

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS' APPROPRIATION OF THE GENRES OF
ACADEMIC WRITING: A SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

by

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(Under Direction the of Linda Harklau)

ABSTRACT

International graduate students studying in American universities must meet the challenge of producing high-level academic writing that may differ considerably from the writing they have done before. This study investigated how they do so. Using a sociocultural theoretical perspective, this qualitative study investigated the social, personal, cultural, and experiential factors that influenced eight international graduate students' appropriation of the genres of written English in two graduate classes. Data consisted of four interviews with each student participant, two interviews with their instructors, observation of the two classes throughout a semester, and collection of all written materials related to the classes. The methodology combined ethnographic methods with Charmaz' constructivist grounded theory.

The major findings of the study are summarized as follows: 1) the participants were resourceful and strategic learners who created opportunities for learning written genres; 2) they valued their independence and wished to be self-sufficient in their writing; 3) they varied in their need and desire to seek assistance with their writing; 4) they found peer review of limited use; 5) prior experience exerted a greater impact on their performance than their level of linguistic proficiency; 6) time played a major role in how they "did school."; 7) in some cases, factors in their personal lives had a major impact on their performance in class and in their written assignments; 8) in one case, different cultural expectations for classroom discourse undermined a student's ability to demonstrate appropriate procedural display; 9) there was little incidence of plagiarism among the students, but in one case plagiarism resulted from unfamiliarity with Western concepts of textual ownership; 10) the students' relationships with their advisors were critical to their success in writing; 11) the participants reported a need for more substantive feedback on writing from their instructors; 12) many of the international students in this study were outstanding writers who engaged in "deep participation" in their academic communities of practice through collaboration on research projects and in the writing of manuscripts.

INDEX WORDS: Sociocultural theory, Bakhtin, Vygotsky, Lave, Wenger, heteroglossia, dialogism, ventriloquation, centrifugal, centripetal, international graduate students, second language writing, ESL, nonnative speaker, advisor, advisee, disciplinary apprenticeship, community of practice, procedural display, peer review

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the three people who have had the greatest influence on my life and on my studies. I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Nana, Mrs. Rose Margaret Mayhew, who raised me, loved me more than I deserved, and made sure I got a good education even though she never had that opportunity herself; and to my mother-in-law, Mum, Mrs. Dot Braxley, who was a true mother to me for eighteen years, and whom I still miss every day. These two women, who had more love and generosity of spirit than any others I have known, are no longer with us in body, but they are always with me in spirit.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

American colleges and universities are now home to more international students than ever before. According to the Institute of International Education (2003), there were 586,323 international students registered at U.S. universities in 2002-2003 and 286,630 of these were graduate students. The great majority of these students come from non-English speaking countries, with more than 50% coming from Asia alone. Most of these students believe that a degree from an American university will open doors for them, either in the United States or at home, and are willing to spend considerable time, effort, and money to attain their academic goals. According to Goodman (2003), "International educational exchange has never been more important for the United States." The end result is that "American educational institutions are to the modern world what Alexandria in Egypt was to the ancient world" (Ubadigbo, 1997, p. 2).

When international students arrive in American universities, they face the challenge of simultaneously adapting to a new country, language, culture and educational system. For graduate students, the challenge is particularly great since they are often expected to produce scholarly writing within a short period of their arrival. This can be daunting when such students may have had little experience of writing in English (Dong, 1998; Rose & McClafferty, 2001) and may have different expectations from those of their professors (Belcher, 1994; Fishman & McCarthy, 2001; Fox, 1994). Despite the difficulties they face, many international graduate students are able to rise to the challenge of writing academic English. Understanding how they are able to do so is the aim of this dissertation.

Background of the Study

Research in second language (L2) writing has burgeoned in recent years. Scholars have investigated the characteristics of non-native speakers' writing (Silva, 1993; Hinkel, 2003), the strategies they use in writing (Carson & Leki, 1995; Fishman & McCarthy, 2001); the connections between reading and writing (Leki, 1997, 2001; Harklau, 2002); the use of literature to teach writing (Belcher 2000; Custodio & Sutton, 1998; Horowitz, 2001); the effects of feedback on writing (Berg, 1999; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris and Roberts, 2001); assessment of writing (Cumming, Kantor & Powers, 2002; Hayes, Hatch & Silk, 2000); and the concept of voice (Ivanic & Camps. 1996; Prior, 2001; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996, 1999). While L2 writing research has provided valuable insights into the nature of non-native speakers' writing and writing instructors' approaches toward teaching, feedback, and assessment, this research has not adequately examined the experience of writing in a second language at the graduate level.

One field of study that does provide some insight into high-level academic writing is the research on written genres, especially those studies that investigate the written genres of academic fields. Researchers have analyzed various forms of academic texts in diverse fields such as medicine (Maher, 1986), law, (Bhatia, 1983, 1987), and science (Bazerman, 1984, 1989). Scholars have also examined differences between the academic genres of different disciplines; for example Bazerman (1981) analyzed the difference between research articles in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. In fact, the research article has been the focus of a great deal of research (see Swales, 1990 for a comprehensive review), which has analyzed every part of the journal article genre, from introduction to conclusion.

Unfortunately, research on the features of academic genres does very little to explain how it is that novice researchers such as graduate students come to appropriate these features in their own writing. A number of researchers have recently begun to suggest that they do so through social interaction with others in their discourse community. Indeed, there is growing consensus that the production of academic texts is fundamentally a social enterprise. For example, Bazerman and Paradis (1991) suggest that in the workplace and in academia, “texts are the transactions that make institutional collaboration possible; they are the means by which individuals collectively construct the contexts out of which intellectual and material products emerge” (p.4); in short, the notion of a self-sustaining text is an illusion.

Going even further to debunk the romantic image of the academic writing alone in a garret, Hyland (2000) describes the whole process of research, including writing, as fundamentally social and interactive. He suggests that “what academics do with words is engage in a web of professional and social associations” (p.1). Furthermore, echoing other researchers who have pointed out the socially constituted nature of academia (Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman, 1988, 1991), Hyland suggests that producing texts is not just something academics do; instead, through the texts they write, academics constitute and reconstitute their academic disciplines.

Hyland (1999, 2000) provides key insights into the socially constructed nature of written genres. He also discusses what Swales (1990) described as the “slipperiness” of genres, mentioning that such genres are far from monolithic; rather, they have disparate histories, practices and strategies, as each writer interacts with and builds upon the words of other researchers in his or her field. However, even though particular academic genres may develop characteristic features, genres are not static; they evolve and develop constantly, and even within

the genres of a discourse community there may be considerable variation. Written genres, then, seem to be a moving target, yet much of the work on genres does appear to be trying to pin them down.

As the focus of Hyland's research (2000) is on published work, it provides only limited insight into the strategies by which academic writers create their work. Nonetheless, because Hyland and others (Bazerman & Paradis, 1991; Berkenkotter et al., 1998, 1991, Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995) have emphasized the socially constructed nature of academic genres, we can infer that understanding these genres would be facilitated by a theoretical framework that incorporates the concepts of learning through social interaction and provides a theory of genres. One such framework is sociocultural theory, a theoretical perspective that draws upon the work of Russian scholars Lev Vygotsky and Mikhail Bakhtin. This framework will be described in detail in the next chapter, but in the following section, I will provide a broad overview of the various ways that researchers in L2 research and L1 composition research have drawn upon the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin.

Constructs from sociocultural theory have already been used productively by scholars investigating children's language and literacy learning and L1 college composition. Vygotsky's theories (1978, 1986), which focus on learning, have been very popular among educational researchers investigating first and second language learning among school-age children (see Clay and Cazden, 1990; Dixon-Kraus, 1996; Dyson, 2000; Freedman, 1994; McLane, 1990; McNamee, 1990; Moll, 2000; Putney, Dixon, Duran and Yaeger, 2000; Smagorinsky and Allen, 2000), yet few researchers have applied Vygotsky's theories to the learning of adults.

While the majority of researchers who use a Vygotskian theoretical perspective have investigated classroom learning among North American children, a few ESL researchers have

applied sociocultural theory to adult second language learning. For example, Washburn (1994) investigated fossilization among college students studying English as a second language, McCafferty (1994) and Ushakova focused on Vygotsky's concepts of private speech and inner speech, and Ahmed (1994) and Coughlan and Duff (1994) considered how Vygotsky's theories can be applied to the concept of activity. None of the above studies, however, has looked specifically at writing.

Bakhtin's theories (1981, 1986), which focus on language, have been used primarily by researchers in the field of first language composition, especially at the college level (see Baynam, 1999; Bialystosky, 1998; Farmer, 1995; Middendorf, 1998). For example, Ritchie (1998) explored the concept of voice in a writing workshop for college first-years, and Welch (1998) used Bakhtin's concept of dialogism as a way to overcome the dichotomy between form and content in responding to student essays. From Bakhtin's theories, Welch claims, instructors can learn to respond to student writing in ways that are more dialogic, less authoritative, and more conducive to student learning. These studies suggest that learning how to orchestrate a range of voices into texts may be an important part of non-native speaking students' learning of English academic genres. However, to date there has been little L2 writing research in this area.

Few studies have applied Bakhtin's theories outside of the writing classroom; one exception is Baynam (1999), who used Bakhtin's concept of double-voicing as his theoretical lens when investigating how undergraduate nursing students took up authoritative writing positions in relation to the sources they quoted, and, by doing so, "wrote themselves into disciplinary positions" (p.485). He found that the task was made more difficult by the fact that these disciplinary positions, rather than being homogenous, were heterogeneous and conflictual.

Baynam's illustrates how Bakhtin's theories can provide a useful analytical framework for investigating how students learn to write within their disciplines.

While the studies reviewed above draw on either the work of Vygotsky or that of Bakhtin, some scholars (Farmer, 1995; Hall, 1995, 2003; Prior, 1998, 2001; Rodby, 1992) have suggested that the theories of Vygotsky and Bakhtin can be usefully combined. Marchenkova (in press) provides a detailed examination and synthesis of Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's insights into language and learning. She suggests that their concepts complement one another and uses them to construct a dialogic model for second language instruction and academic writing that emphasizes both the dialogic nature of reading and writing and the culturally and historically situated nature of academic writing.

Research that brings a sociocultural lens to bear on the writing of non-native speakers is almost non-existent. One notable exception is the work of Prior (1998, 2001). Through class observations, interviews with students and instructors, and analysis of students' written manuscripts, Prior (1998) makes a cogent argument for the use of sociocultural theory in studying writing at the graduate level by highlighting the complexity and ambiguities that students, especially non-native speaking students, face in their graduate programs. If we are to gain a more complete understanding of the social and dialogic processes through which graduate students appropriate the written genres of their fields, more such studies are needed.

Moving beyond theory, one criticism leveled at much of the research on second language learning concerns the way scholars have represented second language learners. In fact, researchers in the field of TESOL have yet to find an appropriate way to refer to students whose first language is not English (Kachru and Nelson, 1996; Liu, 1999; Leung, Harris, and Rampton, 1997; McKay and Wong, 1996; Rampton, 1990; Rampton, Harris, and Leung, 1997). We

frequently use the terms *English as a Second Language* (ESL), *second language learner* and *second language writing*, yet many of the international students who study in American universities are speaking and writing in a third or even a fourth language. Even more problematic are the terms *native speaker* (NS) and *nonnative speaker* (NNS), as they set up a binary in which the native speaker is idealized and the non-native speaker is seen as perennially deficient.

A number of researchers have discussed this “deficiency” model of the second language learner in a variety of contexts. McKay and Wong (1996) studied the discourse of California high schools and found that “immigrant status and limited English proficiency were thought to be states of deficiency and backwardness from which students need to be saved as quickly as possible” (p.584). In a series of studies following a group of students from high school to college (Harklau, 1999a, 1999b, 2000) found that language minority students in high school were often relegated to low-track classrooms and were perceived by their teachers to have “a lack of innate ability” (2000, p.50). When these students arrived in college they were still judged as deficient as they were placed in ESOL and were unfavorably compared to other students.

While international graduate students are generally perceived to have more cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) than immigrant students, they too are often evaluated in terms of linguistic deficiency: Schneider and Fujishima (1995) present the case of Taiwanese graduate student who had to withdraw from graduate school because of his low grades in his ESL class, although his GPA in his other classes was acceptable, and Prior (1998) describes the experiences of a Chinese graduate student from the PRC who is also evaluated negatively by her professor primarily because he perceived her as a deficient language learner.

