforded students ways to explore the real drama and play of their daily life in

school. Through consistent writing collaborations, students negotiated social norms of what was acceptable behavior between friends. Also, through consistent writing collaborations, the students in my study negotiated how to define their groups, which did not always end in agreement. For example, the quote, "Technically, I'm the one who came up with the group," was spoken as one group, that had originally been close-knit, was in the process of unraveling. My second finding aligns with Dyson's (2003) findings about writing as a social activity that encompasses a range of complicated social work done by children. At the same time, however, my finding is a somewhat inverted version of Dyson's (1989) finding that the children in that particular study used their social interactions to eventually negotiate their writing. Simply put, social practices informed writing practices. In my study, the children took writing into social spaces, or to once again put it simply, writing practices informed social practices.

I want to be careful here that my juxtaposition does not simplify the work that the children in Dyson's (1989) study and in my own study did or simplifies the reported findings. This is not a case of which came first, the chicken or the egg—or, in this case, the writing or the socializing. At the heart of why the children in my study grew so keen on writing were social practices that made writing appealing. When the students in my study wrote independently, they had the expectation that they would share their writing with peers in a safe and encouraging space. Even those students who told me in one-on-one interviews that they did not often share their writing said that they enjoyed collaborating with peers to write. Students also expressed that they enjoyed trying to make their writing better by incorporating strategies learned in writing workshop mini-lessons, and that they enjoyed writing about things they had learned, read, and experienced. Thus, students wrote to explore that which they knew or that interested them. They collaborated to write to further enhance that exploration.

5.1.3 Third Finding

The third finding, which I will examine more closely in section 5.4, is that positioning analyses of student interactions show that students appropriated language from various sources— including texts, the teacher, and each other— most commonly across data and over time while enacting storylines of care and acceptance, of literacy-based talk and exploration, and of gaining social and/or academic influence. In alignment with the efforts that Mrs. Cooper made to help shape the classroom community into one that valued respect and care, storylines around kindness and acceptance were more prevalent across interactions than storylines around power in terms of any students claiming or exerting more speaking rights than any of their peers. Unlike previous research findings on I-R-E structures (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) in which the teachers initiated talk with a question related to the academic content matter, students gave responses, and the teachers evaluated students' responses (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979), Mrs. Cooper's follow-up turns at talk were not evaluative in nature. Instead, she generally offered another Initiation in the form of a question, or she repeated, with no evaluative language, what a student had just said. She positioned herself as more of an interested listener than an evaluator. Additionally, she also used I-R-I in order to scaffold student discussions about what respectful and caring talk and actions looked and sounded like. I argue that the time that Mrs. Cooper spent on social talk, in addition to academic talk, contributed significantly to the apparent lack of power positions in this classroom community. Given other research findings that students tend to use instances of social interaction during instruction in order to gain or assert power (Orellana, 1996; Zacher, 2008), this finding from my study may bear significant relevance for examining how to most effectively prepare students to engage in academic talk in ways that are respectful of everyone and that place all members of the classroom community on equal footing.

120

Throughout this study, I have used the term, *classroom culture*, to describe the simultaneously nominal and verbal (Heath & Street, 2008) ways in which students engage in talk and activity that establishes norms for membership within their classroom community. Nominally, a *classroom culture* is a thing to which students belong. Verbally, students in a classroom *culture each other* as part of belonging. Students in any classroom use available cultural tools that are both semiotic (such as language) and material (such as physical items like tables and chairs) to interact in particular ways. Through those interactions, students either maintain the meaning of or redefine the cultural tools in their classroom community. Students' use of tools leads to a history of interactions, and in this manner, students' interactions simultaneously shape and are shaped by their ever-evolving classroom culture. The students in this study used books, language posted around the room and spoken by the teacher, meeting structures, and classroom spaces in order to define their classroom culture as one in which they were all valued contributors to the reading and writing practices in which they engaged. In this chapter, I describe detailed interactions and patterns across students and time to demonstrate how the three major findings help to define the classroom culture of my study.

5.2   STUDENT INTERACTIONS AND CHANGES IN STRUCTURE OF MORNING MEETING SHARE

In this section, I trace how Morning Meeting Share shifted from a space in which students engaged in social dialogue into a space in which students also engaged in joint academic endeavors. Storylines of joint intellectual curiosity and of student authorship and readership were part of this transformation. At the beginning of the year, Mrs. Cooper told students that Morning

Meeting Share would be a time to share experiences, events, and anything else that was conversational only and would not involve bringing in physical objects. Gradually, however, students introduced their own practices with respect to bringing in items and texts from home. Student interactions around texts during Morning Meeting Share evolved into a temporary change in the use, and thereby meaning, of a prominent structure in the classroom—a bookshelf with trade books. This temporary change eventually resulted in the creation of a new structure in the classroom where students could place their authored books in order to make these publicly accessible to each other.

5.2.1 Morning Meeting Share as Social and Academic

Morning Meeting Share in this classroom was a strategically designed social time and space, in which peers shared appropriate news and experiences from their out-of-school lives with each other. The primary goal of Share was for students to build community and to engage meaningfully in the social practices of talking, listening, asking, and responding. During the first week of classes, on 08-14-2014, Mrs. Cooper introduced to the students and had them practice "a new kind of share called dialogue share." During dialogue share, two or three students would tell their classmates news from their lives. After sharing, a student would say, "I'm ready for questions," and then call on classmates one at a time to answer questions about the share. Approximately a week later (08-25-2016), Mrs. Cooper emphasized that when sharing, students would tell classmates about "experiences and memories, rather than things you bring from home."

Just a couple of weeks after that, the first item was brought in for Share. On 09-09-2014, the fifth week of classes, Emma brought in a caterpillar that she and her father had found.

Although it was something she brought from home, Emma's caterpillar was related to the project work that students were doing on life cycles. It also was a gift to one of the student groups, because their assigned caterpillar had died. As such, Mrs. Cooper agreed to let her show the caterpillar during Morning Meeting Share. Emma told her classmates that she brought the caterpillar for Table 5. Nate, a member of that group, smiled and said, "Thank you, Emma!" Mrs. Cooper commented to the class on Emma's kindness and on Nate's appreciation. With that, the first exception to not bringing something from home was made. This exception had both academic and social implications. Academically, it was connected to work students were doing together in school. Socially, Emma was demonstrating care for her classmates and helping them to have the same experience as everyone else in terms of their own butterfly to observe. Throughout the school year, students brought in a range of items for Share, including Lego figures, a portable sing-along karaoke radio, a medal for participating in a family fun run, medals from a science fair, a Christmas tree ornament bearing the name of a deceased baby sibling, photos of pets, stuffed animals, chalk used for indoor rock climbing, karate belts, and more.

Furthermore, bringing in objects became an expected and valued part of Morning Meeting Share, as evidenced in end-of-year student interviews. Figure 4 below shows each of Hailey and Nate's drawings from their interviews in May.
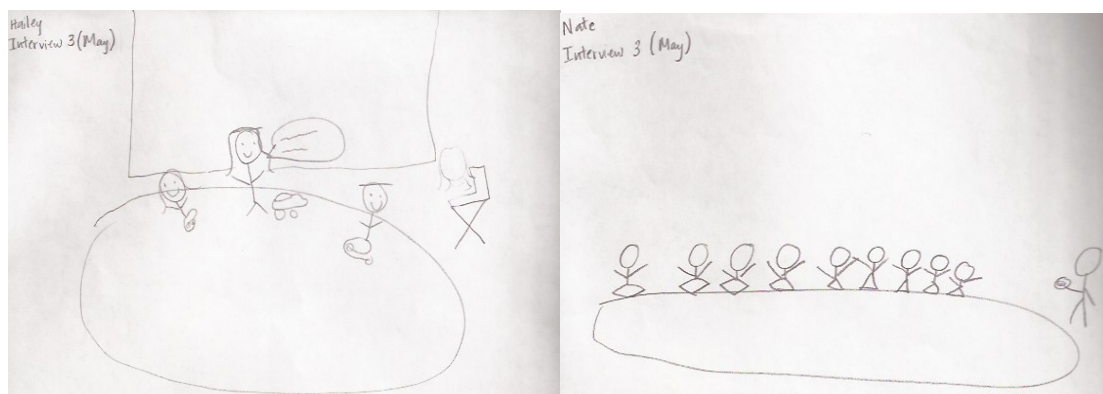
Figure 4. Hailey and Nate's drawings of morning meeting share

Both Hailey and Nate drew the sharer standing and the rest of the class seated in their circle spots on the area rug. In her drawing, Hailey showed the sharer as having brought in a toy truck. After she described the drawing (05-14-2015), I asked her if anyone had ever brought in a toy truck, to which she immediately replied, "No." Then she thought for a moment and recalled that Mia had brought in a car-like toy once that resembled a truck. Similarly, Nate drew the sharer holding an item that to which he did not initially attach a specific name or instance. He said, "This is the sharer, this is what they have, this little thing…" (05-15-2015), but as he spoke he added that he had actually shared that day and he had shown everyone his karate belts, which were folded up like the item in the drawing. Through the simultaneously non-specific yet specifiable items they drew, Hailey and Nate characterized Share as a time to bring in something to show one's classmates. In describing Share, Hailey also said that people talked about things that they liked, yet neither she nor Nate drew the sharer just talking. Therefore, the bringing in of objects during Share was memorable and valued. These objects were social in nature, and thus were in keeping with the socially aimed structure of Share.

Within that social structure though, students introduced academic talk. On 09-17-2014, Hailey brought in an item for her share. Together, she and her classmates, in particular Matthew, and Mrs. Cooper contributed to creating storylines within Share of joint intellectual curiosity. In addition to the sharer's social history with an item, that person and the other students shared their thoughts and ideas about such things as how to classify an item and why. As she spoke, Hailey engaged her classmates in thinking and talking about academic content matter. She and her peers participated in the social practices of Share while they explored their interest in a topic that was academic. During their life cycles project, the students had been talking at length about various insects. For her Share on this day, Hailey brought an insect inside a plastic sandwich bag that she

124

had found in her yard and was unable to identify. Her desire to figure out what kind of insect she had found was the main talking point when she shared. As Hailey briefly described how she had found the insect, she held it up from her circle spot on the area rug for her classmates to see. The insect was already dead when she found it and appeared to be missing a wing. Hailey called on classmates one at a time as they raised their hands to ask questions or make comments. Some told her what kind of insect they thought it might be. Others asked questions about where in her yard she had found it and other similar questions, the intent of which seemed to be to get more information and help Hailey identify the insect. When Hailey called on Matthew, he said, "If I get a closer look, I might [Hailey moved the bag with the insect closer to Matthew as he quickly stood up and leaned in to look, then sat back down], yeah, it looks like it's either a dragonfly, a cicada or a horsefly." Once Hailey had finished taking questions and comments, Mrs. Cooper asked if they could look at it again later in the day and try to figure out what kind of insect it was. Then Mrs. Cooper said, "Let's give Hailey some sizzle. What a great connection to what we've been learning during project work."

Throughout this exchange, several things happened that helped to shape the classroom culture in lasting ways. Hailey added on to the storyline that Emma had initiated of bringing the out-of-school world into Morning Meeting Share through an academic connection. While Emma's move had demonstrated care for her classmates who did not have a caterpillar, Hailey's move demonstrated seeking out her community of peers to help her examine something of intellectual curiosity. In turn, her peers joined her by offering their guesses on what kind of insect it was or by trying to gather more information about it. Matthew's language in trying to identify the insect was indicative of a high degree of confidence in his knowledge on the topic. Once Hailey gave him the "closer look" that he requested, prefacing his determination with the

125

affirmative "yeah," Matthew narrowed down the insect to one of three possibilities. It was already well known among members of the classroom community that Matthew read extensively about animals and insects. Thus, even I found myself accepting, based on his certainty, that the insect in Hailey's sandwich bag was one of those three possibilities.

Finally, Mrs. Cooper explicitly pointed out that Hailey's insect share had been a "great connection" to what they had all been learning in school. The force of Mrs. Cooper's words was to position Hailey as a valued contributor to the classroom community's pursuit of knowledge by bringing in an item that was related to in-school academic work. Through the interactions that came about between speakers and listeners as a result of Hailey bringing in the insect, the members of the classroom community helped to bring to Morning Meeting Share a storyline of joint intellectual curiosity. Within the community, Matthew assumed a position as a resident expert on animal and insect related topics, even though Mrs. Cooper did not comment on his contribution and therefore did not impose upon students any kind of teacher's perspective about Matthew. Thus, he began to take up this position as a result of the specific information he provided and the confidence with which he spoke. Although he did not cite a specific text as evidence for his conclusions about what kind of insect Hailey brought, his classmates knew that Matthew was an avid reader with a keen interest in animals and nature. Consequently, it is reasonable to state that part of his peers' acceptance of Matthew's assertion was based on their history together as a classroom community. Whereas Mrs. Cooper had designed Share to be specifically a social space, the students' interactions were now reshaping it to be an academic space as well.

5.2.2 Students Bring Readership and Authorship to Morning Meeting Share

Over the course of a month and a half, the students had transformed Morning Meeting Share into a space in which items could be brought from home and in which they could use the social practices of dialogue in order to look more closely at academic content that interested them. Storylines of care and of joint intellectual curiosity had been enacted as part of a collaborative community of peers. In this section, I describe how students brought readership and authorship into Share through informational texts and self-authored books. Where appropriate, I continue to highlight Mrs. Cooper's part in contributing to the work students did to shape their classroom culture of reading and writing.

On the day right after Hailey's insect share (09-18-2014), Matthew, Hailey, and Emma, none of whom were scheduled to share on this day, asked Mrs. Cooper if they could show their peers something they had each brought. After a non-participant and Jack (who did not bring in items) did their scheduled share, Mrs. Cooper informed the class that Matthew had something he wanted to show them. Matthew quickly retrieved a large book about butterflies. He talked about the book briefly and about the pages to which he had it opened, and then he walked the book around the inside of the area rug circle for his classmates to see. Upon returning to his spot, he talked briefly about a couple more pages and this time sat down for his classmates to huddle around the book. His peers looked eagerly at and commented on what Matthew was showing them. He was allowed to take a couple of questions. Mrs. Cooper then positioned Matthew's item share as useful for the classroom community by asking him, "And if it's okay with Matthew, I was thinking we could keep this book on my table here today so that during times like snack or academic choice, Matthew, would it be okay if we were to take a closer look?" Matthew granted this request, and an informational text had successfully entered the space of

Morning Meeting Share, but had at the same time also made its way into other spaces and times across the school day as a result of Mrs. Cooper's action.

Next, Mrs. Cooper told the students that Hailey had requested to share something as well. Hailey stood up and came back to the circle with a clear plastic sandwich bag. Inside of this bag was what she believed to be the other wing of the insect that she had shown the day before. She gave a brief description to her peers on how and where in her yard she had found it, and then she was allowed to take a couple of questions. Afterward, Mrs. Cooper asked Hailey to place the wing in the project work area of the classroom. The last student who had requested to share on this day was Emma. She had brought in a locket that her mother gave her, inside of which was a picture of her Beagle. She walked the locket around the inside of the circle for her classmates to see. Although there was no time for her to answer questions at this point, Mrs. Cooper told students that if they had questions for Emma about her locket or her dog, they should keep those in their heads and ask Emma at another time during the day like snack time or recess.

On this day (09-18-2014), then, Matthew and Hailey contributed further to the storyline of joint intellectual curiosity through talk about academic content matter. Emma had once again contributed to Share in a more social way. Students had engaged in the practices of Share through talk that was both academic and social. The force of Mrs. Cooper's request for Matthew and Hailey to make their items publicly accessible within the classroom community was to further contribute to the storyline of joint intellectual curiosity.

The next week, on 09-23-2014, Hailey once again requested to share on a day not assigned to her. She did not have an item; rather, she wanted to share with her classmates some information that she had learned about butterflies from a book she had read. A few days later, on 09-29-2014, Jacob brought in something from home and the subsequent interactions among the

students, as well as Mrs. Cooper, further contributed to the storyline of joint intellectual curiosity. Jacob's mother had emailed Mrs. Cooper three photos of butterflies that Jacob had taken over the weekend. Mrs. Cooper posted the photos onto the ActivBoard screen and turned off the lights. As Jacob talked about where he saw the butterflies and how he photographed them, he described the butterflies that he had recognized. About one he said, "One moment I saw a monarch butterfly flying right above me, and its detail was awesome!" He also explained that there was one butterfly that he had not been able to identify. Mrs. Cooper then put up one photo and enlarged it.

Mrs. Cooper: So Jacob needs some help from us. He could identify the other two.

But *this* one. And there's three pictures of it, so we'll show all three pictures. [Showing the three pictures] So, friends, let's think about what we know and what we've learned.

Jacob: Um, Noah.

Noah: I think it's a dead leaf because on the last one, it um, looks like a dead leaf.

Jacob: Matthew.

Matthew: Um, I have two. The first one is [stands up and walks up to the ActivBoard screen] I know it's some sort of long-winged butterfly because [pointing to photo on screen and tracing with his index finger] see the long wing? And the second one is I know it's not a dead leaf because they live in Southeast Asia [lets out a quick laugh at his own joke].

During the above exchange, Jacob and Mrs. Cooper enlisted the classroom community's help to consider academic information. Noah's comment suggested that this academic work was

open to interpretation in that perhaps this was not even a butterfly. Matthew's joke was indicative of the extent to which he reads and to which he was immersed in the discussion topic. Indeed, there is a type of butterfly in Southeast Asia called the *Kallima inachus*, which is also referred to as the dead leaf. Mrs. Cooper added one more question for the students. She asked them what kinds of patterns or details they noticed about the butterfly in the photos. This action on her part was a momentary departure from the Morning Meeting Share structure in which the sharer called on peers to ask questions and Mrs. Cooper only spoke if she too had a question or to transition to the next sharer. The following conversation took place among the students and Mrs. Cooper:

Mrs. Cooper: So, what about the detail or the pattern of the wing do you notice? Just what kinds of details do you notice? Zoe, what's a detail you notice on the wings?

Zoe: Like the owl butterfly, you can [unintelligible]. And also, I've seen that type of pattern before, but um, I can't really [unintelligible].

Mrs. Cooper: So what details, Zoe I remember mentioned the species an owl butterfly. Zoe, what details on the wing did you notice that made you think of that?

Zoe: Um, the [unintelligible] on the bottom and um, it's [unintelligible] this is just a random guess, it could be type of owl butterfly or a black swell butterfly.

Mrs. Cooper: Hm. Huh. Interesting. Does anybody agree or disagree or have some other noticings to show us? Jacob, do you want to call on someone else?