Defining international students using terms such as second language learner and non-native speaker may reify the notion that they are deficient compared to the idealized native speaker (Leung et al. 1997); thus the use such terms continues to be vexed issue in the field of TESOL. Rampton (1990, cited in Leung et al., 1997) recommended “replacing the terms *native speaker* and *mother tongue* with *language expertise*, *language inheritance* and *language affiliation*” (1997, p.555). Kachru and Nelson (1996) noted that it is inevitable that those labeled as NNS or ESL will be perceived as “less worthy” (p.79), and Liu (1999) pointed out that these terms are particularly problematic for international graduate students who are themselves studying in the field of TESOL, as they are simultaneously being defined as deficient by the NNS label and expert by their field of study. While the terms are inappropriate and often, inaccurate, we do not yet have any widely accepted alternatives (despite Rampton’s efforts). Accordingly, throughout this dissertation, while I use the terms *ESL* and *native* and *nonnative speaker*, I do so while acknowledging that many international students speak and write English as a third or fourth language.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to add to the literature on sociocultural theory and ESL writing and to generate new theoretical insights into the writing of international graduate students by investigating how eight students met (or did not meet) the written requirements of two graduate classes through their appropriation of the academic genres of their disciplines. Guided by its theoretical framework which assumes that students acquire written genres through a social process of interaction with academic texts, with peers, and with more experienced scholars, this study uses qualitative methods to gain an emic perspective on the students’ experiences by investigating their histories of writing, their beliefs about reading and writing,

their literacy practices, the classroom context, and the written assignments they produce in two graduate classes.

Research Questions

This study had one overarching question: What social, personal, cultural, and experiential factors influence international graduate students' appropriation of the genres of written English? Working from a sociocultural theoretical perspective and from ethnographic and grounded theory methods, I developed three main research questions and four sub questions:

- 1) Given that learning is fundamentally a social process (Vygotsky, 1978), what opportunities for social learning of written genres do international graduate students experience?
 - a. What opportunities do international graduate students have to experience the zone of proximal development?
 - b. How does social interaction impact international graduate students' involvement in their discourse communities, especially in terms of the writing they produce?
- 2) How can Bakhtin's concepts such as dialogism, heteroglossia, and addressivity be used to explain the reading and writing practices of international students at an American university?
 - a. What role does the classroom context—the instructor, the discourse, the practices and the assigned readings—play in shaping instructor's and students' expectations and in facilitating or hindering the writing international graduate students produce for the class?
 - b. What centripetal and centrifugal forces impact students' abilities to meet their own expectations and those of their instructors?

- 3) As novices gain expertise through participation in their communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), what factors influence international graduate students' deeper involvement in their communities of practice?

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. Chapter One has introduced the topic, the background of the study, and the research questions. Chapter Two sets forth the theoretical framework and literature review. Chapter Three explains the methodology that guides the study. The next four chapters present the findings. Chapter Four depicts the writing histories of five international students in a Program Evaluation class. Chapter Five describes the context of this class, presents the findings on the assignments the students wrote for the class, and discusses students' reflections on the class. Chapter Six depicts the writing histories of three students in a Developmental Psychology class. Chapter Seven describes the context of this class, presents the findings on the assignments students wrote for the class, and discusses students' reflections on the class. Finally, Chapter Eight summarizes the findings of the study and their implications, suggests the contributions of the study to research and theory on ESL writing, offers directions for future research, and presents an update on the experiences of the focal students since data collection ended.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study will draw upon the work of two scholars who have become profoundly influential in the fields of composition and education, Mikhail Bakhtin and Lev Vygotsky. The focus of the present study is to investigate how international graduate students appropriate the written genres required for success in graduate school. I assume that academic discourse constitutes the genres they learn, is the medium through which they learn these genres, and is the means through which they demonstrate their learning as well as their membership in the academic community. I therefore believe it is necessary to build a framework that will account for both the nature of language and the nature of learning. To this end, I construct a theory of language and learning that fuses Bakhtin's notions about language with Vygotsky's theories about learning. In shaping this theoretical framework, I will also draw on another theory, Lave and Wenger's concept of legitimate peripheral participation (1991), as I believe it can be usefully combined with both Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's theories. By reviewing key features from the above scholars, I construct a theoretical lens that will bring into sharper focus international graduate students' experiences of learning to write the genres of academic English.

Bakhtin's Reflections on Language

Bakhtin's great contribution to the study of language is a perspective on language that challenges the approach of traditional Saussurean linguistics, which saw language in terms of

transmission of unitary meanings unhampered by context (Bakhtin, 1981, p.276; 1986, p.67). In place of the transmission model of language, Bakhtin offers us a conception of language as a site of struggle wherein the collision of centripetal and centrifugal forces results in a condition of *heteroglossia*, in which context and the dialogic relationship between a speaker¹ and other participants in speech communication are all important.

The importance of context in language is apparent in Michael Holquist's definition of heteroglossia as "that which ensures the primacy of context over text" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 428). In other words, the particular context of a given statement—the historical, social, and political conditions of its utterance, and the relationship of the speaker to her audience—serves to determine that those words will have a particular meaning in a given context different from that they would have had at another time under different conditions. An alternate definition of heteroglossia suggests that it refers to the idea that "all language-in-use is made up of bits and pieces borrowed from other language users and infused with their intentions" (Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1999, p.50). This definition perhaps comes closer to a translation of the Greek word Bakhtin coined (*heteroglossia*) which, roughly translated means "many or other tongues or languages."

For Bakhtin, language is shaped by both centripetal and centrifugal social forces². Centripetal forces play a normative role, ensuring that speakers of a language will be able to understand one another, while centrifugal forces serve to keep a language alive and allow for the

¹ For Bakhtin, the terms *speech* and *speaker* are not limited to oral communication but also include written communication, so the term *speaker* can also mean writer. Similarly, *listener* can also mean reader, and *speech communication* can mean communication in speech or writing. (See p. 69 in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*.)

² Some examples of centripetal forces are dictionaries, grammar handbooks, and composition classes. Some examples of centrifugal forces are unconventional writers such as Faulkner, new forms of popular culture such as hip hop and new technologies such as the Internet.

creation of new genres. The term Bakhtin coins to describe the site where these forces collide is heteroglossia, according to which,

The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with such a third group: and all of this may crucially shape discourse. (1981, p. 276)

In a heteroglot world, dialogism is the “characteristic epistemological mode” (Holquist in Bakhtin, 1981, p.426). Bakhtin uses the term dialogism to describe the interaction between a speaker’s words, or utterances³, and the relationship they enter into with the utterances of other speakers. The concept of dialogism is of fundamental importance to Bakhtin and has implications for the way we understand all spoken and written communication.

Inherent in Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism is the idea of a speaker and a listener. In Bakhtin’s view, the speaker is always responding to others’ words:

Any speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree. . . he presupposes not only the existence of the language system, but also the existence of preceding utterances, his own and others’—with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances. (1986, p.69)

The desire to elicit a response is implicit in the idea of dialogue, both spoken and written; Bakhtin calls this concept addressivity. Even in writing, though we may be removed in distance or time from our respondent, we still have a respondent in mind, from whom we wish to elicit a response. In Bakhtin’s conception of dialogism, the listener (or reader) is an active respondent:

When the listener perceives and understands the meaning of speech, he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees with it, augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution and so on. (1986, p.68).

³ Bakhtin describes the utterance at length and uses it as his unit of analysis in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Briefly, it means a speaker’s words (oral or written) until there is a change of speaker, so an utterance can range in length from a one-word command (“Attention!”) to an entire novel.

Even if an utterance does not provoke an immediate response on the part of a listener, the listener will respond eventually, either in words or in action.

Not only do we speak in response to others' words and with the intention of eliciting a response from others, but our utterances are also filled with others' words—we cannot “speak in our own words” because those words already belong to others:

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes “one's own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. (Bakhtin, 1981, p.293).

However, not all language is equally accessible to all speakers of a language—even for those who share a national language. One outcome of the clash between centripetal and centrifugal forces is the stratification of language into social languages and speech genres. Social languages or dialects Bakhtin mentions include “professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups” (1981, p.262). Whenever we speak, we invoke a social language, but we also couch our speech within a speech genre. While each of us has a rich repertoire of speech genres at our disposal, both oral and written, we are more at home in some genres than in others. Finally, we learn to use speech genres, as we learn to speak a language, by hearing them from the mouths of others or by reading them in the texts of others; thus if we are not socialized into particular speech genres, they will remain inaccessible to us (Bakhtin, 1986).

One further result of the stratification of language into genres is the unequal degree of power that inheres in different genres. Not all discourses are equal, and one form of discourse Bakhtin terms as authoritative discourse⁴ has unique qualities. Unlike other forms of discourse that are characterized by “multivoicedness” and dialogism, authoritative discourse remains

⁴ Examples of authoritative discourse are “religious, political, moral; the word of a father, of adults and of teachers etc.” (*The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 342).

univocal—it does not permit dialogue; rather it insists that we either completely accept it or reject it.

To summarize key assumptions about language from Bakhtin, we can say that language is social (it comes to us from the mouths of others), contextual (it has meaning within the context of the specific time and place in which it is uttered), and dialogic (it always involves both a speaker and a listener). Moreover, the clash between centripetal and centrifugal forces causes language to fracture into various social languages and speech genres—to which we do not all have equal access. Finally, not all discourses are equal—authoritative discourse carries with it power, and either empowers or constrains us in that it does not permit dialogue.

Many of Bakhtin’s observations about the nature of language are highly relevant to the situation of international graduate students who must learn to write the genres of their disciplines in another language. First, in his rejection of the transmission model of learning, Bakhtin ascribes a more active role to the learner. Rather than seeing students as empty vessels to be filled by the knowledge of their instructors (Freire, 1998), we can re-envision graduate students as active participants in the process of communication, which is fundamentally dialogic in nature. In a dialogic model of communication, reading—the activity on which graduate students spend most of their time—becomes a much more active process because, as graduate students read, they are taking an “active, responsive attitude toward the text” (1986, p.68). Similarly, in a dialogic model of communication, writing also becomes more active: as graduate students write, they are always responding to the voices of others, in active dialogue with the texts they read. Finally, characterized by addressivity, graduate students’ own texts are written, not in a vacuum, but with specific readers in mind as the writers try to add their own links to the chain of utterances that comprises academic discourse.

Bakhtin's notions about language also help to explain the conflicts and struggles a non-native speaking graduate student may undergo in trying to assimilate the genres of academic discourse: first, language is a site of struggle in which graduate students will be pulled by both centrifugal and centripetal forces that may hinder their appropriation of genres or facilitate it. While they may try to resist these forces they cannot remain unaffected by them. Second, although the process of becoming an academic has been defined in terms of socialization into the academic community through discourse (Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman 1988, 1991, 1995), "expropriating" the discourse of others and "forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents is a difficult and complicated process" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.294). This is especially true for international graduate students who may, as yet, have incomplete knowledge of their fields and who may be reading and writing in a second or even a third language.

Finally, Bakhtin's remarks about the characteristics of genres are relevant to the situation of graduate students, since they help define the discourse that such students must appropriate. Academic discourse has characteristics of professional languages since it certainly comprises various types of jargon and is spoken and written by professional groups. Academic discourse also has characteristics of speech genres, as, when we speak or write for academic purposes we cast this speech or writing in genres that are noticeably different from those we would use in other contexts. Finally, academic discourse has characteristics of authoritative discourse in that it exerts considerable power over the graduate students who must read it and reproduce it, and who hope that by doing so they will bring power and authority into their own writing.

Vygotsky's Theories of Learning and Development

A fundamental concept in Vygotskian thought is the notion that human activity and human development are mediated through the use of tools, either physical or psychological, and

semiotic means or signs such as language or writing. To transform our material and mental worlds, we make use of both physical tools and signs, but these are used quite differently. Physical tools change our physical environment, but signs, which Vygotsky also refers to as psychological tools, are directed inward—we use them to transform ourselves. Vygotsky makes this distinction quite explicit:

The tool's function is to serve as the conductor of human influence on the object of activity; it is externally oriented; it must lead to changes in objects. It is a means by which human activity is aimed at mastering, and triumphing over, nature. The sign on the other hand, changes nothing in the object of a psychological tool. It is a means of internal activity aimed at mastering oneself; the sign is internally oriented. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.55)

Psychological tools can include language, writing, counting systems, and mnemonic devices. Of these, language is of the utmost importance, and for Vygotsky, it is when speech is combined with practical activity that development is best facilitated.

In addition to psychological tools, humans inherit, modify, and pass on to future generations cultural artifacts. Language is itself a cultural artifact, and like other cultural artifacts it is adapted by successive generations and by specific cultural groups to suit their needs. Because we inherit these artifacts from our ancestors, they each have their own historical development, and if we are to understand these artifacts, we must study them within their historical and cultural context. For example, if we wish to understand the construct of ownership of words found in most Western academic institutions, we need to trace the history of the construct back to its origins in utilitarian ideologies, and its development in tandem with the publication industry (Scollon, 1994, 1995; Pennycook, 1994, 1996). Similarly, we need to understand that the notion of textual ownership is a cultural one that may not be shared by other cultures that have inherited different histories and different ideologies.

Perhaps the most fundamental of Vygotsky's insights is that human development takes place in a social environment in which language and culture play a key role. Rather than occurring through internal individual action, human development occurs through and as a result of interaction with others; it is our social interaction with others in our environment that brings about internal development, as Vygotsky describes below:

Every function of the child's⁵ cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child intrapsychological. (1978, p.57)

The expression Vygotsky coined to describe a situation in which learner works with an expert or a more capable peer to solve a problem is the *zone of proximal development* or ZPD. This he described as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p.86). Vygotsky also made the point that learners who are at about the same standard in terms of what they can do when working alone may vary considerably in what they can do when working with an expert or more capable peer.