Jacob: Madison.

Madison: I think that, um, it might have peacock in its name because those spots on it look a lot like a peacock's.

Jacob: [after calling on NP, who describes a bit, calls on Matthew] Matthew.

Matthew: Um, the yellow, I mean, white bands actually, it looks like may be for camouflage because see like all the rocks, like it pretty much has all the colors of the rocks that are there and like, um the black and the [unintelligible, but sounds like he is describing similar colors on both the rocks and the butterfly].

Jacob: Hailey.

Hailey: I want to add to what Zoe said. Um instead of just circles, it um, it [unintelligible].

Mrs. Cooper: This is sounding more and more like a butterfly we know.

Jacob: Noah.

Noah: Actually it wouldn't be impossible for a dead leaf [unintelligible].

At this point, Mrs. Cooper turned the lights back on and told Jacob that he could take some questions now. In other words, embedded within Jacob's share had been an academic discussion with peers, dedicated to discussing the images in his photos. Although Mrs. Cooper momentarily disrupted the student-led structure of Share, she gave the floor back to Jacob once a discussion had begun about specific details of the butterfly in the picture. Mrs. Cooper never offered a theory of her own as to what kind of butterfly it might be, nor did she express agreement or disagreement with any of the students' theories. Instead, she asked them to express their own agreement or different "noticings." Thus, no final answer was given upon the conclusion of this academic talk. Rather, the students engaged in the kind of observational work

131

and theorizing that experts in a range of fields in the real world do. Nor did any student request a final conclusive answer, which suggests that they felt comfortable with this kind of collective exploration and uncertainty. Through their interactions, the students and Mrs. Cooper positioned their classroom community as one in which joint intellectual curiosity was a valued form of sharing.

Upon resuming the usual social talk of Share, most of the students departed from the focus on butterflies in favor of the more social aspects of Jacob's share, such as why he and his parents were out looking at houses that day. Matthew, however, continued to ponder the images in the photos. He stood back up and posited that the butterfly in the photo may be using "mimicry" and that it might be "poisonous because I've never seen a butterfly with that many eye spots." The force of Matthew's words was to further position him as someone with extensive knowledge on this and related topics. The term "mimicry" is used mostly in scientific contexts. Matthew used the term fluently, meaning that he used it accurately and his speech did not falter in its natural speed or prosody as he spoke it. This suggests confidence in one's knowledge base, something to which listeners are inclined to respond with acceptance. Furthermore, by introducing the possibility that the butterfly in the photo could be poisonous based upon his "never" having seen one with so many eye spots, Matthew positioned himself as someone with extensive experience examining butterfly details. Though subtle and perhaps easy to overlook, when someone uses the adverb *never* to describe the persistent non-occurrence of something, that person is indirectly referencing a history of certain knowledge about the topic at hand. Again, the force of such a speech act is to give listeners cause to accept what is being said to them. When someone's knowledge becomes accepted as a tool for verification, that person is positioned as an expert on a particular topic or field of topics.

Immediately after Jacob's share, Mrs. Cooper told the students that today she had a share of her own. Her share was about a photo of a caterpillar that she took while on a walk in the mountains over the weekend. She put up the photo and told students that she thought she had been able to figure out what kind of caterpillar it might be, based on what she had learned about caterpillars, and she wanted to see what they thought. Madeline asked if the caterpillar in the photo was scary, to which Mrs. Cooper replied that not in her opinion. She then opened up the floor to students' ideas and thoughts.

Mrs. Cooper: Think on your own. What type of caterpillar do you think it might be? What do you think? [Calls on NP, who thinks it is a moth.] Oh, does anyone agree with NP? What makes you think that it might be a moth caterpillar? [Calls on another NP, who responds] Yeah, tell me more, NP. Look like what? What do you see that they look like? Nate, do you have an adjective or a describing word that can tell us how it looks?

Nate: Hairy.

Madeline: Harry. We should name it Harry.

Mrs. Cooper: [calls on NP, who says that it might be poisonous] Hm, what makes you think that? Rose.

Rose: I think it might be a yellow swallowtail.

Mrs. Cooper: What makes you think that?

Rose: Because it's yellow and it has [getting up to show something on the photo and then saying something unintelligible].

Mrs. Cooper: Interesting. Let's ask our black swallowtail caterpillar group. Raise your hand if you're working on the black swallowtail sculpture. The caterpillar,

133

not the butterfly, the caterpillar. If you're in the black swallowtail caterpillar group, what do you think? What do you think? Isabella? Do you think that looks like the caterpillar sculpture we're building or not quite?

Isabella: Different.

Mrs. Cooper: What makes it different?

Isabella: [unintelligible]

Mrs. Cooper: Oh, so maybe the color is a little different. Let's hear from Zoe.

Zoe: Um, I think it's probably a moth caterpillar, because when you were showing us those pages of moth caterpillars, other than like the hair on it, um, but I'm not quite sure what kind of moth caterpillar.

Mrs. Cooper: Hailey.

Hailey: I have a question and a [sounds like 'comment']. I think it looks kind of scary. It does look kind of scary. And my question was, are there other types of moths also?

Mrs. Cooper: There are. Just like butterflies. Do you remember when we did look at the moth caterpillars? How there were many different caterpillars? So each of those different caterpillars will turn into a different type of a moth. All right, friends, I'm ready for questions. So if you have a question, I will take questions now.

Once again when Mrs. Cooper shifted to taking questions, most—though not all—students switched back to a focus on social aspects of Mrs. Cooper's share, such as what were the mountains she had visited. Thus, both joint intellectual curiosity and social dialogue had been

134

preserved throughout this Share session. As the students offered their own theories about what kind of caterpillar was in the photo, they provided evidence for their thinking. At times, Mrs. Cooper had to get them to provide that evidence with statements and questions like, "Tell me more" and "What makes you think that?" Thus, at the same time that they were immersed in using prior knowledge and observation to examine an unknown species, they were learning to substantiate their thinking with the reasoning behind it. As with Jacob's Share, a conclusion was never reached, nor were students given a final answer. Mrs. Cooper did not evaluate their ideas, rather she urged students to express agreement or disagreement with each other's statements by providing further evidence in the form of what they already had learned or were in the process of learning. How students agreed and disagreed was also telling of the kind of joint intellectual curiosity that was developing. Their talk was matter-of-fact. Absent were ways of talking that sometimes take place among children, in which a back-and-forth flurry of "Uh-huhs" and "Uh-uhns" take place, or someone is ridiculed for a comment. In this way, a merging of respectful academic and social talk was forming within this classroom community.

5.2.3 Student-Written Texts Brought into Share

In a handful of instances over the next few weeks, other informational texts were referenced or brought in for Share. Then, one day, a student-authored fiction book made its way into Share, and from there students and their writing began to reshape classroom structures in significant ways. In the same way that Matthew had been the first to introduce informational texts into Morning Meeting Share, he introduced fictional texts. The particular text that he brought was a book that he had been working on at home. In December (12-10-2014), on a day that he was not scheduled to share, Matthew brought in a book that he had been typing on his computer and

asked Mrs. Cooper if he could show it to his classmates. As he walked around the inside of the circle showing a page from the book to his peers, Matthew said, "Actually, this is the first in a series." The book had graphics from his computer, which he had inserted as illustrations, and he pointed out, "And that's a dragon. … It looks really scary in color. Trust me. And then on the back I have another picture of a second dragon and then the intro of the second book."

As he walked around, students made remarks such as "Whoa" and "Cool." When he took questions, the following exchanges occurred:

Matthew: Madison.

Madison: How many pages is that book?

Matthew: Including the cover and the back cover, ten. There are eight pages with words. Hailey.

Hailey: Who did you dedicate it to?

Matthew: I didn't dedicate it. Zoe.

Zoe: Did you use plagiarism, or did you like, make it up?

Matthew: I made it up. Noah.

Noah: Can you read it to us?

Matthew: Um [looking at Mrs. Cooper]

Mrs. Cooper: Do you want to read um, your favorite part?

Matthew: I have two favorite parts [then speaking somewhat to himself as he begins to look through his book], okay, um here's my first favorite part… (He reads some dialogue between two characters, and does so with inflection. He then explains what had happened just before the characters spoke.]

Matthew then called on a non-participant who had raised her hand. The non-participant

asked Matthew if he could, if it were okay with Mrs. Cooper, put it on the bookshelf (where they otherwise had trade books) so that they could read the book at some point during the day.

Matthew: Sure!

Mrs. Cooper: That's a really great idea. So, friends, if you want to read Matthew's book that he's written [several students exclaim, "Yes!"], and I know we'll have to take turns with it because a lot of us are probably excited.

Finally, Matthew informed his peers that he had more to print out, adding, "So at some point, we'll have the whole series."

Student interactions and their talk in the above exchanges are filled with elements that pertain to what they valued as readers. I will describe more about these elements, for example, dedication pages and book series, as I progress through this chapter. With regard to Morning Meeting Share, what had just happened between Matthew and his peers resembled that of an author fielding questions from eager readers at a book signing and meet the author event. This particular event culminated in Matthew's published work being placed among the ranks of widely read and respected Caldecott Medal, Newberry Medal, and Coretta Scott King Book Award recipients. Over the next few months, the bookshelf, once reserved for special trade books, became filled with so many student-written books that one day Mrs. Cooper realized that student books outnumbered trade books. Recognizing the value for students of sharing their books with one another within this classroom community, Mrs. Cooper created a new space that was reserved for students to place books they had written if they wanted to share them publicly with peers. Mrs. Cooper placed file folders and boxes along the front wall of the classroom close to the reading corner that housed their classroom library. Students continued to fill these folders and boxes through the end of the school year. They read each other's books with as much interest

as they read trade books. They developed favorite authors. Zoe, in particular, was a favorite among her peers for the humor and adventure in her books. Through their interactions, the students in this classroom had redefined writing within the academically structured setting of school. Whereas writing has traditionally been a personal or between- student-and-teacher endeavor in schools, for these students writing became a highly valued, socially interactive aspect of their school life.

5.3   PEER WRITING COLLABORATION IN THE CLASSROOM CULTURE

In this section, I detail specific storylines and student positions as I describe how peer writing collaborations became a central aspect of this classroom culture. Storylines included students engaging in talk in order to generate new ideas and students sharing their writing with each other in order to give and receive complimentary feedback. Among the evident student positions were writers, good writers, readers, smart students, leaders, and friends. As seen in the preceding analysis on students' interactions during Morning Meeting Share, academic and social interests contributed in equal ways to students' talk and to their reading and writing practices. Students' individual positions within the broader classroom community were integral to the kinds of collaborations in which they engaged. For example, students who were positioned as good writers engaged in mentor collaborations as well as creative writing collaborations. Students who were positioned as smart became central academic and social figures within group collaborations. Students who were positioned as leaders acted as organizers and delegators within group collaborations. Collaborative writing occurred across different times and spaces during the school day. Whereas students interjected academic practices into the social space of

Share in the mornings, they interjected social practices into the academic space of Academic Choice in the afternoons. When, how, and why students collaborated depended on storylines in which they were interacting, positions they were assuming, and a history of ways of talking amongst themselves.

5.3.1 Instructional Literacy Practices and a Classroom Culture That Valued Writing Collaborations

In this section, I look closely at features of instructional literacy practices in this classroom and how the students engaged in them to develop a culture that valued writing collaborations. I will also provide evidence for how social practices like sharing, asking questions, and complimenting that occurred through student dialogue about writing, were brought into Academic Choice. On the second day of school (08-12-2014), Mrs. Cooper introduced to the students what she called Academic Choice time. Throughout the school year, Academic Choice was scheduled for each afternoon as a ten to fifteen minute window of time following lunch. On this day, because they were not yet in their regular schedule, Mrs. Cooper introduced Academic Choice during reading time. When she explained Academic Choice to the students, Mrs. Cooper said:

> So, friends, for the last part of our reading time today, you're going to get what we call Academic Choice time, all right. And I'm going to teach you a little bit about what that time will look like. So whenever we have academic choice, the word, academic, means like, you're learning so it has something to do with school, and choice means I'll give you a list of options and you get to choose one that's best for you, okay. During academic choice, we're working on our own and we're not talking. It's a quiet time where we get to focus on whatever we choose to do.

In addition to explicitly defining for students the interplay of the terms *academic* and *choice*, Mrs. Cooper focused her description on the expectation that this would be a time to work independently with no talking. As the year progressed, however, Academic Choice became a time during which few students ever worked independently, collaborative talk was the norm, and the length of the time students could work increased to approximately twenty minutes or sometimes more.

Among the factors that likely contributed to writing collaborations and social practices entering the Academic Choice space were the student positions that were emphasized throughout other instructional times and the related storylines. Specifically, student positions as readers, authors, writers and friends made possible storylines of engaging in talk in order to generate new ideas. Social interactions as a way to explore academic content were built into each part of the instructional day. At some point during almost all reading and writing lessons, Mrs. Cooper had the students exchange ideas and thoughts with each other though turn-and-talk with a partner. Students grew accustomed to the interplay of social and academic talk as part of their literacy learning.

At the same time that collaborative talk was becoming a routine academic practice, writing was becoming a highly valued literacy practice. The daily writing lesson structure began with a mini-lesson during which students sat at their rug spots and listened as Mrs. Cooper read from an authentic text to demonstrate the topic of the mini-lesson. Students participated by sharing their thoughts and ideas with the whole class or with a partner, depending upon the directions given. At the end of the mini-lesson, Mrs. Cooper set a writing goal for them for that day. After approximately fifteen to twenty minutes of independent work at their table spots, Mrs. Cooper frequently—though not daily—had students share some aspect of their writing.

5.3.2 Writing Share

What I have labeled as Writing Share sometimes took place at students' circle spots on the rug and sometimes at their tables. Usually it involved the whole class, though there were occasions on which students only shared with a partner or with the others at their table. Mrs. Cooper had students share something they were "proud of" in their writing, some way in which they had applied the writing strategies from that day's mini-lesson or something they thought they could improve upon.

Unlike during Morning Meeting Share, student authors did not take questions from classmates. Consequently, they did not engage in back-and-forth dialogue about their writing. In terms of feedback, on a few occasions during my reading and writing data collection period from August through December, Mrs. Cooper urged peers to give a positive remark to the author who had just shared. For example, on 08-21-2014, Mrs. Cooper said:

> Today after someone shares, instead of asking questions, we'll give two compliments. A compliment is telling someone something you liked about their ideas, or you liked about their work. A compliment sounds like, "I like the colors you used for your picture." Or, "You used great details in your writing."

On this day (08-21-2014), examples of comments that students gave to each other included: *I like that you drew a picture of the arts and crafts* (Lily); *I like the way your schedule would go* (Madison); *I like your picture* (Madeline); and *I like the way you drew two people to show…* (Hailey). One student, Zoe, did not have a compliment, rather a clarification question about someone's drawing. Before asking it though, she requested permission from Mrs. Cooper in order to ask a question. Thus, the expectation was for classmates to give sharers an

encouraging evaluation. Consequently, most students were likely to view sharing their writing as a socially safe and enjoyable event.

In the spring, I only collected data for a few days in January, and then I came back in April and May to observe different times of the school day than reading and writing times. I learned through student interviews, however, that although they did not do Writing Share each day, when they did it, occasionally they were asked to give the sharer suggestions for how to make his or her story better. Nate and Zoe were able to recall specific suggestions they had been given. I asked each one, "Can you recall a time when someone gave you a suggestion on your writing or you gave someone a suggestion on their writing that was helpful?" Nate's response (05-15-2015) was, "Yeah, um, when Hailey told me that I should probably put more color on my pictures because I didn't have that much color." Zoe's response to the same question was:

> One of my suggestions was maybe, because I like to write a lot but I never really thought of like putting in a speech bubble or something like that, so one of my suggestions was to put some of the words in speech bubbles because that makes it fun to read. Um, and I thought that was a good idea and right now some of my books have speech bubbles. And then my animals have think bubbles, like one of my dogs has a think bubble, it's got like circles and then a little cloud, and it has a bone in the think bubble (05-14-2015).

Instances like these are indicative of how a history of interactions can lead to the evolution of storylines and positions. Students had gained experience using the expected forms of talk to position each other as readers, writers and friends as they interacted within the storylines of *talk to generate new ideas* and of *sharing writing to give and receive complimentary feedback.* Through these interactions, students co-constructed a storyline of their classroom community as an author club of sorts. In the same way that reading clubs meet to talk

about their thoughts on a book, the students would talk about their thoughts on their own writing and each other's. Although the feedback that Nate and Zoe were given and that other students gave and recalled was primarily focused on text or illustration features, the students were nonetheless engaged in talking about writing. In order to contribute to their author club as readers and writers, students used the content knowledge gained during mini-lessons to offer suggestions to each other. In order to contribute to the author club as welcome members, students used the respectful social talk knowledge gained during various instructional moments to present their suggestions in constructive ways. The author club storyline was facilitated through interactions between students positioned as readers, writers and friends who relied on their words and the force of those words in their ongoing participation together.

5.3.3   Shared Student-Authored Books and Related Writing Collaborations

Of relevance to the developing storylines, positions, and reading and writing culture was a connection between the re-appropriated bookshelf and the restructuring of Academic Choice. When students began to consistently place their authored books on the bookshelf that had once been reserved for published children's books, they positioned themselves as authors and readers. Almost all of the students placed at least one book on the bookshelf. Some students placed quite a few of their written books on the bookshelf, especially those who, like Zoe and Matthew, wrote with frequency both in and out of school. Through the participation structures within Academic Choice, including freedom of movement around the classroom along with the combined elements of personal choice and quiet talk, this time of day provided students with ample opportunities to read each other's books. Mrs. Cooper shared with me that students engaged in social practices around those books. They complimented authors of books they had enjoyed, they

encouraged peers to read particular books, and they talked about features of books that they had liked.

In April and May of that school year, as I read through all of the student-authored books that were in the new space that Mrs. Cooper had created for them, I noticed patterns between students' books. By sharing, reading, and talking about each other's writing, members of the classroom community had generated ideas about text features and themes to try when writing independently. For example, I noticed several different series. I noticed that a few students had begun to include synopses and reviews on the back page of their books. On books that were part of a series, the back page often also included a preview of the next book in the series. Themes of adventure and humor with characters like dragons, pirates, fairies and princesses were common. Mostly boys wrote about dragons and pirates. Boys also wrote about characters from video games and made comics. However, some of Zoe's books also had pirates and dragons in them. Only girls wrote about fairies and princesses. Non-fiction texts about such topics as animals and nature were also common but not specific to either gender. Almost all of the students at some point wrote about animals or nature-related topics, such as weather or geographical landforms.

Students' consistency in reading and talking about each other's books during Academic Choice lent itself to the transition toward collaborative writing as they asked each other for help with technical aspects of writing and commented on and shared ideas about other aspects like plots, topics, characters and illustrations. Five out of my six focal students showed and expressed a preference for writing with a partner or group rather than alone. Only Hailey told me that she did not have a preference. When I asked the students if they thought that collaborating to write was easier or more difficult than writing on their own, their responses were somewhat mixed (as

seen in Table 6 below), which suggests that one of the major reasons students were drawn to work with others was simply to connect socially with peers.

Table 6. Focal student responses to interview question, "Do you think it's easier or harder to write with other people, rather than by yourself?"

Student	Response
Hailey	Um, I don't know. It's the same. (05-14-2015)
Madeline	(Did not ask her this question because she talked at length about her family, her organization at home and school, and a couple of girls in the class. I let her talk and listened. She did, however, say about collaborating, "That's fun.") (05-14-2015)

Table 6 (continued)

Student	Response
Matthew	Well, we pretty much all work on the same picture. And then occasionally we write what we call it at the bottom… because it's pretty much modern art. (05-14-2015)
Nate	Kind of easier [to write with others] … because people won't just have to be waiting and waiting to write. We all get to write because we need a break and the other people haven't been writing. (05-15-2015)
Nicholas	Um, kind of harder, but it could be easier in a way because you don't have to do as much work. But harder because you have to do a lot of work

	because talking to them and writing and having all three pencils on a page. (05-14-2015)
Zoe	Um, easier. Because I don't really like writing by myself because I have, I don't know why, but when I write by myself I have a feeling that I'm not really doing it as good as I would if I was um doing it with a partner. Because um, if I do it like by myself, a whole book by myself, I might miss some of the characters, a really good character that maybe my partner would think of. I like to just listen to their ideas so maybe I can do that in my book to make it better. (05-14-2015)

In their responses, Nicholas and Zoe addressed the role of talk in collaboration. Nicholas's response positioned himself and his peers as compromising collaborators in that their talk while working together on one written text presented difficulty. This does not contradict the storyline of new ideas generated through talk; rather, it presents a realistic depiction of one of the challenges of collaboration. Zoe's response took a different approach to collaborative talk in writing. She positioned herself as an eager collaborator because as an independent writer, she felt the burden of limited perspective. Thus, Zoe not only operated within the storyline that talk generates new ideas, but she explicitly pointed it out. Although Nate and Matthew did not allude to or mention talk, in my fieldnotes I noted that across all of the collaborative groups talk while writing was constant and almost always engaged in the development of the book.

Focal students also talked about the different kinds of books they had worked on and were currently working on with other classmates. What they said and what I observed and noted in my fieldnotes mostly aligned well. For the remainder of this section, I describe my

interpretations in terms of positioning and storylines with regard to some of the focal students' collaborations. First, I briefly summarize what I found in terms of similarities and differences among my six focal students.

5.3.4   Similarities and Differences Among Focal Students

Zoe and Matthew were the two most prolific writers both in and out of school. They placed many books on the bookshelf and later in the student author space, and they expressed keen interest in series. Through the development of series, they showed that they intended to continue to develop characters and plot lines—and they did continue to do so. Among their peers, Zoe was considered a good writer, and Matthew was considered an animal expert. Among their peers then, they were positioned as knowledgeable.

Nate and Hailey expressed interest in improving their writing by applying the mini-lesson strategies and skills they learned. They both tended to write nonfiction books about animals. On occasion, Hailey reminded Mrs. Cooper of things that Mrs. Cooper had said. Hailey also once requested to the whole class that the girls not waste water or soap in the bathroom, but she did not call out any one person. Nate took it upon himself to lead at different times. For example, he once took over an activity when Mrs. Cooper had to step away from the area rug to take a phone call at her desk. On other occasions, when they had to be inside for recess and Mrs. Cooper put dance videos for kids on the Smart Board, Nate would stand in front and the rest of the students who chose to dance would stand behind him and follow his lead. They both valued structure and cooperation, they were both well-liked and respected among their peers, and they were positioned as leaders.

147

Finally, Madeline and Nicholas expressed more social interests during their time in school. They also happened to be the two students who immediately came to Mrs. Cooper's mind when I asked her during our final interview what changes or growth she had seen in specific students as writers and/or readers that year. Madeline was very attuned to people's feelings, including her own. I once overheard her commenting to Zoe, "Sometimes I cry for no reason. I'm just happy and I cry" (09-09-2014). She also consistently offered her classmates kind words after they shared about things they were going to do, for example, by wishing them fun. Her classmates were equally emotionally attuned to her, which I describe briefly here as well as in the next section. Mrs. Cooper described her as a writer: "Madeline has really grown as a writer, you know as far as like conventions and things like that, but like her stories are really, she's just so thoughtful and sweet and just feels everything and she puts that into her books" (05-10-2015). Madeline positioned herself as thoughtful and sensitive, and her peers also positioned her in this way, for example, by spontaneously helping her without anyone making this request of them. On more than one occasion, Zoe kept Madeline on task, whether by getting her started on putting morning work items away at the appropriate time or by bringing Madeline with her from one Reading station to the next at the sound of the chime. Similarly, Emma noticed that Madeline grew frustrated during indoor recess one day when she was unable to make a snowflake, so Emma made one for her. Madeline subsequently used her Academic Choice time that day to write Emma a thank-you note.

Mrs. Cooper described Nicholas as a writer:

Nicholas, his book right now is awesome. At the beginning of the year—it's still Minecraft-esque, it's still game-esque—but like at the beginning of the year, literally his

books were like, I was playing Minecraft, I found a creeper. The creeper dah dah, it was like play-by-play of his video game life, um, and he has grown a lot. (05-10-2015)

Nicholas had difficulty acclimating to the beginning of the year because his best friend was in another classroom, and, as his mother told Mrs. Cooper, he did not feel like he had any friends. Mrs. Cooper met with Nicholas's mother in order to urge her to make sure that Nicholas attended school daily and that he be on time. His favorite topic of conversation was video games, thus he positioned himself—both through his talk and a self-descriptor he once wrote—as a "gamer." Both Madeline and Nicholas told me in their interviews about some social challenges they had faced with peers that I describe later in this section and the next.

Zoe's position as a good writer was established and maintained through the many students who read and talked about her books. Therefore, it was not surprising to observe that she was sought out for collaborations during Academic Choice. When, during end-of-year interviews, I asked other students whose writing among their peers stood out to them, her name was the most frequently given. Students told me about a book she had written called *Pirates Don't Slay Dragons*. They thought it was funny and creative. They also spoke about her series called *Popstar Princess*. As she explained to me, she and her closest friend, NP, had collaborated on a couple of the six books from her series. Zoe expressed that she liked to share her writing with everyone, so she had placed the entire series in the student author space for her peers to read during Academic Choice. She also highly preferred to collaborate when writing, explaining, "because we can both brainstorm ideas for the book and we can like brainstorm the characters and I think it's fun for like two ideas to be in one book" (05-14-2015).

Later in the school year, Zoe's position as an esteemed writer took on new meaning within a storyline of mentorship. Although Zoe most often wrote with her closest friend during

Academic Choice, on one occasion (04-17-2015) she worked with Jacob because he had asked her for help with his writing. She and Jacob did not collaborate; rather he positioned himself as a novice seeking her expertise, and she gladly accepted this storyline of herself as a community member who could share her knowledge with others. On two occasions (05-01-2015; 05-04-2015), Zoe worked with Lily. In my fieldnotes from 05-01-2015, I was able to document some of their talk. My voice recorder could not capture specific conversations because there were so many voices at once throughout the classroom, so I had to rely mostly on my written descriptions of what was happening. At one point as they puzzled over how to proceed with the development of a character in their book, Zoe said to Lily, "Wait, why daughter and husband if?" She did not need to finish her sentence, since Lily apparently realized what would have followed Zoe's 'if'. Lily responded with a slight laugh, "Oh yeah," and quickly erased something and wrote again. As they collaborated, they alternated between thinking, talking, reading, rereading, writing and drawing. Thus, writing collaborations with Zoe involved storylines of mentorship and creativity through character and plot development.

In addition to seeing him as an animal expert, Matthew's classmates described him as "smart" and they alluded to his strong vocabulary and how much he read. He initially wrote on his own during Academic Choice, but not much time passed before he had joined Nicholas and Jack. Ryan joined their group shortly thereafter, and the four boys worked consistently and exclusively together until Jack dissented from the group because of a falling out with Nicholas. While they were still friends, Nicholas and Jack enjoyed their collaborations. An excerpt from their talk that I was able to capture one day (04-17-2015) was as follows:

Nicholas: Should I write this? It's gonna' be funny. What should I write?...

Jack: [Unintelligible, but both boys laugh]

Nicholas: [writing] Peace, bro. [Both laugh]

When the group of four worked together, they spoke quietly and guarded their privacy. They also spent time together beyond Academic Choice. One day (05-01-2015) as I observed indoor recess, I quietly walked around to try to listen and look in on different interactions around the room. I heard Nicholas, Matthew, Jack and Ryan laughing, so I approached the area where they were working. Jack looked up and noticed my presence, at which point he nudged Nicholas to let him know I was there. This elicited quick glances, lowered voices, and closer huddling among the four boys. Being able to take an obvious hint, I wasted no time in nonchalantly moving away and not intruding.

To them, their collaboration was more than a writing endeavor. It marked social belonging, group membership, and friendship. I never witnessed any other students attempt to join the group, although Mrs. Cooper told me one day that Madison had spent some time with them during indoor recess. Thus, I do not know the extent of their exclusivity from peers. I do know, however, that adults were not welcome among their ranks, as I saw similar reactions among them if Mrs. Cooper ever inadvertently ventured near that part of the room while they worked. They grew to value that time together so much, that during Academic Choice of that same day (05-01-2015) Nicholas grew demonstrably angry (slamming papers and a pencil, furrowing his brows and pursing his lips together tightly) when they were unable to meet because the substitute changed plans.

The day that Jack left the group, the members positioned each other in ways that offered insights about their history of interactions and the existing storylines within the group. At the beginning of Academic Choice one day (05-07-2015), I observed that Nicholas, Matthew and Ryan were working on a book together, but Jack was on his own at the reading corner, slumped

in a bean bag chair. He told Mrs. Cooper that he was feeling sick and sleepy. As I overheard the discussion that Nicholas and Matthew were having about the existence of what Matthew called "an extremely rare" snake with a head at both the front and back ends of it body, I had to get closer. I was able to do so by standing between their group and another group to give the appearance that I was watching the other group. I turned on my small audio recorder and held it discreetly in my hand, and a moment later Jack walked up to the group. I was able to capture the following:

Nicholas: Hey Jack, remember? You're not working with us? Remember? You didn't say you wanted to anymore?

Jack: [mumbles unintelligible response]

Nicholas: [mocks Jack] Wahyu wah hnyu. (30 seconds pass.) And Jack, why don't YOU want to be my friend anymore?

[Jack does not reply or look at Nicholas, rather looks down at the book. One minute later…]

Nicholas: Hey Jack, you want to be my friend again?

[Jack, once again, does not reply or look at Nicholas. Jack walks off.]

Matthew: [to Nicholas] Why are you being mean to Jack?

Nicholas: [to Matthew] He's being mean to ME.

[Nicholas, Matthew and Ryan continue to write and draw. Two minutes later…]

Nicholas: Hey, let's play a game. We have to draw as many colors mixed up as we can without, without um basically knocking our crayons down. So we have to like hit each other's crayons.

[The boys begin to play this game and laugh as they do so. Jack walks back over…]

Nicholas: Jack, we're playing a game where we take the crayons and we basically have to, we can't knock each other's down. [One minute passes.] Jack, why do you not want to be my friend anymore? Jack! Ja-ack [in a sing song voice]. JACK! Matthew wants you to explain why you don't want to be my friend anymore.

[Jack replies something inaudible.]

Nicholas: [to Matthew] Hey, hey, ask him the question why he doesn't want to be my friend.

[Inaudible talk]

Nicholas: Technically, I'm the one who came up with the group.

Jack: No.

Nicholas: Yah-huh. The writing group.

This exchange shows how within this classroom community, Academic Choice had evolved into a figured, or cultural world of social interaction while writing. Within the various groups and partnerships that formed around collaborative writing, storylines drove and were driven by a history of interactions. In my fieldnotes, I noted a shift during Academic Choice from independent reading or writing to collaborative writing, as more students joined a writing group or partnered with a friend. For example, Nate and students like Emma, Jacob and a male NP formed a collaborative writing group that generally worked on nonfiction books together and always worked in the front center of the room on the area rug. These students who made the area rug their collaborative writing space did so through storylines of inclusion and friendship. Yet they positioned each other and themselves as writers, as evidenced by the fact that their talk and actions remained focused on the book at hand. At times, other students like Hailey, Lily,

153

Madeline, Olivia and a female NP joined them as well. The students already on the area rug welcomed their peers by giving them updates on the book they were writing and by physically scooting over so that everyone could have room to be part of the group. On a couple of occasions, this group on the area rug grew too large and Mrs. Cooper asked them to split into two smaller groups. On one such day (05-04-2015), Nate, Jacob and a male NP worked together, while Emma, Madeline, Hailey and a female NP worked together. On another such day (05-07-2015), the two smaller groups consisted of Nate, Hailey and Jacob at one, and Emma, Madeline and a female NP at another. While they worked the two sub-groups remained within close proximity of each other on the area rug and occasionally showed each other their writing and illustrations. In this way, the storylines of the area rug group remained intact. There were also times when the large group did not split into two smaller sub-groups. The students in this group agreed to a system of "subbing" that Nate told me had been suggested by an NP so that everyone would have an opportunity to contribute writing and drawing.

In addition to the consistency with which several students were part of the area rug group, other students like Rose and Isabella consistently partnered together to write. Their storylines were of friendship and shared interest in certain books and stories, in particular fiction stories about friendships between children and between children and animals. Madison and Mia also partnered together a few times in order to write fairy stories, and they positioned their collaboration within a storyline of friendship, a shared affinity for fairy stories, and agreed upon delegation of responsibilities. Prior to their partnership, Madison had often spent Academic Choice time reading independently. Mia had partnered with other students to write and had also worked on her own. In her end of year interview, Mia explained their collaboration to me:

154

We love Academic Choice time, because we like working together on books. And me and my friend, Madison, we have the same birthday so we say we're sisters. So we're working on a book about fairies and it is very, I do the designs and we work on the pictures together and she does the words, because I don't like writing. (05-14-2015)

Madison's description of their collaboration was similar, but more detailed. She also offered an articulated perspective on the highly social nature of the writing collaborations that took place during Academic Choice. She explained the following:

Um I just started it [writing with somebody]. I usually pretty much only wrote all on my own. I don't know why [laughs]. But sometimes, I just got like, a bunch of people started working together and I wanted to do it because I was starting to feel a little left out. So when Mia came by and she asked me if I wanted to write a book together, I said yes…What we did is we basically took what we knew [about fairies and fairy stories]…but we didn't want to copy it from there…I knew I was really good at writing and I wanted to do the words and um, Mia said that she was good at drawing. So like Mia helped me out with the words and I helped her out with the drawings. So we both kind of did both things, but I did more of the words and she did more of the drawings. (05-14-2015)

Thus, although Madison, as she went on to tell me, enjoyed writing on her own, when she realized how many of her peers were now collaborating to write during Academic Choice time, she wanted to be part of this majority-of-the-class endeavor. Academic Choice had transformed into a figured world in which social writing collaborations were the norm. When Mia asked Madison to write together, Madison saw an opportunity to participate, presumably without having to find an already existing group or partnership to join.

155

In their interviews, Matthew and Nicholas described their group's collaborations to me as well. Nicholas told me that as a group they would "come up with a random topic that looks like it's going to be funny" (05-14-2015), and that they sometimes worked on a "comics" series. Matthew described another series they worked on together. He told me, "[It is] called *The Messy Book of Mess*, and it's just [unintelligible] and scribble. And me and Nicholas changed it to *Art*" (05-14-2015). Up until that day (05-07-2015), then, the group's storylines pertained to humorous talk and writing about things that interested the boys. However, on this day, the group was experiencing a rift, and because of this, new storylines formed. Friendships were reevaluated, words were called into question, and the group's origins and self-definition became a topic of disagreement.

Individual student interviews with the four boys did not reveal the cause for Jack's decision to terminate his friendship with Nicholas. Positioning theory, however, affords me the specific elements of position, storyline and force of speech act to analyze the information I do have. To begin with, because Nicholas sought out Matthew, Matthew's question to Nicholas about why he was being so mean to Jack forced Nicholas to justify himself to Matthew and, later, to hold himself accountable to Jack. Nicholas's storyline throughout this interaction can be described as trying to call out Jack. That is, Nicholas used words and the presence of others to try to force Jack into a position of admission of wrongdoing. First Nichoas tried to deny Jack access to the group. Then he mocked Jack. Next he insisted on Jack telling him why he was no longer his friend, all of this in front of Matthew and Ryan. Jack's storyline was one of cutting ties with Nicholas. It seems that cutting ties with Nicholas also meant cutting ties with the group, perhaps because Nicholas had laid such a forceful claim to the group by saying that he had come up with

the group, "the writing group." Despite his departure from the writing group, Jack remained friends with Matthew and Ryan.

Although Nicholas responded to Matthew that Jack was being mean to *him*, a few turns later Nicholas filled Jack in on the game they were playing. By trying to include rather than exclude Jack, Nicholas may have been attempting to salvage the friendship by resuming their interactions as if nothing had happened, and/or he may have been demonstrating to Matthew that he was not "mean." Nicholas's approach in recruiting Matthew to ask Jack why he was no longer Nicholas's friend contributed to a storyline of mediation in which Matthew was positioned as a mediator of sorts. In doing this, Nicholas positioned Matthew as someone whose question, for whatever reason, Jack would answer rather than ignore. Nicholas did not recruit Ryan to speak with Jack, which indirectly positioned Ryan as somehow less influential, at least in the storyline of maintaining group cohesion. Although Ryan did make comments on this day that pertained to the book they were working on, he did not speak much, nor did he involve himself in what was happening between Nicholas and Jack.

Finally, there was Jack. Jack was one of only two students who left the room for a period of time each day to receive additional reading and writing support. He was below grade level as a reader and writer, and his demeanor could be characterized as generally reserved. He did, however, demonstrate social engagement with classmates, and got along with his peers. Thus, any instances in which Jack's position enabled him to exert influence were more likely to be social rather than academic in nature.