As Vygotsky wrote from the perspective of a psychologist—not that of a linguist—the focus of his work is on learning and development, not on language learning per se. However, in discussing his notions of concept development in *Thought and Language* (1986), Vygotsky did make some important observations about learning a second language. One of these concerned the mediating role a first language plays in the learning of a second language: "While learning a foreign language, we use word meanings that are already well developed in the native language

⁵ As a child psychologist, Vygotsky made most of his observations about children. However, an important assumption of the present study is that many of these observations are equally relevant to the situation of adults. Throughout this section, I have used the term "learner" to discuss situations where Vygotsky would have used the term "child."

and only translate them” (p.159). Because the learning of a second language involves translating word meanings into one’s own language, words no longer point directly to their object in the real world; first they point to their counterpart in one’s first language. Another important consideration is that the literacy practices one learns in one’s first language will impact, either positively or negatively, one’s learning in a second language.

Finally, Vygotsky made some salient remarks on the subject of writing. It was clear to him that written language has distinct features and, thus, may present particular problems for the writer:

Communication in writing relies on the formal meanings of words and requires a much greater number of words than oral speech to convey the same idea. It is addressed to an absent person who rarely has in mind the same subject as the writer. Therefore it must be fully deployed. (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 239-240)

Because contextual and expressive support (for example, body language) is missing in writing, writing must necessarily be more complex. The task of writing is further complicated when the form of the writing one must produce has its own exigent demands, as is the case in academic writing or when one is writing in a second language.

To summarize key assumptions from Vygotsky, we can say that, first, humans inherit, modify, and pass on cultural artifacts; as these artifacts mediate all our activities, they need to be studied within their historical and cultural context. Second, learning and development are social (interpsychological processes become intrapsychological processes) and are mediated by sign systems and psychological tools (for example language) that are directed inward to transform mental development. Learners vary in their potential development as is seen in their differential zones of proximal development. Finally, when it comes to language learning and writing, the first language plays a mediating role in learning subsequent languages, and writing may present particular problems because it must be more fully developed than spoken language.

Several of Vygotsky's concepts can be usefully applied to the situation of international graduate students writing in American universities. First, as learning is mediated through signs and psychological tools such as language, graduate students' acquisition of the language of their genres also impacts their learning about the subject matter of their fields, as their use of the language will shape their perception of what they are writing about. Second, international graduate students are studying in a context different to that in which they were raised. As a result, they may not share some of the cultural artifacts that prevail within American academia. Furthermore, they will carry with them their own cultural artifacts (such as different epistemologies or different perspectives on language), and these artifacts may facilitate or impede their learning in the new context. Finally, the fact that their learning of a second language is mediated by their knowledge and literacy practices in their first language will certainly impact their appropriation of the written genres of the second language.

Finally, Vygotsky's observations that learning takes place in a social environment in which language and culture play a key role and that it is our social interaction with others in our environment that brings about internal development are highly salient to the situation of international graduate students. Based on these observations, we would expect international graduate students to learn best when they have opportunities for interaction with others. Moreover, the ideal situation for such learning would be within the zone of proximal development, a situation that would, ideally, be found when graduate students work with their peers or with their advisors, faculty, or mentors.

Lave and Wenger's Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Another way of envisioning how novices become experts in their disciplines is Lave and Wenger's *Situated Practice: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (1991). In this monograph, the

authors set forth an analytical framework of learning that lays the groundwork for a number of studies of disciplinary enculturation. They describe this framework as follows:

Legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice: It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice. This social process includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills. (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29)

In other words, it is through their participation in the activities of a discipline that newcomers become members of that discipline. In this sense, learning is located not in the minds of the learners, but in their interaction with others. Moreover, discourse is important not in terms of verbal instruction, but in terms of "learning how to talk (and be silent) in the manner of full participants" (p.105). This last point, I believe, is especially relevant in the case of graduate students' socialization into their disciplines, as discourse, either verbal or written, is both the medium and the material essential to becoming an academic, and it is by learning to speak and write as academics that graduate students, especially doctoral students, transform themselves into academics.

The concept of legitimate peripheral participation can be fruitfully combined with Bakhtin's and Vygotsky's theories about language and learning because, like Bakhtin and Vygotsky, Lave and Wenger ascribe to the learner an active role: it is through their active participation that newcomers are socialized into disciplines and eventually become experts. Furthermore, as in the theories of Bakhtin and Vygotsky, language plays a key role in this process. Legitimate peripheral participation also sheds light on Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development. Scholars have sometimes seen the learner's role within the ZPD as rather passive, imagining the expert in the dyad transmitting her knowledge to the novice

through social interaction (Lantolf, 2000). This perspective might lead us to overemphasize the role of direct instruction in the ZPD. However, legitimate peripheral participation gives us another way to imagine this interaction. Rather than being seen as a *vehicle* to transmit knowledge, discourse can be seen as an *activity* through which newcomers actively construct their learning. In all, I believe that a fusion of Bakhtinian notions about language and Vygotskian theories about learning can provide a productive analytical framework that will guide and inform the current study.

In the literature review that follows, I will draw on various other fields of research: from studies that highlight the role of mentorship in disciplinary enculturation, from studies that discuss the challenges faced by non-native speaking graduate students, from studies that focus on one particular problem in academic writing: plagiarism, and finally from studies that investigate how such students' classroom discourse may impact their learning. Many of the studies reviewed are case studies; wherever possible they are case studies that present the experiences of international graduate students studying in American universities, but as such studies are still relatively few in number, I have also included some case studies of American graduate students and international undergraduate students. By drawing on various areas of scholarship, I hope to provide a structure that will frame the following study, and facilitate our understanding of the complexities of writing English as a second or third language at the graduate level.

Disciplinary Enculturation and Mentorship

It is the process of becoming a doctoral student through construction of texts that Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman tell and retell in a series of articles and book chapters on socialization into a doctoral program (Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988; 1991; Ackerman, 1995; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). In framing their initial study (1988), the

authors make a series of assumptions about key factors for graduate students' enculturation into their disciplines. Since these assumptions are also relevant to the current dissertation study, I reproduce them below:

Table 1

- Members of a research community share a “model of knowing” (Miles and Huberman, 1984). This model of knowing is embedded in the research methodology that incoming students in graduate programs learn and is *encoded in the language that community members use*.
- A research community actually extends beyond a student's graduate school to include researchers at other institutions who use the same methodologies and who ascribe to compatible models of knowing. These researchers . . . *share their work with one another through publications in professional journals and through papers delivered at professional meetings*.
- *Papers and publications constitute a research community's communicative forum; significant issues are raised, defined, and debated within the communicative forum. In this sense, to publish and to be cited it to enter the community's discourse.*
- *Graduate students are initiated into the research community through the reading and writing they do, through interaction in research methodology, and through interaction with faculty and with their peers. A significant part of this initiation process is learning how to use appropriate written linguistic conventions for communicating through disciplinary forums.* [italics added]

(Berkenkotter et al., 1988, p.12)

The passages italicized above indicate the vital role that discourse, especially written discourse, plays in the process of graduate students' socialization into their disciplines or discourse communities. They also illustrate why it is that graduate students are often expected to produce scholarly writing throughout their graduate studies. Recognizing the essential role of students' written products, Berkenkotter et al. (1988) focused their analysis on the texts produced by Nate, a doctoral student in a rhetoric PhD program. Interviews with Nate and analysis of his

writing before and after entering the program revealed a conflict between Nate's approach to writing and that required by the program he had entered. Having done his undergraduate degree in English, Nate favored "selecting active, colorful verbs and metaphoric constructions" (p.16). In his doctoral rhetoric program, his instructors described his writing as incoherent, disorganized, lacking in focus, and having inappropriate vocabulary; however, throughout his first year, Nate's writing increasingly incorporated features of the expository writing required by his program.

Berkenkotter et al's original study (1988) discussed the features of socialization into academia by means of producing texts, but the bulk of the study is devoted to quantitative analysis of the features of Nate's texts, thereby reflecting the quantitative methodology paradigm of the program with which they were all associated. The authors did not investigate deeply Nate's process of producing his texts nor did they investigate what kind of mentorship he received from his instructors that aided or hindered the production of those texts⁶. One study that does investigate the role of mentors in facilitating graduate students' enculturation into their disciplines is Belcher's *The Apprenticeship Approach to Graduate Literacy* (1994), which also draws on the analytical framework of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Belcher (1994) pointed out that experienced researchers are often considered to be particularly skilled in assisting their graduate students to acquire the knowledge they need to succeed in their programs. They do this by (1) *modeling* appropriate behaviors and strategies, 2) *coaching* their students and supporting them as they perform new tasks and 3) *fading*, once their students can work independently (Belcher, p.24 citing Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989, p.39). However, Belcher contended that the situation described above, which she called the cognitive

⁶ An interesting coda to this study is that Nate was, in fact, one of the authors of the study (Ackerman), but the authors chose not to divulge this information at the time of publication (Ackerman, 1995).

apprenticeship model, has three major shortcomings: it assumes that mentors know how to scaffold their students' learning, it does not pay sufficient attention to the context of learning, and it sees the apprentice's role as largely passive. She suggested Lave and Wenger's legitimate peripheral participation framework as a means of overcoming the limitations of the cognitive apprenticeship model.

Belcher used this analytical lens to investigate the advisor/student relationship in the cases of three doctoral students: Li, a Chinese student in Chinese literature; Ko, a Chinese student in applied mathematics; and Keongmee, a Korean student in human nutrition. Although Li was skilled and fluent in both English speaking and writing, his advisor, a Chinese American, identified a problem in his writing which he ascribed to Li's being "like traditional 'old style' Chinese scholars who read to accumulate facts and wrote mainly to display them" (p.27). He wanted Li to take up a more critical and analytical stance, and wrote extensive criticism on Li's drafts "modeling" this stance. Misunderstanding the purpose of his advisor's critiques, and failing to modify his writing as his instructor required, Li eventually left the program for a job outside academia.

Ko also had difficulty meeting his advisor's suggestions for his writing. Ko's writing still had many errors in grammar and syntax, but these were not the source of his problems with his advisor. Ko's advisor, believing that writing is "an iterative process" (p.28), wanted Ko to write successive drafts of his papers and to recognize the needs of his audience: primarily engineers, who were not interested in mathematics, per se, but in what it could be used for. Ko continued to include complex mathematically dense passages that, his advisor believed, were inappropriate for his audience. Ko did complete the doctoral program but because he had, according to his advisor, "Not fully grasped what applied mathematics research and writing were

all about” (p.29), and because he had few publications, the advisor doubted that Ko would find a good academic job.

Keoungmee, the student Belcher described as having the weakest language skills of the three had the most productive relationship with her advisor. She successfully completed her dissertation with the support of her advisor who was confident that, with her help, Keoungmee would go on to publish her work in reputable journals. The advisor considered that Keoungmee had already become a “full fledged member of their community of practice” (p.30) despite her still limited English proficiency.

Belcher compared the roles of the students and advisors described above and concluded that both Li and Ko lacked confidence in their advisors’ judgment and that their participation in their academic communities was limited. Keoungmee, by contrast, was confident of making a contribution to her field and worked closely and collaboratively with her advisor who seemed to take great pleasure in her accomplishments. Belcher suggests that the advisor’s role in fostering their graduate student’s entry into their communities of practice through writing is vital and that the key to academic literacy for non-native speaking students is in having faculty who will “play a facilitative nurturing role” (p.33).

The importance of graduate students’ relationships with their advisors was also a significant finding in Dong’s (1995) study, which included case studies on the dissertation writing of three Chinese students in the sciences. Dong found that her three focal students each had different relationships with their advisors. Helen, a student in biochemistry, reported a very productive relationship with her advisor who worked closely with her in every stage of her research, including the writing. Helen had co-authored four articles with her advisor (who had done most of the writing up of the studies), and she reported that she had learned a great deal

about writing by “mimicking her professor’s writing” (p.168). Furthermore, the legitimate peripheral participation described by Lave and Wenger seems to be instantiated in Helen’s description of what she learned while writing her dissertation: “Learning by doing is a good way to get into the field . . . Now I feel English is easier to use than Chinese when I talk about my work. After completing my dissertation, I feel like a member of the community” (p.184).

However, the other two students in Dong’s study reported less felicitous relationships with their advisors. Sam, an ecology student, mentioned that although he met his advisor frequently, they never discussed Sam’s writing. As a result, Sam felt that he “had to probe in the dark and learn from his mistakes, thus delaying the completion of his program” (p.190). Mike, a student in genetics and breeding, was still unhappier about his relationship with his advisor, which deteriorated as he worked on his dissertation until it was “almost antagonistic” (p.250). Both Mike and his advisor expressed frustration over Mike’s lack of progress in writing, but Mike felt that he was being pushed to work faster than he was able, and as a result his relationship with his advisor became “painful and unproductive” (p.251).

In discussing the students’ relationships with their advisors, Dong found that students and advisors had differing perceptions about the usefulness of the advisors’ contributions, with the advisors tending to rate their helpfulness more highly than the students. She concluded that this discrepancy may have been caused, in part, by students’ misinterpretation of their advisor’s feedback and by breakdowns in communication. Also, the superficial informality of their relationships with their advisors hid the asymmetric power relations that usually exist between advisor and graduate student.