Nicholas's constant questions toward Jack about the status of their friendship positioned Jack as socially consequential to Nicholas. Nicholas's eventual argument, "Technically, I'm the one who came up with the group," may have been an attempt to gain status by attaching the very

existence of the group to his presence. Additionally, when Nicholas stated that he was the one who "came up with the group," Jack replied with a quick "No." When Nicholas countered with, "Yah-huh. The writing group," Jack said nothing more. His initial silence, then one-word response, and then continued silence may be interpreted as him positioning himself as someone who had other social options and could afford to be a dissenter from the group. Or perhaps Jack was not able to verbalize his thoughts or feelings. In that case, his silence would have been a limitation, rather than an agentive move.

It is possible that Jack felt that he could not easily make his voice heard within the group. When I interviewed him on 05-14-2015, Jack did not specify why he had ended his friendship with Nicholas, but he did share the following with me:

Me: You all don't write books together anymore? Why not?

Jack: Me and Nicholas aren't friends anymore, really.

Me: Oh I'm sorry to hear that. Is there, is there a reason?

Jack: We just don't like each other anymore.

Me: Okay. Do you write with Matthew ever?

Jack: No, because Nicholas hogs him all the time.

Me: Oh. So what do you do now during Academic Choice time?

Jack: Just rest my head. There's nothing to do.

Through Jack's responses to my interview questions, Matthew was positioned as someone for whose time and attention Jack and Nicholas were battling. Jack had repositioned himself and been repositioned as an outsider to his former group. Although he could have sought to join another group, he may have felt academic constraints as a writer, whereas with his former group he had been accepted as a collaborator. Socially and academically speaking, he may have

felt special to be a member of the same group as the student who most of their peers considered to be one of the smartest in class.

Jack demonstrated sadness and resignation through the words, "Just rest my head. There's nothing to do." Jack had come to equate his choice during Academic Choice as solely working with his writing group. Because the various writing collaborations in the classroom community had their own history of participation and Jack had invested so much time to his former group, he may not have believed that he could easily join another. It is also possible that he did not want to join another group. Whatever his reason, he still had other options of things to do during this time. Instead, he positioned himself as a silent non-participant in anything academic or social. Unlike Jack, Nicholas was more outspoken during interactions with his group members, and his talk was instrumental in his ability to position himself and them in a social and academic space. Before moving to the next section, it bears mention that I did observe other instances of conflict between students as a result of writing collaborations and during some other instructional times that were literacy-related. I could not examine those or note their relevance to my study, however, because non-participants to my study were central figures in the interactions. In the next section, I look closely at the finding about how students appropriated language from various sources as they co-developed storylines of care and acceptance, and attempted to gain some academic or social influence.

5.4 STUDENTS' APPROPRIATION FROM VARIOUS LANGUAGE SOURCES WHILE ENACTING MULTIPLE STORYLINES

In this section, I focus on the third finding that students drew from various language sources from reading and writing instruction in ways that contributed to the development of the following storylines: care and acceptance, literacy-based talk and exploration, and gaining social or academic influence. Students' interactions around multiple kinds of texts and within teacher-led participation structures contributed to positions they took up or tried to take up. In the next two sections, I provide evidence from transcribed student and teacher talk and from interview data to show how students appropriated language from particular sources and, as a result, the social and academic positions that became relevant.

5.4.1 Students' Appropriation of Language from Texts and Social and Academic Positioning

By the word *texts*, I refer to the trade books that Mrs. Cooper read to students during reading and writing, books that the students wrote, and posters along the classroom walls that represented ideas students had discussed and could refer to as needed. Students in this classroom expressed a high degree of appreciation for books. They enjoyed reading on their own and they showed excitement when Mrs. Cooper read certain books to them, as well as disappointment when time ran out and she had to put those books away until the next day. When I interviewed study participants in January 2015, at the outset of the interview I gave them two options of something to draw. Students could either draw their favorite part of Morning Meeting, or they could draw a character or scene from one of their favorite books. Students also had the choice to not draw

anything. Out of my six focal students, five drew a picture; Matthew chose not to draw, but instead told me about a funny moment from a book. Out of the five students who drew a picture, three chose to draw a character or scene from a book. Similarly, out of the remaining eight study participants who drew a picture, four chose to draw a character or scene from a book. In all, eight out of 13 students chose to draw a character or scene from a book, and five out of 13 chose to draw their favorite part of morning meeting. If Matthew's choice to describe a funny scene from a book is included in the total number of students who chose to focus on a book rather than their favorite part of Morning Meeting, then nine out of 13 students depicted a character or scene from a book. The following table (Table 7) lists the names of students who drew pictures, along with what they drew. I have also included the students' drawings in Appendix I.

Table 7. Student drawings during interviews on January 6, 7, and 8, 2015

| Student Name	Drawing Description
Emma	Morning meeting
Hailey (focal student)	Morning Meeting Activity game called Mouse Trap
Jacob	Morning Meeting Activity game called Mouse Trap
Lily	Morning Meeting Activity game called Four Corners
Madeline (focal student)	Character from the Mo Willems humorous children's book series about a pigeon whose requests to do and get different things are usually denied
Madison	Scene from a fairy book; asked me if she could keep her drawing
Mia	Picture of a fairy from a Halloween fairy book

Table 7 (continued)

Nate (focal student)	Flat Stanley, the main character from the *Flat Stanley* original book and series
Nicholas (focal student)	Scene from a handbook about the video game, Mine Craft
Noah	Scene from a book about the American Revolution in the *Magic Tree House* book series
Ryan	Scene from a handbook about the video game, Mine Craft
Rose	Scene from a book called *Ponies at the Point*
Zoe (focal student)	Morning Meeting Activity game called Mouse Trap

While the difference between the numbers is not a mathematically significant one, the fact that more students chose to draw a character or scene from a book bears mention, because it suggests that books were meaningful to students in lasting ways. In this classroom, students positioned themselves as revoicers of the messages and ideas in certain books. In their revoicing, students enacted storylines of literacy-based talk and exploration, and storylines of care and acceptance.

Books that Mrs. Cooper read to students for the reading mini-lesson and for the writing mini-lesson inspired students to play with the characters and give those characters voice in their own writing. In Zoe's second interview (01-07-2015), she told me that the book, *St. George and the Dragon* (Hodges, 1984)—which Mrs. Cooper had read over a period of several reading mini-lessons in early December—had inspired her to write her own adventure story called *Pirates*

Don't Slay Dragons. She had placed this book on the student author bookshelf to share with her classmates. This book became well-liked among students, thus positioning Zoe as a creative and good writer. As Zoe described the book to me in her interview, she focused on details of plot and character development, which were also the focal points of Mrs. Cooper's reading mini-lesson when she read *St. George and the Dragon* to the class. In writing and sharing her book, Zoe enacted the storyline of literacy-based exploration and she promoted storylines of literacy-based talk that she had learned from Mrs. Cooper, within the classroom community.

Similarly, I learned through interviews that other focal students like Hailey, Matthew and Nate developed books in class that were based on books they had read. Hailey told me in an interview (05-14-2015) that she collaborated with another student, NP, during Academic Choice to write a book called *Don't Let the Pigeon Go Camping*. This title was based on the Mo Willems children's book series about the pigeon with titles like *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* and *Don't Let the Pigeon Stay Up Late*. When I interviewed Mrs. Cooper a few months before, in January, she had informed me that Hailey's willingness to take risks as a writer had grown as the school year progressed and evidence of this could be seen in her humorous take on a book called *If Kids Ran the World* (Dillon & Dillon, 2014). Hailey's book was called *If Feet Ran the World*. Another book that Mrs. Cooper showed me at that time was a nonfiction text that Matthew wrote about pugs. Figure 5 below includes some photos I took of Matthew's book. In my interview with Nicholas a few months later, in May (05-14-2015), Nicholas shared a brief anecdote about Matthew, telling me, "…he's obsessed with pugs. Every time I talk to him he's like, 'I have pug resources,' I'm like what?"
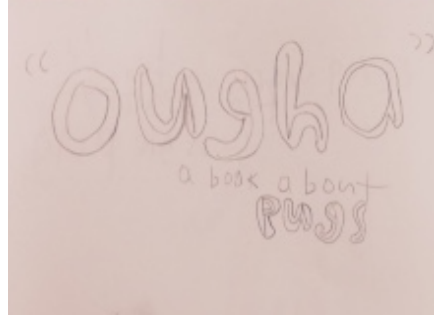
"ougha" a book about pugs
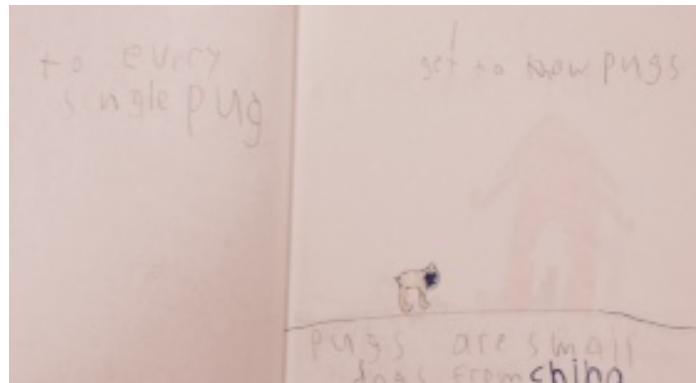
(left page) to every single pug; (right page) 1. get to know pugs… Pugs are small dogs from china.

Figure 5. Photos of parts of Matthew's pug book

It is likely then that Matthew developed his book based on different things he read about pugs, since he had not yet gotten one but wanted to, and he apparently continued to gather reading materials on pugs from the time he wrote and illustrated the book in January through Nicholas's interview in May. Finally, in May Nate shared with me that he and his collaborative writing group had been working on a nonfiction book called *Desert Life* during Academic Choice, which he said was based on a book they had read about the desert.

Tradebooks also took on a unique role in this classroom community in how they related to storylines of care. Mrs. Cooper read books to her students that depicted characters overcoming obstacles through the support of friends and family, along with their own perseverance and belief in their ability to achieve what they set out to do. Examples of such books include *The Patchwork Quilt* (Flournoy, 1985), *Amazing Grace* (Hoffman, 1991), and *Matthew's Dream*

164

(Lionni, 1991). Through whole group discussions on the area rug before, during, and after reading these books, the students had opportunities to share their thoughts and perspectives on different aspects of the books. One day (12-04-2014), students' appropriation of language from the books indicated how those books had resonated on a social level with students. Those books were *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* (McCloud, 2006) and *Ish* (Reynolds, 2004). On the day that *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* was read, I was not in the classroom. However, I was there for the reading of *Ish*. I observed how students connected the two books to each other, and how they used the terms, *bucket filling* and *ish*, as they interacted with one another that day.

The book *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* describes the different ways that people can either fill or empty each other's invisible buckets depending upon how they treat each other. The invisible buckets carry people's sense of self worth. The more care and genuine kindness the people in the book demonstrate toward one another, the more they fill others' buckets and their own. On the contrary, unkind treatment dips into people's buckets. Figure 6 below shows a posted list that the students and Mrs. Cooper generated together.
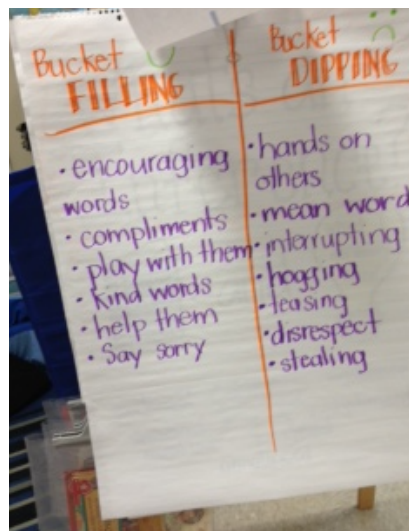
Figure 6. Photo of bucket-filling versus bucket-dipping actions

165

The book *Ish* is about a young boy named Ramon (no accent in the book) who loves to draw. When his brother, Leon, laughs at his drawings, Ramon grows disheartened. In a quick turn of events, Ramon discovers that his little sister, Marisol, has been collecting all of the drawings that he has crumpled up and discarded in the past. Marisol has posted all of those drawings along the walls of her room, and she describes one of a vase as "vase-ish." From that moment on, Ramon realizes the value of ish both in his drawings and his writing. The more he draws and writes, the more content he grows.

On the day that Mrs. Cooper read *Ish* to the class, she prefaced her reading with some brief discussion. She asked students to think about something that feels easy for them. Several students shared aloud. Then she asked students to think about something "that might feel a little tougher for you. It doesn't come quite as easy. You might have to work a little harder or practice a little more or focus longer" (12-04-2014). Again several students shared aloud. She made the point that everyone experiences both and then began to read. When Mrs. Cooper got to the part of the book where Leon's comments and laughter upset Ramon, she asked the students how Ramon had felt to have someone laugh at his work. A student I could not identify made a connection to *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by saying that Leon had "tipped over Ramon's bucket;" this response received comments in agreement from other students. After finishing the book and discussion, the students moved from the writing mini-lesson into their independent work time, during which the goal was to try a new illustration technique drawing a bear.

In a matter of a few minutes, Madeline grew visibly upset with her attempt. She grunted and put her head down. Having noticed, Mrs. Cooper walked over to her and softly said, "No, no, no. Pick your head up. Pick your head up. What did we just learn? You just shared these brilliant ideas on the carpet about not having to be perfect, about trying our best, about being ish-

like." Other students had watched, their facial expressions showing concern for Madeline. Emma came over from another table and showed Madeline her drawing, saying, "Madeline, mine isn't perfect. Mine looks like a spider" (laughs). Nate then walked over with his drawing and showed it to Madeline. "See? Mine's ish," he said, smiling. The classmates at Madeline's table followed suit, commenting on and laughing at their own work. Different voices around the classroom could be heard referring to their drawings as *ish* and *bear-ish*. Some called out to Madeline, while others just commented at their tables. After about ten minutes, Mrs. Cooper asked students to wrap up wherever they were. As they walked to the area rug, Nate put his arm around Jacob's shoulders and said something to which Jacob replied, "You filled my bucket!" As the students took up these terms from two different books, they positioned each other as members of a classroom community in which everyone demonstrated care and concern for others' sense of self worth. In the next section, I look more closely at how students took up ways of speaking that their teacher had taught them in order to enact similar storylines of kindness, as well as storylines of trying to gain social or academic influence.

5.4.2   Students' Ways of Speaking to Enact Social, Academic, and Kindness Storylines

In addition to the language and related meanings and ideas that students appropriated from different kinds of texts, they also appropriated language that Mrs. Cooper used when she interacted with them during instruction. Among the focal students, the ones who most frequently appropriated Mrs. Cooper's language were Hailey, Madeline, and Zoe. Each girl had her own way of doing so, which I argue relates to the social and academic goals each one had. Among all of the participants, I found that girls appropriated this kind of language more frequently than boys. In order of frequency spoken, the phrases as well as terms that students appropriated were:

167

- I have a connection

- I want to add to what [student name] said

- I have a comment and a connection; I have one comment and one connection

- This is similar to what [student name] just said

Students' use of the above language during reading and writing instruction throughout the school year enabled them to do certain kinds of positioning work. Generally speaking, the students understood that by using this language during instruction, they demonstrated active listening. At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Cooper dedicated considerable time to discussing with students the value of active listening to productive participation. Most of the above phrases and terms indicate to a speaker that the listener was paying attention and is attempting to build on to what the speaker just said.

When students used these phrases, they engaged in both social and academic positioning. Socially, students were participating within storylines of respect and acceptance. Most of the phrases above extended conversations by adding a related element to something already said. In building a community of learners, this kind of common ground lends itself to a sense of unity. Students feel safe to participate and share their thoughts and ideas because they expect their peers' responses to validate what they say. In her final interview, as noted in the previous chapter, Mrs. Cooper addressed students' talk as a concern of hers when she reflected on how students did not press each other for clarification or more explanation during reading lessons. In order for that to have been the case, the participation structures during reading (and writing) mini-lessons likely would have needed to change a bit in order to more closely resemble features of Morning Meeting Share, during which time questions for additional information were expected.

As noted, Hailey, Madeline and Zoe were the focal students who most used language that Mrs. Cooper modeled for or encouraged students to use. Hailey most frequently used *I have a connection* and *I want to add to what [student name] said*. Storylines of being a "good student" shaped most of Hailey's participation each day. She wrote the "good student" self-descriptor in a project that students made during the fall. In any classroom, storylines of being a good student are dependent upon how one participates and why. In this classroom, by taking up language designed to promote the construction of knowledge during student interactions, Hailey positioned herself as a good student. By explaining, as she did in her first interview, that she preferred certain participation structures because they could help her continue to improve the quality of her work, Hailey further positioned herself as being a good student. In that October interview, she told me that she preferred the writing mini-lesson portion of writing workshop because, as she put it, "I like to know how to make my work better by doing different things" (10-01-2014). In addition to adhering to the academic storylines of being a good student by participating toward knowledge construction and improving the quality of one's work, Hailey adhered to the social storylines of being a good student by treating others thoughtfully. In this classroom, a good student engaged in storylines of care and acceptance. When she contributed during a discussion, Hailey positioned her peers as having valuable things to say by prefacing her remarks with words like *connection*, *add on to*, and sometimes *similar to*. Such language served to acknowledge the contributions of peers who had already shared their thoughts and ideas.

Zoe most frequently used *I have one comment and one connection*. She participated each day within storylines of social interaction and creative thinking. In the same project that all of the students made in the fall, one of her self-descriptors was *creative*. Storylines of creativity and of social interaction necessitate the desire and ability to collaborate and share with others, and in

doing so, come up with something potentially better than without incorporating others' ideas. Zoe's position as creative was both social and academic. By making a connection to other classroom community members' thoughts, she positioned her peers in similar ways to Hailey. Academically, by contributing a comment and a connection, she fostered cognitive exploration that considered a topic in multiple ways.

Finally, Madeline's appropriation of Mrs. Cooper's language was in keeping with storylines of kindness and of trying to gain social or academic influence. Her positioning was unique because of the content of her talk as well as how she delivered her words. At multiple places throughout my fieldnotes, I wrote that Madeline sometimes seemed to position herself socially as a thoughtful friend, and other times she seemed to want to gain academic influence by assuming a teacher-like tone and by offering positive feedback the way that Mrs. Cooper would do. Additionally, when Madeline offered kind or encouraging thoughts and feedback to her peers, she generally did so without raising her hand. In this classroom community, the students were generally expected to raise their hands to speak, whereas Mrs. Cooper, as the teacher, obviously spoke without this requisite feature of classroom participation. On 11-13-2014, during Writing Share, Mrs. Cooper shared with the class that she had noticed what a few students had done to model parts of their books after the "model text" used at the beginning of the lesson. She showed Zoe, Hailey, Madeline, Noah, and Rose's work. After she had showed their work, she said to the class, "Let's give [student name] some sizzle." She did this with each individual, and each time Madeline would add, "Good job, [student name]." Early in the year, it had been established that silent sizzle was an effective way for students to communicate complimentary encouragement to their peers without all speaking at once.

Why Madeline spoke out like this seemed to be directly related to the positive social and academic positions she was trying to establish. She did not seem to speak out of turn to defy Mrs. Cooper's expectations for student participation. Rather, she was attuned to the forms of talk to which she and her classmates responded well. Consequently, she was positioning herself to use those forms of talk, because she knew her classmates would appreciate it. Madeline understood well the storylines of acceptance, care and kind talk that were expected in this classroom community. Likewise, she had come to understand that storylines of active listening and participation were instrumental to favorable academic positions. Because she had some challenges as a writer and reader, Madeline may have unintentionally determined that in order to become more academically influential, she needed to make her voice heard somehow during discussions and interactions with peers. Thus, in addition to extending good wishes to her classmates when they shared something during Morning Meeting Share, Madeline made use of positive remarks during reading and writing instruction.

For example, on multiple occasions, Madeline, offered positive remarks and evaluations to peers after they read or showed something to the class during Writing Share. On one of these occasions, in November, she used for the first time a word that she had heard another student use earlier in the school year. In August (08-14-2014), Madison shared during Writing Share that she was proud of having used onomatopoeia in her writing through the word "whoosh." When Madison said the word, *onomatopoeia*, Mrs. Cooper and one of the second grade teacher assistants, who had walked in to get some papers, both looked at each other and expressed excitement over Madison's use of this word. Although I cannot claim that this moment was what led to the following moment in November, I do think there was a link. When, in November, Noah read some of his writing during Writing Share, Madeline said to him, "Ooh, that was good

use of onomatopoeia" (11-24-2014). By commenting on his use of this literary device (which he had not mentioned by name), Madeline positioned herself academically as able to use such a term correctly and casually in conversation. At the same time, she positioned herself socially by complimenting Noah.

Similarly, one day during the reading mini-lesson, Zoe came up with an analogy about digging to describe what happens when someone is trying to select a book to read and the person has found one that is too difficult. Zoe said:

Um, it's kind of like you're digging. When a book is too hard, you keep digging and then it's like you come to this huge rock and you have to force, like to the words, you have to sound it out really hard. And you can't sound it out, so you have to dig somewhere else. (09-10-2014)

In response to Zoe's metaphor, Madeline's eyes grew wide and she gasped and then exclaimed, in an audible but controlled volume, "Good job!" It was evident to me at that moment, as I noted in my fieldnotes, that Madeline's exclamation was a direct response to the creative nature of Zoe's analogy. What was not clear was if she was positioning herself socially as an encouraging peer, academically as a teacher-like voice, or a bit of both. However, her words and their force were consistent with other times she had given classmates positive evaluations. Of note is that like Madeline, Mrs. Cooper also found Zoe's analogy useful. As she concluded the reading mini-lesson, Mrs. Cooper explained to the students that it is important to give books a chance,

but if we get to that rock as we're digging and we find that, ugh there's this big rock

172

in the way, and we can't get through that rock, either the words are too hard or we just

can't get to an interesting spot, as readers it's okay for us to stop reading a book and find

a book that will be better for us.

By using Zoe's words, Mrs. Cooper indirectly positioned Madeline's reaction as one that made

academic sense given the analogy's ability to illustrate when it is necessary to select another

book.

Through their interactions with each other and their teacher, the students in my study

demonstrated an ability to recognize the effect that certain terms and phrases could have on their

position within the classroom community. Their participation, talk, and collaborations took place

within storylines of care and acceptance, yet students also imposed their personal goals on

routines and interactions as they tried to position themselves as friends, group members or non-

members, and good writers. In order to establish, maintain, or achieve certain social and

academic positions, students used talk that they had come to learn was useful when engaging in

conversations during reading and writing instruction and during other times of the school day.

6.0   CONCLUSIONS

6.1   EDUCATIONAL ISSUE THIS STUDY ADDRESSES

Through this study I examined how members of a classroom community used particular features of reading and writing instruction and of interaction to negotiate academic and social positions. In particular, I looked closely at specific kinds of talk that the students and teacher in the study used as they enacted storylines of participation, and in the process I traced positions and storylines that contributed to shaping the overall classroom culture of reading and writing. My study builds on previous research that has demonstrated that by better understanding specific details that shape interactions in the moment and over time, educational researchers and practitioners can more positively affect the social constructions of literacy learning (Bomer & Laman, 2004; Scribner, 1984; Street, 1995; Wortham, 2008).

6.2   IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH

As I developed this study, the following research questions guided my work:

How do interactions, routines, and rituals in the classroom develop a classroom culture around

reading and writing?

   a.   What kinds of interactions take place between the teacher and the students?

b. What kinds of interactions take place between the students?

c. What routines and participation structures are an important part of classroom activities?

In this section, I describe how the findings about the teacher and students in this study align with or somehow contest the findings of previous related research, and I discuss what contributions this study makes to theory and methodology. As a matter of consistency with the organization of the findings chapters, I focus first on my findings about the teacher, Mrs. Cooper. I then look at my findings about the students. Finally, I discuss the implications of my study more broadly in terms of theory, methodology, and relevant concepts, such as *power*, *literacy*, *academic talk*, and *social talk*.

6.2.1   Teacher Findings

I generated three major findings about the teacher in my study, Mrs. Cooper. First, Mrs. Cooper's expectations for student interactions fostered storylines of care and respect. She modeled language for students to use as they shared their thinking and worked together, and she dedicated instructional time to explicitly discuss with students why certain ways of speaking and listening matter. Second, Mrs. Cooper used specific terms of address to position students academically and socially. Third, Mrs. Cooper's expectation for participation led students to engage in talk during reading and writing that demonstrated consistent agreement with and acceptance of each other's contributions. Student-to-student talk thus was often supportive and collaborative but did not include productive and purposeful argumentation or the challenging of each other's ideas.

To situate my findings about Mrs. Cooper within my primary research question about how interactions, routines and rituals developed a classroom culture of reading and writing, it is

useful to consider the two relevant sub-questions: (a) What kinds of interactions took place between the teacher and the students? and (c) What routines and participation structures were an important part of classroom activities? Interactions were defined as verbal and nonverbal moments of communication between two or more people. Interactions between Mrs. Cooper and the students were built upon the mutual respect that Mrs. Cooper fostered through speaking quietly and calmly to students and placing the same expectations on them. By emphasizing the importance of the daily Morning Meeting routines of greeting each other, sharing with each other, doing an activity together, and reading the message together, Mrs. Cooper placed value on interactions between students that necessitated cooperation to accomplish shared goals. Within those routines, she helped to establish participation rituals that relied on specific language and actions. Students enacted rituals of interaction such as consciously demonstrating attention to speakers, and passing a greeting around the circle that required a particular action and words (which were not the same every day). Students also used ritualistic language during routines like Morning Meeting Share, for example, "I'm ready for questions." Additionally, students used the expected and available participation structures to develop their own rituals during Share, such as standing up to talk, and when they brought in an item walking it around the inside of the circle for everyone to see. Through their interactions during routines and rituals, the students and teacher co-constructed a classroom culture of demonstrating respect and care for each member.

The concepts of routines and rituals are useful to consider in looking at the development of a culture in a classroom because they are indicative of how students take up or change participation structures. Routines, which are habits that require no thought beyond awareness that it is time to perform them, can change depending upon students' and teachers' patterns of interaction. Rituals, which are also habits but require thought and attention to the task at hand,

can drive the interactions of members of a classroom community in productive or unproductive ways. Certainly, in the context of research, the two terms' fluidity can be problematic in that routines can be become ritualized and rituals can be become routinized, but the work of identifying routines and rituals helps to inform researchers on what the members of a classroom community value and how that relates to social and academic objectives and the relevant forms of talk.

Rather than look at routines and rituals as just different times and spaces throughout the school day, my study examined them as meaningful structures for participation that played a role in how interactions are shaped. Specifically, the features that made something a routine or a ritual enhanced participants' talk and actions within them. My findings and methods align with Zacher's (2008) emphasis on studying "the social field of the classroom" (p. 37) in order to understand hierarchical positioning among students. Zacher also wrote,

> Every day, teachers conduct literacy programs of various stripes, and students (usually) follow directions, write papers, take tests, and turn in homework. Symbolic struggles take place amidst these mundane routines… (p. 37)

In my study, what happened between classroom community members, the "symbolic struggles" they enacted within routines and rituals, was inextricable from the structures of those routines and rituals.

By defining and seeking to identify within their data such concepts as routines and rituals, my study adds to existing qualitative work a conceptual dimension that contributes to how social and academic talk in classroom settings are examined. For example, if one has determined that academic talk is anything that relates directly to discipline-specific content, and that social talk is anything that relates to students' lived experiences, then one can look closely at

how each form of talk relates to features of the routine or ritual in which it takes place. Thus, the notions of routines and rituals added a descriptive layer in my study to what is typically considered social talk and academic talk in existing classroom discourse research in ELA classes. If classroom discourse researchers strictly juxtapose social talk with academic talk, without exploring in an explicit manner the participation structures that foster talk, they run the risk of emphasizing the value of one form of talk over the other, or of not attending to how social talk and academic talk are mutually interdependent as well as necessary for student learning.

The findings from this study align with those of researchers such as Dyson (1998) and Rex (2002) that the positioning work that teachers do can support the co-construction of positive forms of interaction during reading and writing instruction. Additionally, my findings may offer insights into what researchers like Orellana (1996) found to have been missing instructionally in her study. Although the students in that study engaged in argumentation during literacy instruction, they exerted power over each other in ways that silenced some and therefore, negatively affected the construction of knowledge. Had those students engaged initially in significant instruction on socially respectful and inclusive dialogue, they may have more successfully examined texts with more equal participation and more dynamic construction of knowledge. My data analysis and findings, for example, show how Mrs. Cooper attended explicitly to the features of different kinds of collaborative interactions, starting each day with social engagement before progressing into academic work. Thus, my study demonstrates how the social nature of literacy learning can be shaped in positive ways through classroom instruction that addresses both the social and academic aspects of student language and behavior. At the same time, however, I recognize the value of academic conflict in the classroom. Although the students and teacher in my study had co-constructed a reading and writing culture of respect and

acceptance for others' ideas, missing were features of argumentation and students asking each other questions for clarity and information as part of their cultural construction.

This study also adds to scholarly understandings of the complexity of power and language (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004; Wertsch, 1998), in that my findings reveal instances in which speakers unintentionally positioned certain concepts or groups as having more or less authority. For example, Mrs. Cooper's description of the purposefulness and value of Morning Meeting Share allowed her reasoning to be contested by students. Specifically, when Mrs. Cooper said to the students, "Why do you think we take the time to share about ourselves during Morning Meeting? We could be doing math or reading or writing, but instead we're sharing," she guided students toward understanding that in their classroom community, times for social interaction were just as valuable as times for academic instruction. However, her use of the modal auxiliary verb, *could*, presented students with an alternative, thus reminding them of the importance that the academic content instruction holds over how to spend time in school. Mrs. Cooper's language, by that logic, may have indirectly and unintentionally identified academic talk as having more value and consequently more authority in the classroom than social talk.

Regardless of how one interprets Mrs. Cooper's language and the students' perception thereof, my study's focus on longitudinal data highlights how the consistent use of participation structures and students' uptake of those structures play a major role in where power or authority are located and what positions become available. My study, therefore, adds to the existing landscape methodological and theoretical notions about examining classroom culture and the location of authority within it. Methodologically, my study demonstrates why longitudinal studies on classroom culture development should include both micro and macro analyses of language and events. Such work can help to uncover what specifically leads to the tensions that

179

exist in classrooms between social and academic authority. Theoretically, my study shows how specific times of day can take on new significance depending upon how participants co-construct those times through available positions, as well as what participants' interactions mean for academic and social features of the developing figured, or cultural, worlds of the classroom.

Additionally, ethnographic methodology enabled me to identify how Mrs. Cooper positioned herself and the students in ways that help to extend the work of others like Vetter (2010), who made the case for a "strengths-based perspective of teacher education" (p. 61). As Vetter pointed out, pre-service teachers, and I would add in-service teachers, benefit from models of what to do. My research demonstrates how a teacher's willingness to share authority with students and her effectiveness in establishing expectations for respectful interactions helped to create a positive social climate. At the same time, and as the teacher in my study observed, more critique through questioning between students could have been included during instructional times. Researchers can actually draw from these notions in how they design and execute studies. If we approach our work with the goal of reporting both effective and ineffective instruction, we approximate truth more closely.

Although I did not partner with Mrs. Cooper to design instruction, my findings suggest that partnerships between researchers and practitioners can be mutually beneficial. Ultimately, researchers and practitioners share the same goal of developing and implementing instruction that leads to students' academic and social growth. At times, I shared with Mrs. Cooper incidents between students that I observed, and far more frequently, she shared with me her insights and other valuable information about the classroom community. In hindsight, my study was rather one-sided, with the exception of what I can share with others through this report. This is an inherent issue within research, but one that can be addressed through increasing researcher-

practitioner partnerships, and as I argue based on my findings, partnerships designed to promote social as well as academic development. Smagorinsky (2013), for example, advocated for dedicating instructional time to students' development of empathy and social skills. He has helpfully interpreted Vygotsky's theories about education, one of which was "that people should know how to treat others respectfully in order to promote *feelings of inclusion* that enable them to become productive members of society" (p. 196; emphasis in original). Smagorinsky offered specific ways for students and teachers to engage in process drama as a way to examine the perspectives of all members of a community in relation to different conflicts, "including members of the different social groups, people in authority, and other stakeholders" (p. 196).

In considering and dealing with the tensions and potentially productive interplay between social and academic objectives in classrooms, notions of inclusion and empathy are necessary for doing away with instructional approaches that are culturally narrow and as a result, exclusionary to many learners. As Smagorinsky (2013) pointed out, "schools… tend to remain dedicated to the values of the White middle class" (p. 197). Sociocultural perspectives on learning, in addition to literacy, can help researchers and practitioners to partner not only with each other, but with students as well, in order to design instruction that, in both talk and action, affords equal importance to social positioning and academic positioning. Ultimately, this kind of work can help to relocate power structures in classrooms. If students learn to treat each other with genuine respect, they can, ideally, learn to approach conflict more objectively. Likewise, they can learn to examine conflict and debate that are social as well as academic, by turning to existing literature within different academic disciplines. Power, which is always present (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004), would be redistributed. Power is often contested among individual students, who bring into the classroom and use particular forms of social status gained outside of the classroom

(Godley, 2003). Instead, some power would be relocated to the most reliable sources of evidence and how those are presented.

6.2.2   Student Findings

I generated three major findings about the students who participated in the study. First, the students brought academic talk into social spaces. Second, the students brought social talk into academic spaces. Finally, the students used language from various sources, including different kinds of texts and the teacher, in order to do simultaneously social and academic positioning work. To situate these findings about students within my primary research question about how interactions, routines and rituals developed a classroom culture of reading and writing, it is useful to consider the sub-questions: (a) What kinds of interactions took place between the teacher and the students? (b) What kinds of interactions took place between students? and (c) What routines and participation structures were an important part of classroom activities?

Integral to the routines and rituals in which students participated and interacted were the structures through which they did so. Through Morning Meeting, students routinely began every day facing each other and they ritually passed around a greeting. The structures, routines, interactions, and rituals within that time contributed to a classroom culture that valued talk between peers and observation through active listening.

As students grew more comfortable with the routines of Morning Meeting, they exerted more influence over how they participated. Through agentive moves like bringing in items, students engaged their friends in such work as trying to determine more information about the items through joint observation and description. Texts also made their way into Share. By using the social space of Share to discuss a range of texts, students positioned each other and

themselves as readers and writers beyond the instructional times during which reading and writing were part of the expected routine.

Through these findings, I contribute to existing literature that considers agency and authority in the classroom (Rex et al., 2010) detailed information on what can promote or result in student agency and authority development. My analyses focused on how the teacher and the students' interactions across time were shaped by and shaped the participation structures and artifacts of interaction within instructional categories. In turn, my findings led to clearer identification of what specifically led to shifts in authority and to agentive moves. For example, Mrs. Cooper explicitly told students at the beginning of the year that for Morning Meeting Share, they would not bring in items. However, the first item that was brought in, Emma's caterpillar gift to one of the butterfly groups that did not have a caterpillar anymore, was accepted because it aligned with both academic and social objectives. Emma's item contributed to the academic work students were doing for their life cycle projects, and also to the community of care that Mrs. Cooper and the students worked together to foster.

In this instance, the teacher conceded some of her authority over participation structures to the authority of science and of social cohesion. The students also assumed authority through the agency they exercised in bringing in items from home that were academic or social in nature. These findings add a necessary social dimension to what others like Engle and Conant (2002) have found, which is that when teachers share authority with students and encourage shared accountability, students become engaged in disciplinary content matter. In my study, the students became engaged both academically and socially through the authority they were able to take up within the participation structures Mrs. Cooper designed and how they all interacted within those structures.

Whereas existing research has focused on the relationship between student choice and student self-efficacy (Walker, 2003), my study adds a link between student choice and teacher willingness to improvise during instruction. The element of choice was something that Mrs. Cooper consistently engaged students in considering throughout the year. Whether teaching writing strategies or strategies for self-control, Mrs. Cooper often told students to think about what might be the most useful or helpful choice they could make, and she demonstrated flexibility toward students' choices. This flexibility was evident through how she improvised during instructional times based on students' ideas, reminders, suggestions, and purposeful choices. The students' agency across different situations, and their ability to exercise that agency with some authority were the result of Mrs. Cooper's willingness to improvise in both academic and social situations. Her improvisation and ability to concede a certain degree of decision-making to students enabled her to share authority, which encouraged students to take up the unique positions as authors that they gradually took up. Students' interactions with their teacher and with each other around texts fostered their agentive actions in ways that contributed to developing storylines of a community of care and of writing collaboration. These findings demonstrate the interrelatedness of positioning, student choice, shared teacher-student authority, teacher improvisation, and students' social and academic agency. By actively teaching students strategies they can use in academic and social situations and encouraging student choice in the social and academic work they do, teachers position themselves to be flexible and improvise during the school day and they position students as competent and strategic doers. Additionally, these findings show how student choice and related agency are mutually interdependent with shared authority. With that, my findings build onto ideas from previous work (Cazden, 2001;

Vetter, 2010) that consider the value of improvisation in interaction for students' literacy positioning.