The final study of mentoring reviewed here presented students’ perspectives on a more successful relationship. Luebs, Fredrickson, Hyon, and Samraj (1998) related a first-hand

account of their experiences working with their advisor, John Swales, throughout their doctoral programs. They described the many way Swales impacted them, not the least of which was his influence on their writing. In giving feedback on their papers, Swales addressed all areas from “thematic areas [to] sentence level nitty gritty of page numbers and references” (p.76).

The authors noted that although the asymmetric power relationship between advisor and advisee is such that “suggestions” from the advisor may be taken as directives, Swales tried “to walk the fine line between the two” (p.69): Although, at one stage, he made it clear that one student’s writing was unacceptable to him, he later supported that student, encouraging her to retain an unconventional section in her dissertation, even when other committee members were less accepting of its unconventionality. We should note, however, that this article was published in a journal edited by Swales and can therefore be seen as an homage rather than a critique; yet, it is not blindly uncritical of Swales in that its authors admitted that they have “all experienced days when we wanted to strangle him” (p.82).

The articles reviewed above indicate that disciplinary enculturation can be seen, first, in terms of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991), wherein newcomer graduate students become members of a discipline through their participation in the activities of the discipline. Second, the activities of academic disciplines inhere largely in the production of texts, so that it is through the process of writing that graduate students become members of the academic community (Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman, (1988, 1991). Finally, the role of mentors or advisors can have a profound impact on these students textual socialization: with unsuccessful mentoring relationships even skilled writers may fail to complete their programs; with good mentoring relationships even students with limited English writing skills may become productive academics (Belcher, 1994; Dong, 1995).

Writing in Graduate School: The Challenges for Nonnative Speakers

Contextual Challenges

One might expect that for a non-native speaker of English, the biggest challenge in writing at the graduate level would be difficulty of writing in a second or even a third language. While it is true that writing in a second language is cognitively more challenging in many respects (Silva, 1993), the linguistic challenge is not the only one international graduate students face. Still more challenging might be the disjunction between the students' experiences, home cultural contexts, and expectations and those of the foreign context in which they now find themselves. In the following section, I review a number of studies that show how such contextual conflicts can complicate the experiences of graduate students writing in a second language. These studies also show the limitations of the disciplinary enculturation model of learning in graduate school.

The difficulty of finding oneself in an academic environment that clashes with one's home culture and expectations is described in two research studies by Casanave (1992, 1995). In her 1995 study, Cassanave presented the findings from an 18- month long ethnographic study of culturally diverse graduate students in a doctoral sociology program characterized by "deep respect for science, numbers, analytical thinking, and formal discourse conventions" (p.97) that faculty assumed to be "culture neutral" (p. 99). Casanave found that the metaphor of graduate school as a process of socialization was inadequate to describe the diversity of these students' experiences; rather than being uniformly socialized into a discourse community of sociologists, the students were strongly influenced by various contexts that touched them personally. Moreover, although several students criticized and resisted the theories, methodologies, and underlying epistemology of the department into which, in theory, they were being enculturated,

none felt they had the agency to change the system. Casanave called for a greater understanding of the impact of the local, historical, and interactive contexts that influenced these students' understandings of their fields, of themselves, and of the texts they read and produced.

Focusing more deeply on one of the students from the above study, Casanave (1992) examined the conflict between academic socialization and cultural diversity in her case study, which followed a Hispanic woman through the first year of her PhD program in sociology. Throughout the year Virginia became increasingly disenchanted with the program, especially with the scientific jargon that prevailed in the program. She came to feel that she no longer owned the language that she was compelled to use and that this language distanced her from the people she most wanted to help. As a Hispanic woman interested in the social aspects of her field, she felt alienated by an environment Casanave describes as dominated by white males intent on making the field into a science. After a year, Virginia left the program to work in a non-profit Puerto Rican educational organization, but even there was frustrated because she felt her voice could not be heard without the amplification a PhD would bestow.

While Casanave focused on how students were—successfully or unsuccessfully—socialized into their graduate programs, Prior (1998) looked more specifically at the role students' writing and production of written texts played in their socialization into their disciplines. Prior's book, *Writing/Disciplinarity: A Sociohistoric Account of Writing in the Academy* contains a number of case studies that detail the successes and failures of international graduate student writers.

In his chapter, *Trajectories of Participation*, Prior (1998) examines the different paths taken by two MA students in a Language Research class. Prior examines their different trajectories in terms of three modes of participation: *passing*, *procedural display*, and *deep*

participation. *Passing*, he defines as an institutional perspective that takes into account students' meeting of various requirements of their program yet has nothing to say about the learning or true participation in the program. *Procedural display*, a notion taken from Bloom, Puro, and Theodrou (1989), refers to "the cooperative display by teachers and students to each other of a set of interactional procedures that can be counted (interpreted) as doing a lesson by teachers, students, and members of the community" (p.266, cited in Prior, 1998, p.101). *Deep participation*, adapted from Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of full participation, refers to "a form of centripetal participation marked by rich access to, and engagement in, the practices of a community (Prior, p.103).

Prior analyzed the production of two research proposals originally written for a language research class he observed and their consequent re-production as master's theses. The writers of these texts, Teresa and Mai, followed very different pathways in writing the texts. Teresa chose a subject in which she had a strong personal interest. Throughout the production of this paper, Teresa actively and repeatedly sought opportunities to discuss and obtain feedback on her proposal from her family, friends and peers, from more senior graduate students, from faculty, and from the university's human subjects office. Mai, on the other hand, seemed less personally engaged in her subject and sought few if any opportunities for interaction on the topic of her proposal. In analyzing the theses, Prior concluded that Mai seemed to be "ventriloquating others' voices with limited evidence of participating in disciplinary practices of writing and knowledge making" (p.132); thus her participation is characterized by "passing." Teresa, on the other hand, whose world was "richly populated with helpful others" appeared to be "deeply engaged intertextually" (p.133), and thus she instantiates the notion of deep participation.

In the three studies discussed above, the researchers present the difficulties their participants face not in terms of linguistic challenges, but in terms of conflicting expectations or differing modes of participation: In Cassanave's study of the sociology doctoral students (1995), conflict arose from the students' resistance to the methodologies and epistemologies of their department; in her case study of Virginia (1992), Cassanave found that although Virginia had difficulties with the jargon used in the department, this problem was ethical rather than linguistic: Virginia believed that using this jargon distanced her from the very people she wanted to help. Finally, in Prior's study of Teresa and Mai, the problem is framed not in terms of linguistic proficiency but in terms of engagement and differing levels of participation. However, for some non-native speaking graduate students, linguistic problems—more specifically, difficulty producing texts written in academic English—can have a significant impact on their success or failure in graduate school.

Linguistic Challenges

As part of his study of six students in a graduate level geography seminar, Prior (1998) discusses the experiences of the one non-native speaker of English in the class, Betty, a student from the Republic of China. In examining the final paper Betty wrote for the class, Prior found that her instructor's comments had focused on form rather than content, and that many of these comments concerned issues of grammar or syntax. In interviewing the instructor (who was also Betty's advisor), Prior found that the instructor focused mainly on what the instructor called Betty's writing problems: "She can't write . . . I don't think she can get a degree basically unless she has vast improvement." We are not given Betty's perspective on this situation, nor do we know if Betty did eventually graduate, but given her advisor's pessimistic comments on her prospect of completing her degree, we can infer that Betty's writing problems—or at least her

advisor's perspective on her writing problems—negatively impacted her performance in graduate school.

When a student's limited proficiency in English negatively impacts his performance, the result can be academic failure, as is shown in Schneider and Fujishima's (1995) study of Zhang, a Taiwanese student in a master's degree in International Public Administration. Because Zhang was admitted to his master's program with a low TOEFL score, he was required to take four English classes, and the grades from these classes were included in his GPA. While his grades in his major classes were As and Bs, the Cs he received in his English classes meant that his GPA was unacceptably low, and he was asked to leave his graduate program.

Schneider and Fujishima suggest a number of reasons for Zhang's failure to progress in English: lack of experience with English, limited exposure to English outside of school, and a general lack of interest in US culture and in campus life. However, the fact that it is only Zhang's performance in English classes that led to his failure to complete the program is problematic; in this respect, Zhang's situation was similar to that of Luc, the student in John's (2001) study, who maintained an A average in his major courses but was unable to pass a required English proficiency exam.

Clearly, a lack of proficiency in English can lead to problems for non-native speaking graduate students, especially, if their limited proficiency negatively impacts their writing skills, as it is usually on their written products that graduate students are evaluated. When students find that their skills in understanding or writing are inadequate to meet the requirements of graduate school, they can adopt various strategies: one of these, and a particularly important one as I will argue later in this paper, is getting help from friends, instructors, advisors, or writing specialists, but another strategy is more problematic—incorporating others' words into their own texts.

Plagiarism

For the English composition teacher . . . one of the most troubling aspects of non-native writing in English is the attribution (or non-attribution) of authorship. Quotation, indirect quotation, paraphrase, and reference to the general gist of a passage are mixed in a tapestry that is all but impossible to untangle. (Scollon, 1994, p.35).

Given the above comments and the concerns about plagiarism that are shared by many researchers and teachers of academic writing (see, for example, Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Bloch, 2001; Currie, 1998; Deckert, 1993; Evans & Youman, 2001; Howard, 1995; Hsu, 2003; Hyland, 2001; Myers, 1998; Pecorari, 2001; Pennycook, 1994, 1996; Scollon, 1994, 1995; Spack, 1997; Stanley, 2002), plagiarism is an issue that must be addressed when considering the writing of graduate students who are writing in a second, or even a third, language. In the following section, I review a number of research studies that challenge the accepted opinion of plagiarism as “immoral” and “dishonest” (Howard, 1995, p.793). These studies, pointing out that plagiarism is a Western ideological construct, call for a more flexible attitude toward students’ borrowing from others’ texts. Moreover, they suggest that such borrowing may be a strategy that can eventually lead to real learning.

The notion that plagiarism is a peculiarly Western concept deeply rooted in modernist ideologies is now becoming more and more widely accepted in the field of ESL academic writing (Evans & Youmans, 2001; Hyland, 2001; Myers, 1998; Penneycook, 1994, 1996; Scollon, 1994, 1995; Sherman, 1992). In two articles that call for a reconceptualization of the construct of plagiarism and examine its ideological underpinnings, Scollon (1995) traces the roots of plagiarism back to their origins in the European Enlightenment, and finds that plagiarism “represents a construct of Utilitarian ideology which is likely to be in conflict with both current changes in English and with the culturally constructed selves of non-native speaking students of

English” (1995, p.33). When seen in this light, it is hardly surprising that students from diverse cultures may not buy into Western notions of textual ownership.

Pointing out the complexity of plagiarism, especially when differences in cultural traditions are taken into consideration, Scollon (1995) describes how the traditional view of plagiarism, based on the notion of ownership of words, is rooted in the transmission model of communication, which is now under attack from a variety of sources, for example from postmodernists who reject the notion of “the autonomous, individual author” in favor of “the collective, always unfinished text” (Howard, 1995, p.791) and from socially-oriented scholars of language such as Bakhtin, who argue that our voices are not our own but come to us from others. Given the underlying utilitarian ideology of plagiarism, and the various attacks on the notion of solitary authorship, Scollon suggests that teachers and researchers of academic writing, especially those who work with NNSEs, should reexamine the question of plagiarism if they wish to avoid the charge of ideological arrogance.

Continuing the attempt to situate the notion of plagiarism within its social, cultural, and historical context, Pennycook (1996) describes how textual ownership has its origins in the “Individualist Romanticist view of originality that emerged in the modern era” (p.207). He goes on to undermine the notion of textual originality by presenting examples of well-known expressions such as “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” that really have their origins in earlier utterances (in this case, in remarks by Oliver Wendell Holmes). He continues the attack by showing how postmodernist critiques have further weakened the notion of individual authorship, and, finally, polishes off the now foundering concept of textual originality by citing scholars such as Bakhtin, who claimed that our all

utterances are “filled with others’ words” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.89, cited in Pennycook, 1996, p.211).

Turning from theoretical discussions of plagiarism to its practice among his own Chinese students in Hong Kong where he taught, Pennycook presents the results of informal interviews he had conducted with students who had been “‘caught’ plagiarizing.” He found that students had many reasons for plagiarizing. Some cited “heavy workloads,” others “careless study habits,” while for others, plagiarism arose from their unhappiness with their classes, and as such their plagiarism was “more a case of resistance than of ignorance, ineptitude or dishonesty” (p.223). Furthermore, the students were aware that their own words were likely to be perceived as inferior to those of the original authors, and they challenged the belief held by their Western instructors that students who plagiarize are not learning; to the contrary, some students believed that reproducing others’ words led to better learning. Ultimately, Pennycook claimed, Western academics and teachers of English need to be more open and less rigid in their attitudes toward “textual borrowings” (p.227), especially where non-native speakers of English are concerned.

The situation in which differing attitudes toward “textual borrowing” may first become apparent is in the ESL writing class, and how writing instructors deal with the question of plagiarism in these classes may impact on their students’ future writing practices in college or in graduate school. Hyland (2001) addresses the issue of plagiarism in an ESL classroom from the perspective of how teachers should give feedback on papers they suspect have been plagiarized. The two teachers in her study were reluctant to accuse their students outright of plagiarism. Instead, they took an indirect approach which, rather than clarifying the situation, led to misunderstanding.

Hyland found two kinds of plagiarism in her study. Seng Hee, a Korean undergraduate incorporated sentences and paragraphs from her source readings into her text. After a conference with her teacher, who indirectly commented on these sections by asking, “Where did you get this information? Did you use any quotations?” (p.377), Seng Hee revised her text to introduce these sections with the authors’ name and to add the year of the text in parenthetical citations, but she never understood that she was supposed to paraphrase or use quotation marks, even at the end of the course.

The second case of plagiarism Hyland found was more serious. Zhang, a Chinese graduate student submitted a “very competent and highly academic draft . . . heavily and expertly referenced” (p.379). As this draft was so markedly different from his earlier essays and as Zhang was sharing a house with a graduate student who had written on this topic in the previous year, his teacher was confident that this was not his own work. However, Zhang claimed that it was his own work and refused to discuss the issue. Hyland concludes that Zhang’s plagiarism was “an act of desperation” (p.380). She suggests that when ESL students compare their own written texts with those of their source texts, they may be dismayed by the differences they perceive between them and feel that plagiarism is their only recourse. Hyland also suggests that instructors’ appropriate responses to plagiarized texts are critical if students are to learn how to use sources and how to avoid plagiarizing in future.

Incidents of plagiarism are not confined to ESL writing classes, but also occur in academia, even among professional scientists. This is the situation that Myers (1998) discusses in her response to an article reported in the journal, *Science* (Xiguang & Lei, 1996), which centered on three cases of plagiarism among Chinese scientists. Myers’ retelling of this article focused on the “blatant arrogance of equating the ability to use English with the ability to do

science” (p.6) she perceived on the part of the editor of *Science*. Myers also sought an explanation for these incidents by reviewing the attitudes toward knowledge found in a Chinese classroom, where, “Students . . . cannot view their talent as private property” (Ross, 1993, p.145, cited in Myers, 1998, p.9).

To illustrate the attitudes of Chinese scientists writing for English publications, Myers presents the comments of the Dutch editor of the journal *Plant Molecular Biology*, which published one of the plagiarized articles:

Some Chinese journalists think they can’t compete equally in Western journals because of a problem with English So they like to copy what others have done and then fill in what is new . . . to many people, what was done is not considered an aberration, but part of an attitude that says it’s OK to copy as long as you’ve done the work yourself (Xiguan & Lei, 1996)

In Myers’ account, such an attitude on the part of the Chinese scientists seems almost reasonable, especially when examined in the light of the comments of the editor of *Science*, Floyd E. Bloom: “If you see people making multiple mistakes in spelling, syntax, and semantics, you have to wonder whether when they did their science weren’t also making similar errors of inattention” (Gibbs, 1995, cited in Myers, 1998). In discussing the *Science* article with the graduate students in her ESL composition class, Myers found that while all of them thought it was wrong to publish another’s work under one’s own name, given the hegemonic position of English, which demands that scientists publish in English journals, the students were generally sympathetic to NNSE scientists’ “borrowing” some words and phrases from English journal articles to use in their own.

In addition to exposing the history and underlying ideology of plagiarism, a number of ESL researchers have investigated ESL student writers’ attitudes toward plagiarism and toward textual practices that might be regarded as plagiaristic. For example, in a research study based

on interviews with students in three ESL writing classes, Evans and Youmans (2001) found that the students (from 15 different countries) had various understandings/misunderstandings of the concept of academic dishonesty: some did not understand the difference between plagiarism and collaboration while others reported that plagiarism was a necessary to survive in school, though it might be ineffective as a long term strategy. Some students used plagiarism as a form of resistance against a “Draconian educational system” (p.53), and others considered it to be normal practice in their home educational systems (Evans and Youmans, 2001).

The articles reviewed above broadly agree that plagiarism is a Western construct and that Western textual practices may be confusing or even seem ridiculous (Sherman, 1992) to students from other countries. Moreover, academic writing seems to be asking the impossible of students: they are supposed to “sound like” the expert writers whose sources they draw on, yet they must do so using “their own words.” As Pennycook points out, “When does one come to own a language sufficiently that to say something ‘in one’s own words’ makes sense?” (p.202). Textbooks on writing suggest that writers avoid plagiarism by quoting or paraphrasing, yet quoting large blocks of text is unacceptable (Spack, 1997), and paraphrasing is “arguably the highest and most synthetic language skill of all” (Myers, 1998). In the present study, I argue that all writers are constantly engaged in borrowing from others’ texts, and hope to gain a greater understanding of how ESL graduate students appropriate others’ words and adapt them to their own intentions (Bakhtin, 1981). I also hope that these students’ experiences will add insight to the debates on plagiarism.

Conflicting Cultures of Communication

International graduate students may differ from American students not only in their attitudes toward appropriate use of others’ words in their writing, but also in their attitudes

toward appropriate use of their own words in the classroom. A fundamental assumption of this dissertation is that we all carry with us cultural artifacts: international graduate students' cultural artifacts—their ways of thinking, speaking, and writing—may differ from those held by their American instructors and classmates. Accordingly, opportunities exist for cultural misunderstandings.

Many contextual factors impinge upon international students' process of academic apprenticeship in graduate school (Belcher and Braine, 1995; Casanave, 1995; Prior, 1998). Morita (2000) found that international students' ways of participating and interacting in classes is an important part of this process. In such classes, participation in class discussion is the primary means by which students interact with their instructors. However, "cultural differences in communication norms, structures, and patterns between teachers and students may predispose them toward misunderstandings and misjudgments of both their [students'] academic proficiency and their communicative competence" (Crago, Eriks-Brophy, Pesco and McAlpine, 1997, p.246). Such misjudgments may resonate into other areas of the students' participation: in their attitude toward the class and even in the written assignments they produce for the class; misjudgments on the part of the instructor may also impact the instructor's reception of a student's assignments.

To understand how misjudgments between interlocutors can occur it is necessary to consider the cultural underpinnings of discourse; one researcher who has pointed out the socially and culturally defined nature of discourse is John Gumperz, who has analyzed, conceptualized, and described many key features in discourse (1982a, 1982b, 1984, 1992). Gumperz' work focuses not only on the phonological elements of discourse, but also on "participants' personal background knowledge and their attitudes toward each other, sociocultural assumptions

concerning role and status relationships as well as social value components associated with various message components” (1982, p.153). He notes that these features play a critical role in discourse and describes several instances of miscommunication between native and non-native speakers who have different contextual criteria for understanding the conversation. In other words, speakers relate what is said to knowledge acquired through their past experiences (or cultural artifacts), and misunderstanding may arise when these experiences diverge.

In the academic settings, several researchers have examined cultural misunderstandings between non-native speaking graduate students and American students. For example, Tyler and Davis (1990) and Tyler (1995) have focused on communicative missteps that occur between international teaching assistants and American undergraduate students. The authors used an ingenious method for discovering both American and Korean perspectives toward the breakdowns in communication: they video recorded naturally occurring interactions; then they asked each participant (American and Korean) to view the video and describe their perceptions of what was going on at particular moments in the interaction.

They found that the Korean graduate students and American undergraduates had widely divergent understandings of what was going on, and these understandings were based on the different frames or interactional conventions the participants assumed to be in operation, frames that were determined by the participants’ different culturally defined notions of appropriate discourse. For example, in one situation (Tyler and Davis, 1990) an American student asked his Korean TA about his low grade on an assignment during a conversation that could be heard by other class members. The American student expected his TA to respond by giving him a brief overall explanation for the low grade, but the Korean TA had a completely different discourse strategy. Feeling that it would be more face-saving for the American student, the TA used an

“inductive/collaborative strategy” (p.401) that he assumed would be less confrontational: rather than give an overview, he built his argument incrementally by going through each of the points that had led to the low grade, seeking to get the American student’s agreement on each point before proceeding on to the next. As the TA began by presenting small details, rather than with a general overview, the American student assumed there was no major problem with his paper and expressed anger at his low grade.

In a similar situation, Tyler (1995) analyzed a conversation between a Korean TA and an American undergraduate who were working on a computer assignment that required calculation of bowling scores. The American undergraduate, who had no knowledge of bowling, asked the Korean TA if he knew about bowling. He replied, “Yeah approximately” although he was, in fact, very knowledgeable. His response was an expression of modesty, as it is considered rude in Korean to directly state one’s expertise; moreover, throughout the exchange, the TA refrained from explicitly mentioning his expertise because he considered the student might be embarrassed by a foreigner’s superior knowledge of an American game. However, the undergraduate interpreted his response to mean that he was not an expert and proceeded to challenge the TA’s subsequent remarks about how to score the game, thinking that she knew more than he.

Such breakdowns in conversation are just as likely to occur in graduate classrooms between international students and their classmates or instructors (Morita, 2000), especially when students’ culturally defined expectations for appropriate discourse differ from American expectations. In discussing the situation of Russian students in American classes, Petro (2003a, 2003b) pointed out that Russians’ conversational style is much more direct than Americans’, especially when expressing disagreement. As a result, American students and instructors may perceive Russian students as rude or confrontational because, as Tyler (1995) had noted earlier,

“When speakers from two speech communities engage in conversation, each tends to judge the other’s contribution from the vantage of their own community-specific conventions” (p.137).

The biggest challenge for international graduate students in adapting their own discourse to the expectations of their classmates and instructors is that these expectations are tacit; expectations for appropriate discourse are culturally defined and very seldom made explicit. One way of understanding the behavior appropriate for the classroom is Bloome, Puro, and Theodorou’s notion of procedural display (1989). This perspective on classroom behavior sees classroom lessons “not so much as a way to teach/learn academic content (though lessons may do both), but rather . . . as a particular set of cultural events” (p.267). Bloome et al. define procedural display as “the display by the teacher and students, to each other, of a set of academic and interactional procedures that themselves count as the accomplishment of a lesson” (p.272). In effect, it is a kind of game played by students and teacher, the rules of which are never explained. Students who have grown up in the native culture learn these rules throughout their schooling, but international students who have grown up in different cultures may have learned quite a different set of rules. As a result, they may be unable to play the game, and in failing to engage in appropriate procedural display, they may be judged as deficient by their classmates or instructors (Crago et al., 1997). This review suggests that researchers looking at international graduate students’ apprenticeship experiences should look at face-to-face classroom interaction as well as written interactions.

Summary

In the above literature review, I have pulled strands from various fields of research: for the theoretical framework I have drawn on the theories of Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and Lave and Wenger. To give an in-depth picture of the experience of writing academic English at the

graduate level, I have drawn on studies of disciplinary enculturation and mentorship, studies that present the problems faced by international graduate students, studies that consider divergent perspectives on textual ownership, and studies that investigate differential attitudes toward intercultural communication. I have woven these strands together to form a web that will support our understanding of the challenges international graduate students face in appropriating the written genres of their programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In choosing a methodology to guide the data collection in this study, I had four aims: I wished to find a methodology that would 1) enable me to answer the research questions, 2) allow me to find an emic perspective, 3) make sense with the chosen theoretical perspective, and 4) help me to stay open to any potential themes within the data and to generate theory from them.

Given my own constructivist epistemological stance and the sociocultural theoretical framework of the study, I needed to find a methodology that fit with these epistemological and theoretical perspectives. I was also anxious to choose a methodology that would enable me to see whatever the data had to tell me. In conducting previous research (Braxley, in press), I have experienced the blinkering effect of theory: while theory sharpens vision, it may also narrow it. I wanted to avoid seeing in the data only those things that fit well within my theoretical perspective; thus, I needed a methodology that would be flexible enough to allow me to pursue the points that the participants themselves emphasized, and by building on these points I hoped to generate new theoretical understandings. The methodology I chose to meet these needs combines the traditional research methods of ethnography with the constructivist version of grounded theory proposed by Charmaz (1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2002).

By using a combination of ethnographic and grounded theory methods, I had two aims for this study: First, I hoped to provide the “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of ethnography that would lead readers to develop a deeper empathy (Schwandt 1997) and understanding of the participants’ experiences; second, I wanted to use the rigor and flexibility of grounded theory

methods to generate theoretical insight into the participants' experiences. There are, however, some tensions between ethnography and grounded theory. Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) pointed out that in most grounded theory studies "conceptual analysis takes center stage; stories scenes and, therefore, individuals play minor parts on the illustrative sidelines" (p.170); moreover, "Grounded theorists include snippets of stories and fragments of experience rather than entire narratives" (p. 170). The authors suggested that such tensions are not irreconcilable. Rather, they believed that ethnographers and grounded theorists have much to learn from each other, as the strengths of each approach can inform the other.