My study also adds to existing research on positioning and the use and sharing of texts (Bomer & Laman, 2004) approaches to texts that afford students positive social and academic positions. The texts that the students and Mrs. Cooper shared across the school day, particularly during Morning Meeting Share, Writing Share, and Academic Choice became sources of social meaning when members of the classroom community appropriated specific language from books. Appropriation took the form of words students spoke in interaction with each other to demonstrate kindness and care. It also took the form of writing ideas that students took up from reading trade books or each other's authored books. Texts enabled students to bring academic talk into the social space of Morning Meeting Share, and to bring social talk into the academic space of Academic Choice. Whereas Bomer and Laman (2004) made a case for the social nature of writing and writers' vulnerability as a result of real or possible positioning when sharing texts, my study demonstrates how texts can be used to promote a sense of safety and engaged interaction. Through purposeful text selection and discussion about the relationships and words among the characters, teachers and students can co-construct a classroom culture in which texts become valuable artifacts for interactions that are both social and academic. My findings also point to the usefulness of participation structures that grant students more authority over the dialogue, and of teacher positioning of students directly as "authors." This positioning of students coupled with talk that positions the authors of children's trade books as real people who make particular choices when writing (including such details as to whom authors dedicate their books) makes those authors more accessible to children in the classroom. Such positioning helps to situate texts as driving and driven by the interactions and exploratory writing of writers not so

185

different from students themselves. This, in turn, can help to make texts less intimidating and more inviting to reluctant readers and writers.

In keeping with the findings of other studies (Bomer & Laman, 2004; Dyson, 1993; Godley, 2003), the findings from this study demonstrate that during classroom literacy instruction, participants' positioning work is concurrently academic and social. As the students and teacher in my study did academic and social positioning work through interactions, routines and rituals, they developed a classroom culture of reading and writing in which every member of the classroom community was considered a reader and writer to be given respect and to be cared for and valued. In that culture, there were students who stood out as, in students' own words, "smart" and "good writers." However, there were no students who were singled out for negative aspects of their reading or writing.

6.2.3 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

With regard to theory and methodology, my study contributes to how positioning theory and storylines as part of literacy learning can be productively examined through longitudinal ethnography. Specifically, my longitudinal perspective illuminated how the co-construction of storylines is accomplished through the ongoing interactions among all members in a classroom community. Teachers and students use the available participation structures and semiotic and material artifacts in order to position each other and themselves in particular ways, but a longitudinal approach to participants' interactive work enables researchers to see the broader collective social and academic implications beyond what could otherwise be interpreted as merely self- and not other-centered actions. My goal was to look closely at positioning within interactions, identify the operating storylines, and then trace how those storylines developed over

time into figured worlds. Here, rather than *figured worlds*, I used the term *classroom culture*, as this enabled me to locate student and teacher positioning and student learning specifically within the space of participants' daily interactions. In order to study positioning in the moment and over time, my methodology necessitated ethnographic forms of data collection. The combined use of micro and macro analyses can be used to demonstrate how multiple instances of positioning across different times of the school day and of the school year coalesce to create a shared storyline, and how storylines and culture are co-created and evolved through the actions and interactions of students and teachers.

Additionally, my study findings add useful perspectives to existing literacy research that has demonstrated the relationship between social positioning and academic positioning, and how this relationship can either enhance or detract from student learning (Bausch, 2007; Dyson, 2006; Godley, 2003). Based on my findings, I assert that in this classroom, the available social and academic positions and how students were expected to enact them enhanced student learning. Inherent to that give and take was the understanding and expectation that in this classroom community, demonstrating respect and care (social awareness) was given equal value to demonstrating academic competence. The time spent on instruction about why and how to demonstrate respect and care seemed necessary to make the classroom a place in which all students felt welcome and encouraged to participate. Thus, what could be labeled social instructional time, rather than detract from student learning, seemed to support learning by fostering active involvement from every member of the classroom community.

Certainly, one question to ask regarding my findings is whether all students' academic literacy actually made gains, since my data collection did not include student scores on measures of reading or writing. Furthermore, when students wrote collaboratively during Academic

Choice, there were students like Mia who often did more drawing than writing. Researchers and practitioners who take a less ideological and more autonomous approach to literacy could argue that Mia's literacy skills were not being developed or enhanced through these collaborations. This would be a fair point to make, and one for which a rebuttal would likely require some quantifiable measure of student progress. However, of note is that the collaborations took place during a time that was not intended for extended writing or talking about writing; Academic Choice was a separate time from Writing and Reading instruction. Students took up their positions as authors to such an extent that they created the collaborative writing that occurred in the Academic Choice space. Among experienced and published authors, some degree of ability to give and receive feedback is generally expected, thus the students were organically participating in practices similar to those of actual authors. Regardless of the approach to literacy that researchers and practitioners take, it is unlikely that too many would consider students engaging in authentic writing practices to be a negative effect of instruction. On the contrary, researchers like Dyson (1992), and Bomer and Laman (2004) have described authentic writing practices as those that use texts and interactions in ways that foreground writers' lived experiences. For example, Bomer and Laman wrote,

> Like these children's texts, furthermore, the texts of adult writers serve as meeting places: sometimes sites of affiliation and sometimes contested difference, stages for competence and also difficulty and failure, spaces of collaboration and multi-voicedness or of private ownership, places sometimes to be visible and sometimes to hide. (p. 456)

The act of writing is a social one, whether an author writes alone or in collaboration. Because writing requires thought and development of ideas, it can be argued that sketching one's ideas or

talking about those ideas with others can function as precursors or simultaneous actions to putting those ideas into words on paper.

6.3   FUTURE RESEARCH

The implications from my study lend themselves to a call for research that seeks to more fully understand and depict the value of positive and purposeful interactions between all members of classroom communities as they engage in reading and writing instruction. Future studies could, as this study did, focus on specific tools used in literacy instruction and how members of the classroom communities use those tools to construct knowledge. However, those future studies would do so in more diverse schools and classrooms and in multiple classrooms within the same school and in different schools. Sociocultural and sociolinguistic approaches to human interaction facilitate efforts toward understanding how participants within communities of practice, in this case, literacy learning in classrooms, use tools in which are already embedded social, cultural, and historical meanings (Polman, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). Useful insights may be gained about how the tools currently available and used in schools take on different or similar meanings depending upon the configurations of participants and how those participants interact through reading, writing, and talking. For example, future studies could conduct simultaneous data collection across different classrooms. Classrooms included in these studies would ideally consist of limited diversity (for example, that which may be found in rural areas) and would also consist of considerable diversity. Student demographics across classrooms would ideally reflect the larger community. The goal of such studies would not be to isolate specific features of literacy instruction that work better than others but rather to generate patterns about the kinds of

interactions that support growth for students in social and academic ways some of the factors that make such interactions possible.

Because of what can be learned from examining how members of classroom communities use texts to do positioning work during literacy-based instruction across the span of a full academic year, more studies in the future should, like this one, be longitudinal. Future longitudinal studies could also follow specific students in order to observe and describe how they interact with and engage in positioning with a different teacher and new group of classmates while developing a classroom culture of reading and writing. Although the work that inspired Polman's (2012) ideas for designing such learning environments took place outside of school, his ideas have relevance and hold the potential for some transfer in school. He explicated elements for planning and realizing "trajectories over time"—paired as trajectories of participation and identification—noting, "These elements are made real through acts of positioning and framing that are negotiated and taken up by the facilitators and the learners within these learning environments" (p. 226). In order to approximate accurate determinations about the cultural, social, and linguistic work that students do as they read and write in classroom communities, substantial periods of data collection are necessary. The classroom life is a dynamic one, and researchers must be careful to capture its growth as fully as possible.

With this in mind, future research could also focus on intervention studies in which teachers and researchers partnered to develop year-long curricula that used some of the same principles of talk that Mrs. Cooper used to foster respect and trust among students. While descriptive research such as that in this study is valuable, research that aims to support the growth and opportunities for all students is vital. As the findings from this study suggest, when all students' social needs are factored into instruction, the likelihood increases that all students

will feel safe to participate. Part of the design and implementation of studies of year-long curricula should include scaffolds developed to progress toward having students engage in respectful and meaningful argumentation as they work together to examine texts critically.

With intervention studies in mind, another area for consideration in future research is the development of a year-long writing curriculum that focuses on affording students expert positions as writers at the beginning of the year, and eventually, grows in challenging them to write across a range of genres. For example, as Julia and I looked at samples of students' writing during her final interview (05-10-2015), she noticed that for some children who were reluctant writers at the beginning of the year, their ability to play with informational texts sparked creativity as they played with text features and vocabulary. Julia commented,

> At the beginning of the year all we do are personal narratives. All we do are you know stories from our life. And I never thought about really, until now, I always thought like for kids, well they're just easier stories to write. That's just what kids write—little stories about their life. But I wonder for kids if this [informational text writing] is you know, less risky, because think about it, as an author this is putting them in a position of power by imparting information, rather than a position of vulnerability of like I'm going to expose something from my life. And it's something that they're teaching others.

Future researcher-practitioner designed studies can examine how through particular student writerly positions, for example as information-sharer rather than personal life sharer, learning gains can be made that are both social and academic. Teachers would also have the opportunity to reflect on positioning in their classroom, and how the instruction they design can support children socially, emotionally, and academically.

Similarly, although I did not address this as one of my major findings, several students shared with me during interviews that they enjoyed writing for younger audiences, including younger siblings and kindergartners. With this in mind, and based on the extent to which students placed their self-authored books on the bookshelf originally reserved for published trade books, future research could include studies that examine how students share their writing and ideas in the classroom with each other when they know they are writing for authentic audiences. Those audiences could be each other, younger readers, or community members to whom students choose to write. Because students would have specific readers in mind as they write, they would be able to define their writing goals more purposefully and to offer each other feedback that directly addresses those goals. Such studies could examine features of student writers' talk as they work together to help each other draft and revise writing for different audiences.

6.4   IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The implications of these findings for practice are specific to the language that teachers use and to the kinds of participation structures they design. With regard to language, teachers would do well to adopt features of talk that, like Mrs. Cooper's, position students directly as doers of the content they learn and the ways they are expected to participate. For example, addressing students as writers, readers, authors, friends, scientists, mathematicians, and other similar terms is academically and socially supportive, because it indicates belief in students and it locates all students within the same community. It also sends students the message that in their classroom they engage in the kinds of practices in which real authors, scientists and mathematicians engage, and that they do so respectfully as friends or other terms that position students to acknowledge

192

and care for each other. For example, Mrs. Cooper at times addressed students as *kind kids*. Similarly, a teacher might address students as *caring citizens* or some other term that promotes values of respect for the dignity and worth of all, as well as responsibility to each other. Although using these terms may seem artificial or surface-level, my findings demonstrate that they had a strong influence on shaping the culture of the classroom, its literacy activities, and the productive academic and social subject positions that students took up throughout the school year.

The reason that these terms became meaningful among students is that their use was accompanied by consistent actions that demonstrated that Mrs. Cooper respected students' contributions and each person's individual worth. Had her language lacked the substance of instruction that engaged students in discussing features of texts purposefully, or had her language lacked instruction that included specific communication strategies for social as well as academic talk, her words may very well have been perceived by students as insincere.

For example, at the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Cooper's use of the term *friends* was something about which I expressed uncertainty in my field notes. My concern was that this term lent itself to students understanding that their teacher wanted to position herself as a social equal to them in ways that could hinder the necessary imbalance of authority between an adult teacher or mentor and a young pupil or apprentice; this imbalance is necessary for learning because as a result of it, young pupils and apprentices place trust in a more knowledgeable other to guide them toward independent learning toward informed thought, talk, and action.

However, as the year progressed and a range of verbal and non-verbal interactions coalesced around consistent ideas, I recognized that Mrs. Cooper's use of *friends* was a deliberate attempt to get students accustomed to the idea that their entire community was

composed of people who would treat each other with respect and care, the way that friends do. She was not saying, "*My* friends," rather she was indicating that students were friends to each other and that they were a whole class of friends. As seen in Appendix H, Mrs. Cooper spent time discussing the significance of *friends* with students, which emphasized the importance of that word to their classroom community. In terms of practice, the implication is not that teachers should refer to students as friends. The implication is that teachers should include in their instruction deliberate decisions about how to interact with students, and that these interactions should consist of language that will promote a respectful community. In order for teachers' talk to be effective in its purpose, teachers' actions must be consistent with their talk.

With regard to participation structures, my study suggests that teachers should disrupt traditional ones in which the teacher leads and evaluates all conversations. Instead, teachers should include as part of instruction substantial time for students to directly share their thoughts and ideas with each other and to ask each other questions—similar to the Morning Meeting Share routine and related rituals. If teachers explicitly and gradually prepare students on how to share ideas and how to ask each other fruitful questions, these kinds of participation structures will become a familiar and comfortable way of interacting and will support the development of a literacy learning community in which students all see themselves as capable and necessary contributors.

In order for all students to feel welcome and safe to participate, teachers must attend to the social positions that are present and that may present themselves. With these in mind, teachers must, as Mrs. Cooper did, dedicate instructional time to explicitly focusing on respect and support between peers and why it is imperative to collaborative learning. The texts that teachers select for reading and discussing can serve as models not only for student writing, but

194

also for student interaction. Teachers would do well to consistently throughout the school year select texts that promote values of kindness and sincerity while at the same time represent people from all possible categories that relate to culture, language, and way of life. These include ethnicity, race, religion, gender identification, and physical or mental limitations (and related abilities). Along with this kind of thoughtful text selection, and once careful work has been done to establish mutual respect among all members of the class, teachers should engage students in reading, writing and talking about texts in developmentally appropriate ways that critically examine representations of race and gender.

In order to be able to talk with students candidly and respectfully about a range of issues, teachers must approach their practice with the expectation that they will improvise as needed. In my final interview with Julia (05-10-2015), I asked her to discuss how her beliefs about learning inform the decisions she makes in the classroom. She replied,

> I think first and foremost, every child is capable of learning. I think that's just foundational. This is their basic human right, to receive a really good education. I also think as, you know, I've gained more years of experience, I've learned each child is very different and needs very different things. I've also learned that teaching requires a certain amount of just, um, spontaneity. Like we have to be able to set the plans to the side and deal with what we need to in the moment. Whether that's you know having a tough conversation with a kid, giving a hug, like teaching them something completely different than what we needed to. That's tough as a beginning teacher because you have this plan and you know, we're going to do this plan, I worked so hard on this plan!

Her final point about this kind of improvisation being more difficult for beginning teachers speaks to possible teaching points that are not considered substantively in teacher education

courses. We might want to consider how to train future teachers to adopt the necessary mindset, language, and skills to make improvisation not only possible, but productive.

Finally, teachers should reflect on how they interact with students during discussions. Rather than evaluate students' academic contributions, Mrs. Cooper responded with more questions, such as, "Can you say more about that?" and "Does anyone agree or disagree?" By responding in this way, Mrs. Cooper contributed to creating a space in which students could use their talk with her and with one another to examine their interpretations of texts and ideas. Unless a response requires an immediate correction, teachers can support their students as independent thinkers by giving them appropriate time and guidance to evaluate their own comprehension. Because it represents a shift away from what could be seen as our tendencies as adults to correct children right away, this teaching practice may require quite a bit of practice. Done thoughtfully, it can support a community of learners who develop a sense of ownership over the strategies they use to read, write and talk.

6.5   LIMITATIONS

My study was limited in several ways, primarily in terms of methods for data collection. One limitation was the video camera placement. Because Matthew's parents explained to me prior to the first day of school that he was highly sensitive to having a video camera focused in on him, I made the decision to leave the video camera in one spot in the classroom at all times. Related to this decision was the issue that not all students' parents gave consent for their children to participate in my study. Because there were participants and non-participants grouped together at the different tables, I determined that it would be more appropriate for me to not focus in on

196

small groups with my camera and instead capture what I could with field notes and with the camera zoomed out to get as much of the classroom as possible. If I had been able to situate my camera in different places throughout the classroom, in particular closer to where the students met each day for Morning Meeting and for Writing and Reading Mini-lessons, I might have been able to capture much more student talk that was difficult to hear when I viewed videos for transcription.

Another limitation was that my data focused on only one set of students and one teacher. Within this classroom, including non-participants, 13 students were White (one of who was of Puerto Rican descent), four students were Black, two were students of color of Mexican descent, and two were of Asian descent. Among the non-participants were both students of Mexican descent and one Black and one White student. The number of boys and girls who participated were split fairly closely, with 10 girls and seven boys. Therefore, although I selected focal students that represented more diversity, the class itself was not as diverse as a typical elementary class. The generalizability of my results is low. The fact that not all students participated added another element to my limitations. Although I had rich data on the students who did participate, I think that for a study that focuses on the development of a classroom culture by looking at positioning among students and between students and teachers, every member's contributions to that culture should be included.

Finally, it should be noted again that the culture of this particular school, as described to me by the school principal, was unique in that parents were expected to comply with and support the school's philosophical and pedagogical emphases. Presumably then, the parents who agreed with this understanding encouraged their children to do the same. Such widespread support for

teachers and administrators from parents may not be the case in most schools, which makes the findings here perhaps more of a challenge to replicate to a similar degree in a different setting.

Despite these limitations, my study offers insights into the value of creating safe spaces for social interaction as part of daily instructional routines. Unlike other studies in which students used forms of power in order to limit or silence others' speech during literacy activities (Christianakis, 2010; Godley, 2003; Orellana, 1996), my study shows possibilities for a teacher and students to share participation among all members. The development of empathy and respect for the dignity of others must be treated as a necessary educational foundation. By dedicating time to talking with students about features of responsible citizenship in a community, teachers do not waste academic instructional time. Rather, an emphasis on positive social interaction can support academic learning, because when all students in a classroom participate and contribute, the construction of knowledge ideally benefits from enhanced diversity of perspectives. This diversity reflects our society more broadly, and therefore prepares students to more successfully navigate social, historical, cultural, and political terrain.

FIRST STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

First Student Interview Protocol (for October 2014)

*Before beginning to ask questions, I will ask each student to do the following:

      Please draw a picture of yourself and the friends you usually play with during recess, and

      what you all do. (I will then ask each student to tell me who is in the drawing, what they

      are doing, and anything else that might help to clarify some aspect of the picture.)