In the present study, I wished to include more than "snippets" and "fragments" of experience; rather, in ethnographic vein I wished to create a written product "symbolic of the worlds [I] visited rather than distilled abstractions of actions" (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, p.171). In short, the methodology in this study takes up Charmaz and Mitchell's challenge to use the methods of grounded theory to enhance ethnographic work. In the following section, I describe the characteristics of Charmaz' constructivist grounded theory and explain how this methodology framed the study.

The Assumptions of Constructivist Grounded Theory

While early inceptions of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978) had objectivist underpinnings, Charmaz (1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2002) notes that more recent constructivist versions of grounded theory make the following assumptions: a) Multiple realities exist, b) data reflect the researcher's and the research participants' mutual constructions, c) the researcher enters into and is affected by the participants' world, and d) such an approach provides an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it. Charmaz' constructivist version of grounded theory retains the advantages of Glaser and Strauss' (1967)

original conception while casting off the objective underpinnings that would render the methodology unsuitable for a study guided by a sociocultural theoretical framework. Since grounded theory provides a flexible methodological framework that enables a researcher to avoid forcing the data into preconceived categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) and to capture an emic perspective (Charmaz, 2000, 2002), it provides an appropriate methodology for the present study.

The Literature Review in Grounded Theory

One way in which grounded theory methodologists differ from other researchers is in their recommendation that the process of reviewing the literature be delayed until after data analysis (Charmaz, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967); in this way, the research remains grounded in the data rather than being based upon the ideas of other researchers. However, as Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) pointed out, researchers are generally familiar with the literature of their fields before they begin their studies, and they cannot simply set aside the knowledge they already possess.

In the present study, I was already familiar with the literature of sociocultural theory, and this theoretical perspective has undoubtedly influenced my thinking about the writing experiences of international graduate students; however, the remaining literature I reviewed in the previous chapter grew out of the study itself. In other words, based on my analysis of the data, I found that I needed to review literature on the areas of disciplinary enculturation and mentorship, contextual and linguistic challenges to writing in graduate school, plagiarism, and cultures factors that influence communication. While the traditional format of a dissertation or research article dictates that the literature review is presented before the findings, in this

dissertation, the literature review is based on my analysis of the data and serves to connect the present research to the work of other researchers.

Participants

There were ten participants in this study: eight international graduate students in two classes (three in one class and five in another) and the two instructors of these classes. The students came from Malaysia, Korea, Russia, India, and the People's Republic of China, and their ages ranged between 25 and 35. Seven of the eight students were female and the eighth was male. Most of the students in the study were single and had no children. Two students, Inna and Maya were married, and one student, Inna, had a two-year-old child. The instructors were both American, married with one or more children and female. All of the participants in the study are referred to by pseudonym, most of which they chose themselves. For a more detailed description of the participants, their educational backgrounds, and their experiences of writing English, see Table 2 overleaf.

Selection of Participants

Finding participants for the present study was no easy matter, as I needed, first, to find classes where there were international students and, second, to find both students and instructors in the same class who were willing to participate in the study. I tried various methods to find participants: to recruit faculty, I sent email letters to faculty teaching graduate-level classes in almost every department of the university, but to no avail. When I found faculty who were willing to participate, they seldom had international students in their classes.

I tried several methods to attract student participants. I put flyers on the notice boards of many university departments briefly describing the study and offering free tutoring/editorial assistance as an incentive for students' participation. I also contacted all the university listservs

Table 2

Student name	Nationality and languages spoken	Degree program and year in program	Educational background Years of experience learning English Experience of academic writing in English
Julie	Malaysian Mandarin (1 st) Malay Cantonese English	Master's/PhD Ed. Psych Applied Cognition 2 nd Year	English medium kindergarten. Took English classes in school from age 9-18 and an extra private class from age 10. Attended English medium university in Malaysia (2 years). Transferred to US undergrad university for final 2 years. Extensive experience of writing academic English in undergrad and graduate programs.
Sooyoung	Korean Korean (1 st) English	Master's/PhD Ed. Psych. School psych. 2 nd Year	Started learning English in middle school, mostly grammar and reading. Went to English institute in Korea for 9 months, but felt English did not improve much there. Attended IEP in US for one year where she learned academic writing. Considerable experience of writing academic English in graduate school
Inna	Russian Russian (1 st) English Kazakhstan	Master's/PhD Developmental Psychology 1 st Year	Was in English track class in Russian high school—had about 6 hours' English instruction her week. Completed senior year in US high school. Completed psychology undergraduate degree in the US. Considerable experience writing academic English as undergraduate.
Maya	Indian Bengali (1 st) Hindi English	PhD Qualitative Inquiry 3 rd Year	Attended all English medium schools in India, but seldom spoke English. Completed junior and senior years in Canadian high school. Majored in psychology and biochemistry in Canada and then took postgraduate program in human resources. Completed master's in instructional technology in US. Did one year of PhD in IT then transferred to Qualitative Inquiry. Extensive experience of writing academic English
Harry	Korean Korean (1 st) English	PhD Training & Evaluation 3 rd Year	Began studying English in middle school, mostly grammar and reading. Found speaking and writing very hard when he started graduate school, but since then has had considerable experience writing academic English.
Rainbow	Chinese Mandarin (1 st) English	PhD Higher Education 3 rd Year	Began studying English in middle school. Took two English courses in first year of bachelor's. Mostly studied grammar, vocabulary and reading. Considerable experience of writing academic English in grad school.
Jacey	Chinese Mandarin (1 st) English	Master's Human Resources 1 st Year	Began learning English in middle school and continued throughout bachelor's degree, but her English classes focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary. No experience of writing academic English.
Miri	Chinese Mandarin (1 st) Japanese English French	Master's (exchange student) International Business 1 st Year	Began learning English in middle school. Classes focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary. Took an English class throughout first two years of bachelor's degree. Took an English class in her master's degree in Japan and one business class taught in English. Almost no experience of writing academic English.

that non-native speaking graduate students were likely to subscribe to, describing the study and offering the same incentive for participation. Finally, I attended the orientation for new international students and put flyers describing the study in each new student's package of information. Several students who were willing to participate contacted me, but none of their instructors was willing.

Ultimately, I found participants not through email or flyers but through personal contacts. Knowing that the Department of Adult Education had many international students, I approached the director of that department who introduced me to Dr. Newman. She agreed to take part in the study and introduced me to her students. All five international students in the class agreed to become participants in the study, and eventually I interviewed each of the nine students in the class.

Personal contact also led to my finding a second research site. I was contacted by Julie, an international graduate student whom I had met at the international student orientation where she had volunteered to work as a team leader. Julie told me that she and another international student in her class would be willing to participate in the study, and she put me in touch with her instructor, who also agreed to participate. A third international student in the class was also willing to participate, so, with Julie's assistance, I found another site in which to collect data.

My Relationship with the Participants

The relationship of the researcher to the researched is of critical importance (Creswell, 1994) since it affects the nature of the interaction between them. From this perspective, it is important that I set forth my relationship with each of the participants in the study. I had one major advantage in collecting data in this study. I was collecting data mainly from my peers—other graduate students. As I was in much the same position as my student participants, the

asymmetric relationship that often exists between the researcher and the researched (Britzman, 1995; Garrick, 1999, Lincoln, 2002) was sharply reduced in this study. I found that all of the student participants in the study were remarkably open in the interviews, conversations, and the emails we exchanged. I could not have asked for more helpful and reflective participants. Also, the instructors, Dr. Newman and Dr. Jones, seemed very eager to help in my research, and I believe that they, too, reflected deeply on their experiences to answer all my questions as fully and completely as possible.

Another point that must be foregrounded is the fact that I knew some of the student participants in the study before the study began. However, my familiarity with these students was not a factor in their becoming participants in the study. I was introduced to Dr. Newman, the instructor of the Program Evaluation class, by the head of her department. When Dr. Newman introduced me to the students in her class, I found that I already knew two of them. One, Maya, had an assistantship in my department, and we had also taken a qualitative research class together two years earlier. This fact is significant because, as part of the activities for that class, I interviewed Maya about her experiences as an international graduate student, and I use part of that interview transcript in the present study. At the beginning of the study, Maya and I were on friendly terms but were not close friends. Through the process of data collection, we became much closer.

The other student in the Program Evaluation class whom I already knew was Harry. In my work as a writing tutor⁷, I have worked with many international students in the Department of Adult Education of which the Program Evaluation class is a part. Harry had been a regular visitor to the Tutoring Center, where I had worked with him as his writing tutor for two years.

⁷ I have worked as an ESL writing tutor in the university's tutoring center for eight years. Since I also taught for seven years at the university's intensive English program, I know many international students on campus.

This fact is also noteworthy in the present study, as any remarks Harry made about the usefulness of tutoring in his interviews need to be evaluated in light of the fact that he was talking to the writing tutor with whom he had worked for two years and with whom he would continue to work in future.

I was introduced to the Departmental Psychology class by Julie, whom I had met serendipitously at the University's international student orientation. When I met the other students in the Developmental Psychology class I found that I knew one of them slightly, Sooyoung. Sooyoung had come to the Tutoring Center a few times for editorial assistance several months earlier, and I had worked with her as a tutor a few times. However, it had been several months since we had seen each other, and we did not know each other very well before the data collection period.

One more point must be addressed, my friendship with the third student in the Developmental Psychology class, Inna. I met Inna at the beginning of the semester in which I collected data, and throughout the period of data collection (and since) we became good friends. During her first semester in graduate school, Inna was experiencing some personal difficulties that will be discussed further throughout this dissertation. She had no friends or family in this country, and she needed the support of a friend. Given her situation, I would have found it unethical to withhold my friendship. Wolcott (1995) suggested that "hiding behind the role of distanced onlookers" (p.239) is mistaken. He also said that in fieldwork there is "a call for involvement, room for compassion and understanding" (p.239). Given my constructivist epistemological and theoretical stance, I make no claim to being an objective observer, and I had no desire to keep a professional distance from my participants. To the contrary, I believe that it is because they trusted me and because we were on friendly terms that the student participants

were willing to be so forthcoming in their interviews. However, as Inna and I became good friends, my interpretation and presentation of her experiences (many of which I would not have known about had we not become friends) should be seen in the light of our friendship.

The Faculty Participants

The two faculty participants in this study, Dr. Newman, and Dr. Jones (Elaine) were both faculty members in their departments. Dr. Newman, an associate professor, has 30 years' experience as an instructor, administrator, and evaluation consultant. Dr. Jones, an assistant professor, has seven years' experience as an instructor and researcher. In the last five years, she has also been the recipient of a teaching award and a teaching fellowship. Both instructors are white, female, and middle-class. Both are enthusiastic about their teaching and their research and are active participants in their discourse communities. I will describe their personalities and their teaching styles in the findings sections of the dissertation.

The Setting

This study was conducted at a large research university in the southeastern United States. The Evaluation Class was offered through the Adult Education Department, a department with a large number of international students. The predominant research methodology within this department is qualitative. The Developmental Psychology class was offered through the Psychology Department, a department with few international students. The predominant research methodology in this department is quantitative. I will describe the individual classroom settings of the two classes more fully in the findings sections of the dissertation.

Data Collection

In qualitative research researchers tend to draw upon multiple sources of data in order to triangulate their data (Berg, 1995; Glesne, 1998) and by doing they believe then can increase the

trustworthiness of their studies (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). In the present study, there were five sources of data:

- 1) Classroom observations of two classes, Program Evaluation (PE) and Developmental Psychology (DP) and the field notes I took in these classes. I also audio-recorded one class (DP) but not the other, as the instructor of the PE class preferred that her classes not be recorded. Some parts of these recordings were transcribed.
- 2) Collection of the archival data pertaining to the classes I observed. Documents collected included syllabi, class handouts, the assignments the students wrote in class (exams) and out of class (midterm and final assignments for the PE class and drafts of a research proposal for the DP class). Also, when they wrote them, I collected the notes students took in class. I collected and read the class textbooks and the other required readings. I also collected curriculum vitae from all students who had them.
- 3) Audio-taped interviews with each of the student participants (4 with each) and interviews with each of the faculty participants (2 with each). I conducted additional interviews with all of the native-speaking students in the PE class and with two of the native-speaking students in the DP class. This resulted in a corpus of 42 interviews, all of which were transcribed; the average interview length was about 45 minutes.
- 4) Email correspondence with faculty and student participants.
- 5) Audio recordings of tutoring sessions with the one student who chose to take up my offer of free tutoring. However, as all the other students who asked me to read their papers preferred to receive feedback via email, only two tutoring sessions were recorded. Thus they are not a main source of data in this study.

Class Observations

Participant Observation

Glesne (1998) pointed out that participant observation ranges along a continuum from *observer* to *full participant*. In the classes I observed, I was closer to the full participant end of the spectrum, what Glesne described as a “participant as observer” (p.44), in that I did most of the required readings, took part in class discussion and participated in all activities related to the class except taking the exams and writing assignments. According to Wolcott’s (1988) categorization of *active participant*, *privileged observer*, and *limited observer*, I would describe my role as that of an active participant. Some researchers have suggested that participant observation requires simultaneously getting close to participants while maintaining a professional distance (Brewer, 2000). However, constructivist grounded theory is premised on the notion that those involved in the research process jointly construct their perceptions of the world (Charmaz, 1990, 1995a, 1995b, 2000, 2002). Accordingly, I did not feel it necessary to keep a professional distance, and I believe that my participants gave me richer data because our relationship was based on trust and, in some cases, on friendship. In the Program Evaluation class, I observed 43 of the 44 fifty-minute classes, and in the Developmental Psychology class, I observed 13 of the 14 three-hour long classes (I missed one meeting in each class due to illness).