Table 8. First student interview protocol

Main Question	Follow-up 1	Follow-up 2 (only if necessary)
What is your favorite subject in school?	Why?	Can you tell me more about that?
What is your favorite time of day in school?	Why?	Can you tell me more about that?

Do you like to write? Why? / Why not?	(If yes): What kinds of things do you like to write about?
	
	(If no): Even if you don't always enjoy writing, is there something that you do like to write about?
		(If yes or no): Do you like to share things you write with others?
		   (If yes): Who? And why do you like to share your writing with___?
		   (If no): Why not?

Table 8 (continued)

Do you like to read? Why? / Why not?	(If yes): What kinds of things do you like to read about?
	
	(If no): Even if you don't always enjoy reading, are there some things that you do like to read about?
		(If yes or no): Do you like to read with others?
		    (If yes): Who? And what is it that you enjoy about reading with ___?
		    (If no): Why not?

Although I've got a pretty good idea from watching, can you talk me through a typical writing workshop?	What do you like the most about writing workshop? The least?	Why?
Again, although I've got a pretty good idea from watching, can you talk me through a typical reading workshop?	Can you tell me a little about the reading groups?	Can you tell me a little about *your* reading group?
How do you feel about spelling? Why?	Can you tell me a little about spelling groups?	Can you tell me a little about *your* spelling group?

APPENDIX B

SECOND STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Second Student Interview Protocol (for the end of fall semester and of bulk of data collection

period)

*Before beginning to ask questions, I will ask each student to do the following:

Please draw a picture of you and your classmates doing your favorite part of Morning

Meeting.

-AND/OR-

Please draw a picture of a character or a scene from a book you have read that you really

liked.

Table 9. Second student interview protocol

Main Question	Follow-up 1	Follow-up 2 (only if necessary)
Why is Morning Meeting an important part of the school day?	What do you like or not like about Morning Meeting?	Can you tell me more about that?
Can you tell me about the closing meeting you all have each day?	What do you like or not like about closing meeting?	Can you tell me more about that?

Table 9 (continued)

What book has Mrs. Anderson read to you and your classmates that you have really enjoyed?	What about that book did you like?	Has that book given you ideas for writing your own stories?
What book has a classmate written that you have really enjoyed?	What about that book did you like?	
When you are writing, who do you have in mind as your reader?	How does having your reader in mind help you write better?	(If tough for student to answer): Do you write more for yourself?
Why might good readers be good writers?	Can you think of a time when you have made a connection between something you were reading and something you were writing?	Perhaps between a book you were reading and a story you were writing?

SECOND STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Final Student Interview Protocol (for end of school year; May 2015)

Table 10. Final student interview protocol

Figured Worlds and Positioning				
Identity	Cultural tools/significance	Agency	Interaction	Situation
What kinds of descriptors do the students use to talk about themselves?	What participation structures become affordances for or limitations to the students?	How do students act on participation structures in ways that redefine those structures?	How do students use language and non-verbal modes of communication to convey alignment, detachment, or something else altogether?	What is the relationship between things that are salient in the moment and things that become salient over time? How do storylines evolve into figured worlds?
1. What do I want to better understand about Morning Meeting **Share** through the student interviews? *How students have come to view this time of each day, and how their views relate to reading and writing and/or to relationships with their peers.* 2. Why do I want to know this? *Because Share is not designed as a literacy space, nor was it originally intended as a space for students to bring in texts or other physical items, but as a result of students' actions and talk, it has become an increasingly important literacy and social space over time.*				

Table 10 (continued)

Interview Questions about Share:
1. Could you draw a picture of Share for me?
   a. What is happening in this picture?
2. What is Morning Meeting Share like?
   a. Who usually talks during Share?
   b. What kinds of things do you all talk about? For example, what kinds of questions and comments come up?
3. I have noticed that books are sometimes brought into Share during Morning Meeting. What kinds of books have you or your classmates brought during this time?
   a. What kinds of things are shared about the books?
4. What other kinds of things have you or your classmates brought in during Share?
   a. If you bring in something to share, how do you decide what to bring?

1. What do I want to better understand about the **writing mini-lesson** on the rug, through the student interviews?
   How students view this time in relation to how I view it, that is, what the structure of the writing mini-lesson means to students.
2. Why do I want to know this?
   Because students' reported interpretations about this time can help me to make sense of video recorded interactions between them and between them and their teacher. What students can also shed light on what they have come to understand is worth knowing about writing, and it can shed light on what they have come to understand as the expected ways to participate and interact during this time. Finally, how they talk about and visually represent this time can demonstrate similarities and differences between the structure of Share and the structure of Writing Mini-Lessons, both of which I argue present affordances and constraints for students as academic and social spaces.

Interview Questions about Writing Mini-Lessons:
1. Could you draw a picture of a typical writing mini-lesson for me?
   a. What is happening in this picture?
2. What are writing mini-lessons like?
   a. Who usually talks during this time?
   b. What does she/do you all talk about?
3. What kinds of books does Mrs. Cooper usually read to you during this time?
   a. Why does she read these books to you?
4. What is something, or what are some things you have learned during writing mini-lessons this year?
   a. How have you used this in your own writing?

Table 10 (continued)

1. What do I want to better understand about **Independent Writing time** at table seats?
   How students view this time in relation to the mini-lesson, and if students report talking about their writing with peers at their tables (and if so, how they talk about it).
2. Why do I want to know this?
   Because this information can help set up a comparison and contrast with the physical and other participation structures of morning meeting share and the writing mini-lesson, both of which are at the rug. This can also help me to better understand the relationship between table seats and students' social and academic negotiations, with a particular focus on literacy.

Interview Questions about Independent Writing:
1. Could you draw a picture of you and your classmates during independent writing?
   a. What is happening in this picture?
2. What is independent writing time like?
   a. Who do you usually talk with during this time?
   b. What do you talk about?
3. What kinds of books have you written during independent writing?
   a. How do you decide what you are going to write about?
4. Who do you go to for help with your writing?
   a. Why?
   b. Who else do you go to for help with your writing? And why?
5. Who have you helped with their writing?
   a. How?

1. What do I want to know about **when students share their writing** at the end of writing class?
   How often they report doing this, how they describe this time in their own words, and how the participation structures during this time relates to the participation structures during morning meeting share.
2. Why do I want to know this?
   Because I believe that there is a difference between how students interact during share and during this time, in terms of how they talk with one another, and I want to get a better understanding about why this might be.

Table 10 (continued)

Interview Questions about Sharing Writing:
1. Can you draw a picture of yourself or a classmate sharing writing with the whole class?
   a. What is happening in this picture?
2. How often do you all share what you have written with the whole class?
3. What is sharing writing like?
   a. Who usually talks during sharing writing?
   b. How do you decide what to share?
4. What kinds of things do you all talk about when you share writing with the whole class?
   a. How has this helped you?

1. What do I want to know about **academic choice time**?
   How it has evolved into a time for students to read each other's books, and more recently, into a time for them to collaborate on writing books.
2. Why do I want to know this?
   This is something that has happened organically among the students, and suggests important things about how students demonstrate agency as they interact as writers and readers. Additionally, I have seen dramas play out between friends, where collaborative writing has fueled alliances and the putting up of borders. I have also seen students use sports-related language, such as "subbing in," in order to develop rules for how to take turns writing in a shared book for an extended period of time. Finally, I have seen strong bonds form that are either solidified during academic choice, or are becoming stronger because of academic choice (or as I believe is the case, a little of both).

Interview Questions about Academic Choice Time:
1. Can do you draw a picture of yourself and your classmates during this time?
   a. What is happening in this picture?
2. What is academic choice time like?
   a. What do you usually do during academic choice time?
   b. What other things have you done during academic choice time in the past?
3. When you write during this time (for those who write, rather than read), who else writes with you?
   a. What kinds of stories do you all write together?
   b. How do you decide who will write, who will draw, and when?
4. What do you do with the stories you write during academic choice time?

APPENDIX D

FIRST TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

First Teacher Interview Protocol (for the end fall semester and of bulk of data collection period)

To begin with, could you please tell me a little about your path into teaching, in terms of why you chose to become a teacher and how you went about it?

Table 11. First teacher interview protocol

Main Question	Follow-up 1	Follow-up 2 (only if necessary)
What beliefs about learning inform the decisions you make in the classroom?	How have these beliefs been shaped by your teaching experiences?	Can you say more about that?
What do you enjoy about the reading block?	What do you consider challenging about the reading block?	Why?
What do you enjoy about the writing block?	What do you consider challenging about the writing block?	Why?
What kinds of things have you noticed about how your students interact with each other during reading?	Why do you think you noticed these?	Can you say more about that?

Table 11 (continued)

What kinds of things have you noticed about how your students interact with each other during writing?	Why do you think you noticed these?	Can you say more about that?
How has your experience teaching here at Voyager been different from or similar to your experiences at other schools?	What about the culture here at Voyager do you think contributes to these differences or similarities?	
What is your goal for Morning Meeting each day?	Why do you think this is important?	
What changes or growth have you seen in specific students as writers and/or readers this year?	Why do you think this is?	
How do you select the different texts you use throughout the day (in writing, reading, and closing meeting, for example)?		
What do you enjoy most about teaching?	What do you find most challenging about teaching?	

APPENDIX E

SECOND / FINAL TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Table 12. Second / final teacher interview protocol

Figured Worlds and Positioning				
Identity	Cultural tools/significance	Agency	Interaction	Situation
How does the teacher describe the classroom community? What kinds of social groups does the teacher think have formed among students?	How does the teacher determine what kinds of participation structures and other resources to use at given times throughout the day, and how does she talk about these structures and resources?	How does the teacher allow or push back against students acting on participation structures in ways that redefine those structures?	How does the teacher use language and non-verbal modes of communication to convey social and academic expectations for students, as well as to build relationships with them?	What is the relationship between things that are salient in the moment and things that become salient over time? How do storylines evolve into figured worlds?

Table 12 (continued)

3. What do I want to better understand about Morning Meeting **Share** through the teacher interview?
   How the teacher originally intended for this time to be used, and how she views students' interactions during Share when framing it independently of other parts of Morning Meeting as well as necessarily connected to all other Share moments throughout the school year. Also, how her talk about share compares to students' talk about share.
4. Why do I want to know this?
   Because Share is not designed as a literacy space, nor was it originally intended as a space for students to bring in texts or other physical items, but as a result of students' actions and talk and the teacher's reactions to students, it has become an increasingly important literacy and social space over time.

Interview Questions about Share:
5. At the beginning of the year, what were your goals for morning meeting share?
   a. How has that changed (if at all) in terms of goals, format or content?
   b. Which students most frequently have something to share? Least frequently?
   c. Which students most frequently ask questions to the sharer? Least frequently?
   d. What kinds of questions do students usually ask?
6. I have noticed that books are sometimes brought into Share during Morning Meeting. What kinds of books have students brought during this time?
   a. What kinds of things do students share about books?
   b. What kinds of questions do students ask sharers?
7. Can you talk about some other things have students brought in or talked about during Share?
   a. Has anything ever happened during Share that has surprised you? How and why?

3. What do I want to better understand about the **writing mini-lesson** on the rug, through the teacher interview?
   How the teacher views this time in relation to how I view it, that is, what the structure of the writing mini-lesson means to her.
4. Why do I want to know this?
   Because the teacher's reported interpretations about this time can help me to make sense of video recorded interactions between her the students, as well as how students have made sense of the kinds of structures she has put into place. Also, how she talks about this time can demonstrate similarities and differences between the structure of Share and the structure of Writing Mini-Lessons, both of which I argue present affordances and constraints for students as academic and social spaces.

Table 12 (continued)

Interview Questions about Writing Mini-Lessons:
5. What are your goals as you structure writing mini-lessons?
a. What kinds of successes and challenges have students demonstrated in accomplishing your writing goals for them?
6. How do students interact and participate during this time?
a. What kinds of changes, if any, have you noticed over the year in how students interact and participate during this time? (If changes) Why do you think that is?
7. During our first interview, you talked about how you wanted students to be able to challenge each other more in their writing. What changes, if any, have you observed in this space with regard to students challenging each other?

3. What do I want to better understand about **Independent Writing time** at table seats?
How the teacher views this time in relation to the mini-lesson, and how she describes what students do during this time.
4. Why do I want to know this?
Because this information can help set up a comparison and contrast with the physical and other participation structures of morning meeting share and the writing mini-lesson, both of which are at the rug. Through my questions, I can also get a better idea of how the focal students in my study demonstrate, at least through the teacher's descriptions, learning specific to writing.

Interview Questions about Independent Writing:
6. What are your goals for students during independent writing time?
a. What are your interactions with students like when you conference with them? Do some students stand out as more or less receptive, as having interesting questions or comments, etc.?
7. What kinds of books do you find that students have more ease writing? More difficulty writing?
a. What kinds of resources do you use to help them?
8. When they talk, how do students help or support each other during this time?
9. Can you talk about how each focal student (show list) does at applying what you have taught during the mini-lesson?

3. What do I want to know about **when students share their writing** at the end of writing class?
How often the teacher plans for this, how she describes this time in her own words, and how her goals for the participation structures during this time relate to or differ from the participation structures during morning meeting share.
4. Why do I want to know this?
Because I believe that there is a difference between how students interact during share and during this time, in terms of how they talk with one another, and I want to

Table 12 (continued)

Interview Questions about Sharing Writing:
5. When you have students share their writing at the end of a writing lesson, how do you structure that share time? a. Which students most frequently share their writing? Least frequently? b. Which students most frequently ask questions to the sharer? Least frequently? c. What kinds of questions do students usually ask authors? 6. What kinds of writing feedback have you heard students give each other when they share writing with the whole class? 7. Going back to the issue of when and how students challenge each other, what changes, if any, have you observed in this space with regard to students challenging each other?

3.	What do I want to know about **academic choice time**? *How it has evolved into a time for students to read each other's books, and more recently, into a time for them to collaborate on writing books. With regard to the teacher, what role she has played in this shift.*
4.	Why do I want to know this? *This is something that has happened organically among the students, and suggests important things about how students demonstrate agency as they interact as writers and readers. Additionally, I have seen dramas play out between friends, where collaborative writing has fueled alliances and the putting up of borders. I have also seen students use sports-related language, such as "subbing in," in order to develop rules for how to take turns writing in a shared book for an extended period of time. Finally, I have seen strong bonds form that are either solidified during academic choice, or are becoming stronger because of academic choice (or as I believe is the case, a little of both). I am interested in what the teacher has seen and what these events mean to her.*

Interview Questions about Academic Choice Time:
5. What were your goals for academic choice time at the beginning of the year? a. How have goals, format, or content changed over the course of the year? b. What kinds of interactions have you noticed among students during academic choice throughout the year? 6. What student groupings, if any, have you noticed during this time that you may not have expected? Why have these groupings surprised you? 7. Can you talk briefly about what the focal students do during academic choice?

Table 12 (continued)

1. What do I want to know about **the teacher's ideas on literacy**? *How has she attempted to shape students' literacy learning and why? Also, how does she believe that specific students have grown as readers and writers, and why?* 2. Why do I want to know this? *In order to make claims or inferences about students' literacy learning and their participation in literacy spaces, it is important to triangulate data with the teacher's language on what she emphasized throughout the year. Likewise, the teacher's beliefs about specific student growth can help to highlight consistencies and inconsistencies between her ideas about who are the strong readers and writers, and students' ideas about who among their peers are the strong readers and writers.*
Interview Questions about Student Literacy Learning: 1. What reading and writing practices have you tried to emphasize this year? a. Why are these important? b. How have you structured activities in order to support students' learning of these? 2. What students stand out to you for their growth in reading and/or writing? a. Why? 3. What students were already strong readers and/or writers at the beginning of the year? a. Why? 4. What about focal students? 5. What kinds of social developments have you seen in students who have also grown as readers and/or writers? a. To what would you attribute this?

Table 13. Instructional activities category sample

Category	Code	Definition	Example	Relationship to Research Questions
Instructional Activities: Morning Meeting (MM)	School-home relationship (MM)	Marked by students bringing in texts or objects that relate to something they are learning about in school	Matthew brought in butterfly book during the life cycle unit	Routine-interaction-literacy culture connections
	Informational (MM)	Marked by students bringing in objects or	Hailey brought in a text about	Routine-interaction-

Table 13 (continued)

		talking about something that they	the history of candy canes	literacy culture connections
	Personal (MM)	learned about away from school Marked by students bringing in objects or talking about something that they relate to their family or to a personal interest they have away from school	Emma brought in a Christmas tree ornament that had her baby brother's name on it; he passed away	Routine-interaction connection affords students a space in which to share personal things

Table 14. Participation structures category sample

Category	Code	Definition	Example	Relationship to Research Questions
Participation Structures	Circle spots	Students and teacher seated on area rug in a circle	For every Morning Meeting and almost always for sharing writing	Close proximity on area rug and circle formation (along with expectations for how to talk) lend themselves to a sense of community; interactions appear driven by social connectedness even when the conversations were driven by school based content and

Table 14 (continued)

				literacy-specific elements like texts
	Row spots	Students seated in rows on area rug, facing either a side wall where the teacher sits at her red director's chair using an anchor chart, or the Smart Board at front of room.	For reading and writing mini-lessons	Close proximity to teacher, instructional content and to each other was important for student engagement with that content and one another; interactions driven by instructional goals and the talk therein was supported by social connectedness

Table 14 (continued)

	Table spots	Students seated at their assigned seats at tables, with teacher walking around or calling students to back table to work one-on-one or in small groups with her	Independent work time	I wonder if/how student talk and teacher talk differed when students were seated at table spots versus the area

Table 15. Material artifacts of interaction category sample

Category	Code	Definition	Example	Relationship to Research Questions
Material Artifacts (of Interaction): Anchor Charts	Academic	Charts with specific strategies for reading and writing that the teacher developed for students or that the teacher and students developed together for use during instruction; displayed on and clipped onto the easel for reference	Reading Stamina anchor chart (reading longer and stronger); Selecting a just right text	Although the interaction described by this code pertains more to interacting with content than with people, in many instances, the students and the teacher developed charts together through interaction,

Table 15 (continued)

				which arguably gave students a sense of authorship and voice on matters of instruction (as opposed to having to passively accept whatever chart the teacher developed for them)

Table 16. Semiotic artifacts of interaction category sample

Category	Code	Definition	Example	Relationship to Research Questions
Semiotic Artifacts (of Interaction):	Encouragement	Any nonverbal gesture that participants gave to each other as a way to offer encouragement and support.	Students and teacher often gave each other "silent sizzle" as either a substitute for clapping for each other following something well done, or as a way to non-verbally convey the message of, "You can do it" to someone having	Silent sizzle was introduced to students by the teacher, Mrs. Cooper, during Morning Meeting. However, it eventually made its way into other instructional moments of the school day. Thus it was a participation structure (non-

Table 16 (continued)

			experiencing a bit of difficulty.	verbal communication) that became an important part of classroom activities. Students used it during interactions that were both social and academic in nature. Silent sizzle fostered and was fostered by a classroom culture of literacy that valued kindness in interactions.