Field Notes

Field notes are an important part of ethnographic research, and researchers have described various ways of taking them (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002; Glesne, 1998; Sanjeck, 1990; Silverman, 2000; Wolcott, 1995; Wolf, 1992). I wanted to keep my field notes in an electronic database, as they are much easier to keep organized that way, but I did not want to take the time to transcribe handwritten notes onto a computer. Consequently, I typed my field notes using an

Alphasmart, a small, lightweight, low profile keyboard that will send its information to a computer by means of a USB cable. Throughout my observations I typed field notes on the Alphasmart, which remained out of sight on my lap beneath the desk.

Some researchers have pointed out that field notes are selective (Emerson, Fretz and Stephen, 2001; Atkinson, 1992): the researcher chooses what elements of the setting are significant and therefore worthy of transcription. Thus, the researcher's subjectivities come into play even while taking field notes. As my interest in observing the classroom context was primarily to see how (and if) elements from this context would be reflected in the students' writing, I mostly concentrated on writing down what was said, especially when the focal students were speaking, but I also tried to record the instructor's reception of these remarks (critical or approving). As research has shown that the context of the course, including class discussions, influences the texts produced (Samraj, 2002), I re-examined my field notes, and, in the class in which I made audio-recordings, transcribed parts of those recordings as needed, based upon my analysis of successive interviews with students and faculty and on my analysis of the texts students wrote.

Archival Data

The collection of relevant archival documents is an important part of any qualitative study, and, given the sociocultural theoretical perspective of the present study and the study's focus on writing, document collection becomes even more important. From a Bakhtinian perspective, students learn from and respond to the texts they read, so the texts they read should influence the texts they write (Harklau, 2002; Samraj, 2002; Selzer, 1993). I, therefore, collected and read the assigned textbooks and the few other readings that were distributed in the classes I observed, and I asked the students how they drew on these readings in the interviews. I also

collected course syllabi, which provided important data about the class objectives and assignments, class handouts, and whatever notes the students wrote in class.

Interviews

Charmaz' Grounded Theory Interviewing

In conducting the interviews in this study, I followed Charmaz' (2000) constructivist version of grounded theory interviewing. Charmaz suggested that rather than begin an interview with a list of scripted questions the researcher should start by introducing an area of interest (for example, instructor's feedback on written assignments) then try to open that up by exploring the participants' concerns related to the area. The interviewer should then develop further questions around the concerns the participants raise. I hoped, by using such techniques to avoid forcing the data and to stay focused on the participants' perspectives.

Interviews with Students

The four interviews with each student were the critical data source in this study since they provided a way of revealing students' evolving practices and thought-processes over the course of the semester. I met with each student for four interviews. The first round of interviews took place at near the beginning of the fall semester 2003, the second after the midpoint of the semester when students had completed their midterm assignments, and the third between the end of the fall semester and the beginning of the spring semester 2004, depending on students' availability. The final interviews took place in the middle of the spring semester 2004, after I had completed much of the data analysis, as I wished to verify my findings with the participants. Each interview lasted from 30 minutes to an hour, with an average length of 40-45 minutes.

Grounded theory methodology requires that researchers transcribe and begin analyzing data as they collect it so that the categories and themes found in the data, based on the

researcher's areas of interest and their perceived salience to the participants, can guide future interviews (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As my analysis of the data guided the questions asked in future interviews, I transcribed and analyzed each interview as soon as possible after it was conducted in order to develop questions for the next interview.

Interviews with Faculty

I conducted two interviews with each of the faculty participants (Dr. Newman and Dr. Jones). At the first interview, I asked the instructors to tell me their beliefs about writing, to describe the characteristics of the written genres in their disciplines and to explain their expectations for the written assignments their students would produce. I also asked about the instructors' previous experiences with the international students in their classes. At the second interview, which took place at the end of the fall semester (with Dr. Newman) and at the beginning of the spring semester (with Elaine), I asked about particular written assignments and about how the focal students were able to meet (or not meet) the instructors' expectations. In both interviews, I encouraged the instructors to raise and discuss any points they thought were important.

Transcription of Interviews and Field Notes

All the interviews were transcribed, and in transcribing them, I was initially interested in recording only the participants' words and, to a lesser degree, the actions or expressions that accompanied the words. These actions or expressions were recorded in square brackets, for example [laughs] or [sighs]. The field notes and recordings of classroom discourse were selectively transcribed. Again, my main focus was in recording the participants' words, but I also made an attempt to more closely describe the speaker's emotional tenor and that of her interlocutor. For example, I tried to distinguish between different forms of laughter and

transcribed them in square brackets as [embarrassed laughter], [nervous laughter], [astonished laughter], and [amused laughter]. By doing so, I hoped to become more sensitive to both “unstated and unrecognized meanings and [develop] an awareness of layers of meaning in language” (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).

Email Correspondence

Throughout the semester during which I collected data, I checked in with students and faculty via email to ask if they had any questions about the study, comments about the course, or points they wanted to raise in future interviews. This was also the most practical way to schedule interviews. During the following semester, I also contacted the students by email asking them answer brief questions that arose from my continuing data analysis. I found that email was the quickest and most convenient way to communicate with both the student and faculty participants, as both usually responded to my questions within a few hours or sometimes within minutes.

Tutoring Sessions

As an incentive for participation in the study, I offered each student four hours of free tutoring or editorial assistance. However, as most of the students in the study were extremely busy, those who asked for my editorial assistance with their papers preferred to receive feedback via email. Consequently, I have preserved the email messages we exchanged, and they form part of the archival data. Only one student met with me for tutoring, and his two tutoring sessions were recorded and form part of the data for the study.

Data Analysis

Coding the Data

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define coding as “the analytic process through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form a theory” (p.3). They suggest that coding has the purpose of building (rather than testing) theory, providing an analytic tool to help researchers to organize their data, making salient alternative interpretations of phenomena, allowing researchers to be simultaneously creative and systematic, and helping researchers to identify, develop, and relate the concepts from which they will build their theory.

Most grounded theorists (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) advocate line by line coding as this has the advantages of deterring researchers from imposing their own beliefs on the data and of keeping them focused on the data and attuned to their respondents’ perspectives. For example, one kind of coding often used in grounded theory is *in vivo* coding (Glaser, 1987); *in vivo* codes derive from the language used by the participants in the study, and systematic use of these codes leads to a bottom up approach in which codes and categories emerge from the data (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).

Grounded theorists insist that data should be coded as it is collected and argue that the process of coding helps analysts to interact with their data by interrogating them (Strauss, 1987) as they begin to code and develop categories. Following the advice of most grounded theorists, (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) I used line by line coding in an attempt to stay focused on the data and attuned to the respondents’ perspectives before moving on to the next step in analysis, comparing the coded data. To facilitate coding, I transcribed the interview data in two columns, a wide column on the left for the interview transcripts and a narrower column on the right for open codes.

Constant Comparison

One of the most widely used analytical strategies in qualitative research, constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) involves recursive examination of the data, comparing incidents with incidents and categories with categories. Accordingly, the main analysis technique in this study was comparing all the various sources of data. I compared individuals' situations with those of other individuals; I compared individuals' comments on various phenomena with those of other individuals; I compared interview transcripts with field notes and field notes with audio-recordings. I also compared interviews with earlier interviews across time to see how participants' perspectives changed and developed.

As I constantly compared multiple sources of data, I began typing categories in the margins, (using different colors), and as these categories began to reoccur across the data, I capitalized them to make them stand out further. Finally, as the amount of data became unmanageable I separated the open codes and emerging categories from the field notes and interview transcripts and began to analyze them separately, referring back to the original field notes and interview transcripts as needed. From these categories, I developed themes that eventually became the findings of the study. Some researchers have remarked that they find this approach alienating (Richardson, 1993) or that they dislike fragmenting the data in this way (Conrad, 1990), claiming that it prevents more holistic understanding, but as I had more than 1000 pages of interview transcripts alone, I found working with the codes was a useful way to avoid drowning in the data. Also, because I had marked the codes and concepts with page numbers I was easily able to refer back to the originals. As I often worked with the field notes and transcripts on computer rather than on paper, I found Microsoft Word's "find" feature very useful for locating the exact section of the transcript I needed. In fact, I found that many features

of Word—the ability to highlight or use different colored text and, of course, the ability to cut and paste—greatly facilitated organizing, analyzing, and writing up the data.

Drawing Diagrams

Strauss and Corbin (1998) note that drawing diagrams can help an analyst see relationships in the data; such diagrams can eventually facilitate synthesis of the findings. I found that this method was a useful way to conceptualize the data, so I drew a diagram for each participant on which I wrote down the codes and categories I found in my analyses (based on frequency of occurrence or degree of emphasis). I then arranged and rearranged these categories, trying to find relationships between them and attempting to represent more concretely the connections that, until then, had existed only in my mind.

Writing Memos

An important part of grounded theory methodology, memo writing forces researchers to work with concepts rather than with raw data and serves as a visible, re-viewable reflection of analytic thought (Corbin and Strauss, 1998). I began memo writing early in the data collection process, and I found it a useful way to record ideas and comments that might otherwise have been lost (Charmaz, 2000). Furthermore, influenced by Richardson's writing as a method of inquiry (2000), I believe that writing about an issue fundamentally affects the way one thinks about it. By beginning to write about the data as I collected and analyzed it, I hoped to be able to think more critically, and to take the first steps in the final part of the study—writing it up.

Summary

In this chapter I have set forth my methodological aims for the present study: to answer the research questions, to find an emic perspective, to choose a methodology that works with a sociocultural framework, and to stay open and flexible to whatever themes are present in the

data. I selected Charmaz's constructivist version of grounded theory as an appropriate methodology to for the study, and I have described the data collection and analysis procedures I used to pursue these aims. Finally, I have discussed my relationship with the participants as this relationship influenced the nature of my interaction with them throughout the data collection period and may also have influenced my analysis of their experiences.

In the next four chapters I present the findings of the study. The first pair of chapters presents the findings from the Program Evaluation class and the second pair presents the findings from the Developmental Psychology class. In the first of each pair of chapters I describe the students' writing histories, and in the second I describe the settings, the instructors, the readings, and the assignments in the two classes I observed.

CHAPTER IV:

NEWCOMERS AND OLD TIMERS IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

Students' Writing Histories

International graduate students do not spring into existence the moment they set foot in their graduate classes in American universities. Nor are they a tabula rasa, free from all traces of prior beliefs and experiences, on which the requirements of graduate school may be inscribed. All students carry with them the imprint of their cultures, their beliefs about life and learning, and their prior educational experiences. In this respect, they resemble palimpsests, overwritten with many layers of experience, and in each layer traces of earlier histories are still visible.

Researchers in sociocultural or sociohistoric theory claim that in order to understand a phenomenon it must be studied in its historical and cultural context (Prior, 1998, Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch, 1991, 1998). Other researchers have pointed out that context plays a key role in shaping students' writing; moreover, in moving between contexts, for example from undergraduate to graduate school, students may be particularly at risk (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Carson & Leki, 1994; Fishman & McCarthy, 2001; Harklau, 1999, 2000; Leki & Carson, 1997). In the light of these findings, I believe that graduate students' prior learning experiences, especially their experiences of writing, play a critical role in shaping their beliefs about writing, their attitudes toward writing, and their ability to appropriate the academic written genres required in graduate school. Accordingly, I begin this chapter and the next by introducing the focal students and presenting their writing histories.

Rainbow

Rainbow, a third year Chinese doctoral student in higher education, is a calm, self-possessed woman who projects an image of quiet self-confidence. Reflecting on her experiences, she told me that although she had studied English in China for several years, most of her studies had focused on grammar and reading; she had done very little writing in English before coming to America to attend graduate school. Nonetheless, she told me that she had always enjoyed writing and for many years she has written journals. No matter how busy she is, she sets aside time in her day to write a journal in Chinese: "Writing a journal helps me to think; [besides] I don't want to lose my writing skills in Chinese." She was also very concerned about improving her writing skills in English because she knew how important writing skills are for an academic. At the time of our interviews, Rainbow felt fairly confident about her English writing skills, but, like most students in this study, she had found writing in English to be very difficult indeed during her first semester in graduate school.

One major influence on Rainbow's writing was an instructor from whom she took a course early in her doctoral program. This instructor she described as very tough and strict; he had high expectations for everyone in the class and she did her best to rise to meet them:

I think he tried to show everyone in class and in individual tutorials how important it is that writing should be, how you say, graceful: how to write gracefully. It's from him, from his class I learned you need to work hard to improve your writing. . . . I just learned so much about writing from that course and about content.