APPENDIX G

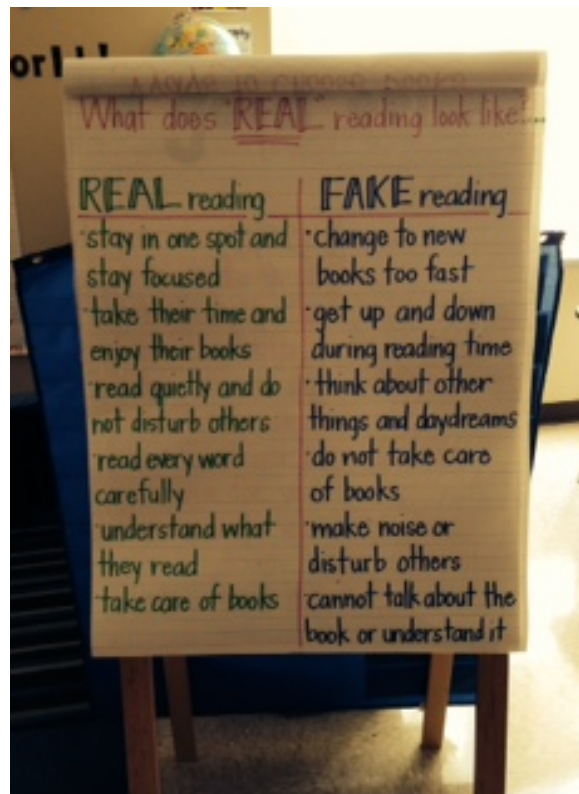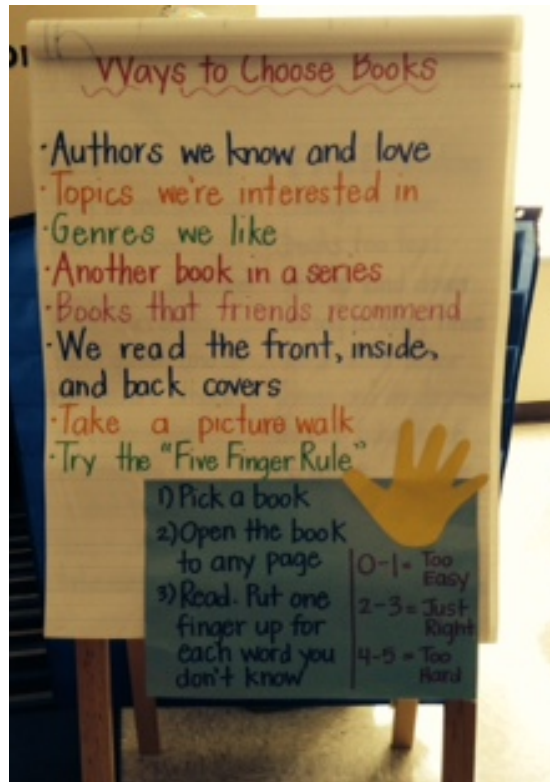## MATERIAL ARTIFACTS OF INTERACTION (ACADEMIC): ANCHOR CHARTS ON READING

Figure 7. Photo of anchor chart on what real reading looks like

Figure 8. Anchor chart for students to choose books independently

APPENDIX H

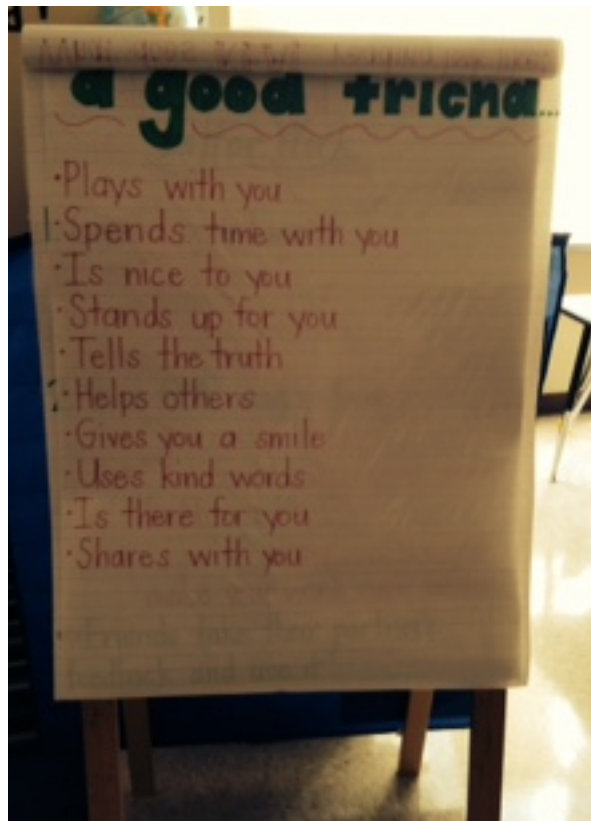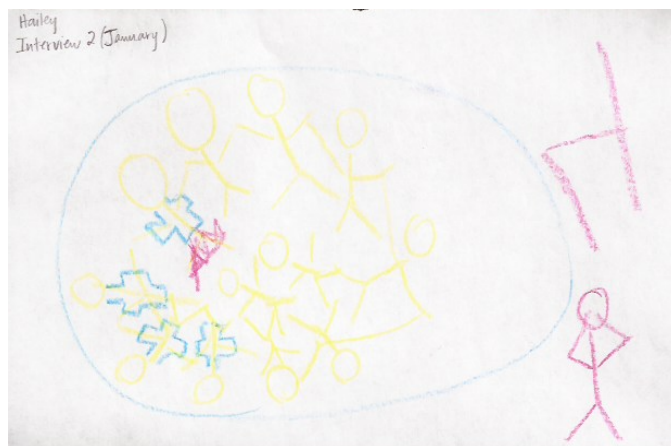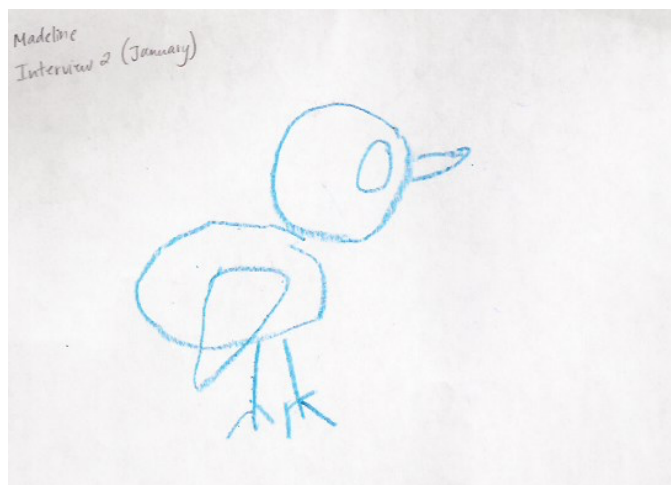## MATERIAL ARTIFACT OF INTERACTION (SOCIAL): ANCHOR CHART OF WHAT A GOOD FRIEND LOOKS LIKE

Figure 9. What a good friend looks like

APPENDIX I

FOCAL AND NON-FOCAL STUDENTS' DRAWINGS FOR SECOND ROUND OF

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Figure 10. Hailey's interview 2 drawing

Figure 11. Madeline's interview 2 drawing

Figure 12. Nate's interview 2 drawing

Figure 13. Nicholas' interview 2 drawing

Figure 14. Zoe's interview 2 drawing

Figure 15. Emma's interview 2 drawing

228

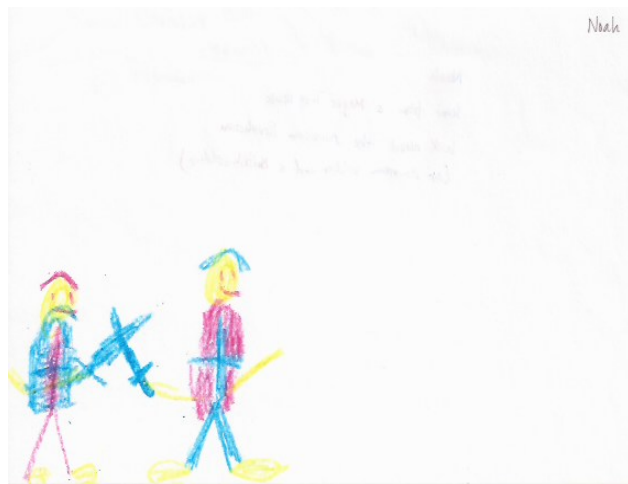**Figure 16.** Jacob's interview 2 drawing

Figure 17. Lily's interview 2 drawing

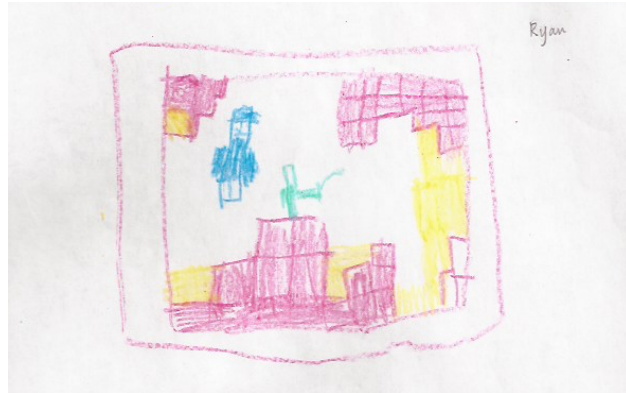**Figure 18.** Mia's interview 2 drawing

Figure 19. Noah's interview 2 drawing

Figure 20. Rose's interview 2 drawing

230

Figure 21. Ryan's interview 2 drawing

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). Discourse in the novel (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (pp. 259-422). Austin: University of Texas Press. (Original work published 1935)

Barron, I. (2014). Finding a voice: A figured worlds approach to theorising young children's identities. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 12*(3), 251-263.

Bausch, L.S. (2007). Boy-talk around texts: Considering how a third grade boy transforms the shape of literacy in book talk discussions. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 7*(2), 199-218.

Bloome, D., Carter, S.P., Christian, B.M., Otto, S., & Shuart-Farris, N. (2005). *Discourse analysis and the study of classroom language and literacy events: A microethnographic perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Bomer, R., & Laman, T. (2004). Positioning in a primary writing workshop: Joint action in the discursive production of writing subjects. *Research in the Teaching of English, 38*(4), 420-466.

Cazden, C. (1988). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Christianakis, M. (2010). "I don't need your help!": Peer status, race, and gender during peer writing interactions. *Journal of Literacy Research, 42*(4), 418-458.

Clark, A. (2005). Listening to and involving young children: A review of research and practice. In A. Clark, A.T. Kjörholt, & P. Moss (Eds.), *Beyond listening: Children's perspectives on early childhood services*, pp. 490-505. Bristol: Policy Press.

Cole, M. (1990). Cognitive development and formal schooling: The evidence from cross-cultural research. In Luis C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology*, pp. 89-110. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cornelius, L.L., & Herrenkohl, L.R. (2004). Power in the classroom: How the classroom environment shapes students' relationships with each other and with concepts.

Cognition and Instruction, 22(4), 467-498.

Corsaro, W.A. (1992). Interpretive reproduction in children's peer cultures. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 55*(2), 160-177.

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. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Dillon, L. & Dillon, D. (2014). *If kids ran the world*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Dutro, E., Kazemi, E., Balf, R., & Lin, Y-S. (2008). "What are you and where are you from?": Race, identity, and the vicissitudes of cultural relevance. *Urban Education, 43*(3), 269-300.

Dyson, A.H. (1993). *Social worlds of children learning to write in an urban primary school*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Dyson, A.H. (1998). Folk processes and media creatures: Reflections on popular culture for literacy educators. *The Reading Teacher, 51*(5), 392-402.

Dyson, A.H. (2003). *The brothers and sisters learn to write: Popular literacies in childhood and school cultures*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Dyson, A.H. (2006). On saying it right (write): "Fix-Its" in the foundations of learning to write. *Research in the Teaching of English, 41*(1), 8-42.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Engle, R.A., & Conant, F.R. (2002). Guiding principles for fostering productive disciplinary engagement: Explaining an emergent argument in a community of learners classroom. *Cognition and Instruction, 20*(4), 399-483.

Erickson, F. (1992). Ethnographic microanalysis of interaction. In J. Preissle (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 201-225). San Diego, CA: Academic.

Flournoy, V. (1985). *The patchwork quilt*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Godley, A.J. (2003). *Literacy learning as gendered identity work*. Communication Education, 52(3-4), 273-285.

Graue, M.E., & Walsh, D.J. (1998). *Studying children in context: Theories, methods, and ethics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Green, J., Skukauskaite, A., Dixon, C., & Córdova, R. (2007). Epistemological issues in the analysis of video records: Interactional ethnography as a logic of inquiry. In R. Goldman, R. Pea, B. Barron, & S.J. Derry (Eds.) *Video research in the learning sciences*, pp. 115-132. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Hall, L.A., Johnson, A.S., Juzwik, M.M., Wortham, S.E.F. & Mosley, M. (2010). Teacher identity in the context of literacy teaching: Three explorations of classroom positioning and interaction in secondary schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*, 234-243.

Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

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. 1-12). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Heath, S.B., & Street, B.V. (2008). *Ethnography: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Herbel-Eisenmann, B., Wagner, D., & Cortes, V. (2010). Lexical bundle analysis in mathematics classroom discourse: The significance of stance. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 75*(1), 23-42.

Hicks, D. (2005). Cultural hauntings: Girlhood fictions from working-poor America. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11*(2), 170-190.

Hodges, M. (1984). *St. George and the dragon*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.

Hoffman, M. (1991). *Amazing Grace*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.

Holland, D., Lachicotte Jr, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Holland, D., & Lave, J. (2001). History in person: An introduction. In D. Holland & J. Lave (Eds.), *History in person: Enduring struggles, contentious practice, intimate identities* (pp. 3-36). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E.W. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Leander, K.M. (2002). Locating Latanya: The situated production of identity artifacts in classroom instruction. *Research in the Teaching of English, 37*, 198-250.

Leander, K.M. (2004). "They took out the wrong context": Uses of time-space in the practice of positioning. *Ethos, 32*(2), 188-213.

Lewis, C. (1997). The social drama of literature discussions in a fifth/sixth grade classroom. *Research in the Teaching of English, 31*(2), 163-204.

Lewis, C., Enciso, P.E., & Moje, E.B. (2007). *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency, and power*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lionni, L. (1991). *Matthew's dream*. New York, NY: Dragonfly Books.

McCloud, C. (2006). *Have you filled a bucket today?: A guide to daily happiness for kids*. Northville, MI: Ferne Press.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mercer, N. (2005). Sociocultural discourse analysis: Analyzing classroom talk as a social mode of thinking. *Journal of Applied Linguistics, 1*(2), 137-168.

Mercer, N. (2008). The seeds of time: Why classroom dialogue needs a temporal analysis. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 17*(1), 33-59.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as theory. In: Ochs, E. & Schieffelin, B.B. (Eds.), *Developmental pragmatics* (pp. 43-72). New York: Academic Press.

Orellana, M.F. (1996). Negotiating power through language in classroom meetings. *Linguistics and Education, 8*, 335-365.

Polman, J.L. (2012). Trajectories of participation and identification in learning communities involving disciplinary practices. In D. Yun Dai (Ed.), *Design research on learning and thinking in educational settings: Enhancing intellectual growth and functioning* (pp. 225-242). New York: Routledge.

Reeves, J. (2009). Teacher investment in learner identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*, 34-41.

Rex, L.A. (2002). Exploring orientation in remaking high school readers' literacies and identities. *Linguistics and Education, 13*(3), 271-302.

Rex, L.A., Bunn, M., Davila, B.A., Dickinson, H.A., Ford, A.C., Gerben, C., Orzulak, M.J.M., & Thomson, H. (2010). A review of discourse analysis in literacy research: Equitable access. *Reading Research Quarterly, 45*(1), 94-115.

Reynolds, P.H. (2004). *Ish*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press.

Rimm-Kaufman, S.E., Larsen, R.A.A., Baroody, A.E., Curby, T.W., Ko, M., Thomas, J.B. Merritt, E.G., Abry, T., & DeCoster, J. (2014). Efficacy of the *Responsive Classroom Approach*: Results from a 3-year, longitudinal randomized controlled trial. *American Educational Research Journal, 51*(3), 567-603.

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Scribner, S. (1984). Literacy in three metaphors. *American Journal of Education, 93*(1), 6-21.

Smagorinsky, P. (2013). What does Vygotsky provide for the 21st century language arts teacher? *Language Arts, 90*(3), 193-204.

Street, B.V. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography, and education*. London: Longman.

Tammivaara, J., & Enright, D.D. (1986). On eliciting information: Dialogues with child informants. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 17*(4), 218-238.

Urrieta Jr., L. (2007). Figured worlds and education: An introduction to the special issue. *The Urban Review, 39*(2), 107-116.

van Langenhove, L., & Harré, R. (1999). Introducing positioning theory. In R. Harré, & L. van Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning theory: Moral contexts if intentional action* (pp. 14-31). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Vetter, A. (2010). Positioning students as readers and writers through talk in a high school English classroom. *English Education, 43*(1), 33-64.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walker, B.J. (2003). The cultivation of student self-efficacy in reading and writing. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 19*(2), 173-187.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J.V. (1998). *Mind as action*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Willems, M. (2003). *Don't let the pigeon drive the bus*. New York, NY: Hyperion Books for

Children.

Wohlwend, K. (2009). Mediated discourse analysis: Researching young children's non-verbal interactions as social practice. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 7*(3), 228-243.

Wortham, S. (2004). From good student to outcast: The emergence of a classroom identity. *Ethos, 32*(2), 164-187.

Wortham, S. (2008). The objectification of identity across events. *Linguistics and Education, 19*, 294-311.

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.

Zacher, J.C. (2008). Analyzing children's social positioning and struggles for recognition in a classroom literacy event. *Research in the Teaching of English, 43*(1), 12-41.