Not only did this instructor emphasize writing in class, but he also met with each student for three or four tutorials during which he gave detailed and specific feedback on papers. Rainbow was also impressed by the time and effort this instructor put into the class: "He read each paper four times before he gives us feedback!" As a result of his guidance and the emphasis he placed

on writing she found this class to be very rewarding and said that she learned a good deal about writing from it.

Rainbow's description of her work with this professor suggests that with him she found a chance to experience what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development or ZPD (1978), in which a learner works with an expert or more experienced peer who can guide and support her learning. The tutorials she described above provided an ideal situation for the ZPD to occur in that she was working with an expert on a goal directed activity, acquiring the genre of writing required for his graduate class. Throughout her graduate career, she was to benefit from other instances of this productive means for learning.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Another important learning experience for Rainbow was learning how to use citations appropriately in her writing. As our second interview was concluding, Rainbow turned rather abruptly to the subject of plagiarism:

There's another point I want to bring up here. As international student, I'm very aware of—what's the word—plagiarism? And I think—I cannot speak this on behalf of other students, but personally, you can find plagiarism in my paper, in my writing, once in a while.

Rainbow suggested that plagiarism might be a particular problem for new Chinese students studying in America because “writing is not something we emphasize in the college curriculum [in China] . . . We're not trained to write very rigorously. It's not like here.”

Moreover, she explained that faculty in Chinese universities had a different perspective on plagiarism than that of their US counterparts:

The faculty members in China are aware of—what do you call—plagiarism. Their attitude is it's okay at least if as long as you learn something . . . They would not—how to say—they do not, um, encourage students to do that [plagiarize] but they don't have a problem with it. Here they think, oh no you are stealing something from people. It's just a different attitude from the faculty members [here], which has a big impact on students.

And a lot of Chinese students, I'd say a lot Chinese students are not aware of that because that is something they have been doing for years.

Rainbow's description of the different attitudes toward plagiarism held by Chinese faculty support the findings of researchers such as Pennycook (1996) and Scollon (1994, 1995) who pointed out that plagiarism is a Western concept not necessarily shared by other cultures; moreover, Chinese notions toward "ownership" of words may differ from the notions that prevail in Western countries (Bloch, 1995; Myers, 1998). Rainbow went to discuss this attitude further:

I don't think that's a matter of honesty or dishonesty. Just in our country we have different way to define plagiarism. In China a lot of students think, if you copy the whole article, that's plagiarism, but if you borrow something [it's not]. *Of course everyone borrows things from others' words*, but our problem is we are not taught, or we fail to learn, to give credit for authors. Students think, "I did the readings; I put this together; that's not plagiarism." So I really don't think that's a matter of honesty or dishonesty.

In the italicized section of the above passage, Rainbow echoes Bakhtin's words, that "the word in language is half someone else's" (1981, p.293). Indeed it is impossible to speak in our own words because all words have already been used by others. However, many Western academics may neither know nor care about other cultures' attitudes toward textual borrowing, and most academic institutions have stringent strictures against plagiarism (which, as many have pointed out, comes from the Latin for "kidnapper"). Academic dishonesty continues to be considered by many as a heinous crime that can have severe consequences (Howard, 1995).

Fortunately, Rainbow was taught about Western attitudes toward ownership of words by a professor who was more understanding. During her first year in the US, Rainbow admitted that she had unwittingly plagiarized large sections of her paper by quoting directly from uncited sources. One of her instructors, realizing that she was unfamiliar with appropriate use of

sources, quietly took her aside and explained to her the correct way to incorporate sources into her texts.

[He] was very nice to talk with me very seriously about it: “Rainbow, he said, Rainbow, here we call it plagiarism. I understand that you did not do this on purpose, but as a scholar you have to be very, very cautious.” He, um, actually helped me with paraphrasing some of the sentences. I really appreciate that. Um, when he first brought up this issue I was really embarrassed, so embarrassed, it’s like you’re caught stealing from people. I think he handled that in a very straightforward yet thoughtful way. I really appreciate that.

Rainbow was lucky to meet with an instructor who understood her unfamiliarity with American academic conventions concerning citations and who was willing to take the time to teach her a skill that she would need throughout graduate school: how to incorporate others’ words into her own writing.

Getting Help from Friends

In her first semester, Rainbow realized the importance of establishing good relationships with people in her department who were willing to help her with writing. The first people in her department to whom she turned for help were the staff (secretaries and administrative staff). Rainbow said they took the time to talk to her and encouraged her to improve her English; she asked them to read her papers and give her feedback, and they willingly complied. Only later did she turn to other graduate students for help with her writing, and even then the students to whom she turned were from the history department, but as she shared an office with them (they had assistantships in her department), their propinquity made them a convenient source of help.

The fact that Rainbow looked to others (rather than to fellow graduate students in her department) can be explained by her circumstances. When she arrived in her department, she was both the youngest student in the department and the only international student. As a result,

the staff in the department tried to look after her: “We had a very, very good open relationship maybe just because I’m the only one from other country. They really take very good care of me. They had time, so I could spend maybe two hours on my lunch talking with them all the time. They helped me out.” Moreover, as most of the students in her department work full time, they spend little time on campus. As Rainbow explained, “They barely come to class in time and then they leave, so I’m not very familiar with them.” Consequently, Rainbow had few opportunities to meet students in her own department outside of class. Not surprisingly, then, she turned to others for help when she needed it.

Relationship with Advisor

Rainbow also reported having a close relationship with her major professor, a relationship that has been seen as vital to graduate students’ success (Belcher, 1994; Dong, 1995, 1998; Luebs et al., 1998). She told me she has tutorials with her major professor almost on a daily basis. They often work together on research projects and frequently collaborate on conference proposals. Moreover, she felt that from her advisor she had learned “an insider’s perspective” that was invaluable in teaching her what she needed to know to write a successful proposal. (In fact, during the semester when I collected data, Rainbow had two conference proposals accepted, proposals that she had written with her advisor’s guidance.) Rainbow found her advisor’s comments on her work gentle yet also critical, and she realized that she was very fortunate compared to some of her Chinese peers: “I know some Chinese students whose professors told them, your writing skills are so poor; they just told them in a very straightforward yet uncomfortable way, but [my advisor] handles this very well.” In contrast, she had always found her advisor to be encouraging and supportive.

Another factor that aided their close working relationship was the proximity of their offices, which were located next door to each other. Whenever she has questions, Rainbow feels free to go next door to ask her advisor, and then she usually sits beside her advisor while her advisor is reading drafts of her proposals. As they sit together, her advisor will read the proposal from the computer screen and they will discuss the changes that need to be made. In every one of our four interviews together, Rainbow referred to the positive relationship she had with her major professor, stating, “I can learn so much from her. Just every day.”

Rainbow’s considered her relationship with her advisor to be a critical part of her life as a graduate student. As Belcher pointed out, although “it is assumed that senior researchers automatically “model” and “coach” (Brown et al., 1989; Collins et al., 1989) . . . these roles do not seem to be intuitive to some of the advisors of [her] students” (p.24). Rainbow is fortunate to have an advisor who is willing and able to play these roles because, as several researchers indicate (Belcher, 1994; Dong, 1995, 1998; Luebs et al., 1998), a good mentoring relationship with one’s advisor is of vital importance to graduate students.

Getting Feedback from Instructors

Despite the good relationships she has managed to establish with her advisor and with several faculty members, one area in which she has been disappointed is in the amount and quality of feedback she receives on her papers. With the exception of the professor she mentioned earlier, the instructors in her department seldom give lengthy or detailed feedback on their students’ papers. This was, however, a problem that was recognized by her department, which was in the process of developing a protocol by which instructors would give students more feedback, not just on their content area knowledge, but also on their writing skills. However, until now, Rainbow has received little feedback on her written work from faculty in

her department, something that disappointed her because as she prepared to write her dissertation, she recognized the importance of writing and hoped that substantive feedback would help her to identify her strengths and weaknesses.

Joining a Writing Group

Because of her eagerness to improve her writing, at the time these interviews took place, Rainbow was considering joining a writing group. She first learned about writing groups from the instructor of a qualitative research class she had taken. This instructor stressed importance of meeting with others to read and discuss writing, and had even assigned a reading on the subject (Durst, 1992). The idea of joining a writing group was also reinforced by another professor in Rainbow's department who, rather than meet students on an individual basis, met with them in a writing group, a practice that some other researchers have noted (see Luebs et al., 1998, discussing John Swales).

Rainbow was interested in the idea of joining a group, but also expressed some reservations: she had spoken to several of the students in the group and found that while some loved the group others didn't think it was an efficient use of their time. Moreover, she doubted her ability to be heard in such a group: "You have to be very assertive; otherwise your voice will never be heard—it happens for some students." In a later interview, she raised another concern: she had to decide whether to work in a group with Chinese or American students. She was aware that her writing skills were above the level of many of her Chinese peers, and she would have preferred to work in a group with American students, but she very much doubted that they would welcome her to their group:

That's my dilemma . . . in my case, should I work with Chinese students or American students? Really I don't know because surely I want to find some native speakers in the group, but maybe they will think it's a waste of their time because I'm a non-English speaker, so that's why I haven't [joined a group yet].

If she managed to resolve this dilemma, though, she did plan to join a group, as much for its motivational role as for any other reason. Rainbow several times mentioned that she was a procrastinator and tended to work on assignments at the last minute, but in a writing group “you are kind of pushed to do some serious writing at least once a month and you really want to present your best work to the group members, so. It’s something I really want to do especially next year when I move to another stage [writing her dissertation.]”

Being Independent

Another reason for Rainbow’s not joining a writing group may be her desire to be independent. Before we began talking about writing groups, I had asked Rainbow if she ever studied in a group with friends. This was her response:

Maybe that’s unique for Chinese students because we don’t have the habit of forming study groups. I don’t think it’s encouraged in China. You are supposed to do your work independently. I don’t know about Indian students or students from Korea, but it is not just common among Chinese students. I took another course this semester with another five Chinese students. We never, never get together although we have several in-class examinations; we never get together a single time.

Rainbow seemed to feel that this independence was a peculiarly Chinese characteristic not shared by people from countries such as Korea. And in fact, Rainbow’s own independence was mentioned by a mutual acquaintance, who described her as one of the most independent people he knew. Considering her independent nature, perhaps it is not surprising that Rainbow (at the time of writing) has still not joined a writing group.

Harry

Harry, a third year Korean doctoral student in adult education, is a kindly, thoughtful and insightful man. Like Rainbow, he reported that he enjoyed writing as it gave him the opportunity to reflect on his experiences, and he was very keen to hone his writing skills. More than any of

the other students in this study, Harry reported having trouble understanding and being understood in English. Although he had about 15 years' experience of studying English before coming to do his Ph.D. in the US, like many Korean students (Chang, 2003) he found the English he had studied in Korea had not prepared him for the reality of studying at the graduate level in an English speaking country:

I didn't have much problem about reading in English. However, my speaking listening is very, very big issue for me, because when I was in Korea I didn't care about my listening and speaking because I didn't have to use English in my daily life. But in this, when I came in the United States the situation total different because I have to use, I have to speak English every day. I have to listen to English all day long, so it was very overwhelmed for me as well as my studying materials. So when I write, wrote a paper with English, I had a trouble in writing about my topics as well as using English.

In addition to the problem of listening and speaking in English, Harry was concerned that his instructors did not understand his papers, as he describes below:

I try to make my ideas to write down in English that is readable for American readers, but after getting some feedback from my professors they several times they commented their feedback kind of question mark, "I don't understand what you mean." When I submit my paper for the first time, two years ago, I just got feedback not regarding my content, but regarding my grammar [laughing] so, at that time I realized it is not feedback but kind of proofreading.

Harry was frustrated as he realized that the superficial errors in his papers were preventing his instructors from giving him vital feedback about the *content* of his papers, feedback that he needed to learn about his field. In fact, several times throughout his interviews Harry expressed frustration about receiving comments on his English skills rather than his content knowledge because, as he explained, "I'm in the department of education, not the department of writing."

He believed that in order to get feedback on the content of his papers he needed to eliminate the superficial errors from these papers. At first he asked American friends from his department for assistance in proofreading his papers. Although they were willing to help him, he found their help inadequate. Seeking more professional help, he asked his Korean friends for

advice and was directed to the university's Learning Center. After he found the Learning Center, he sought editorial assistance with most of his graded assignments.

Writing Tutoring

As mentioned earlier, I was the tutor to whom Harry came for editing assistance with his writing. Consequently, Harry's comments about tutoring should be read in light of the fact that he was talking to his tutor and, thus, may have been overemphasizing the value of that tutoring. As Harry describes it, the impact of seeking help from a professional ESL writing tutor (which he calls "proofreading") was considerable:

After that I got some proofreading and then submit my papers, and that is very, very powerful for me, not only to get some feedback about my topics, because I really, really wanted to get feedback about my ideas and my content of my writing Because my instructors do not have to concerned about my grammars any more. I think they can concentrate on my content without any distracting causing my grammar mistakes.

A superficial reading of Harry's use of editorial assistance might imply that he saw getting "proofreading" as a quick fix, a simple means of eliminating errors so that his professors could focus on the content of his written work; however, when I began to probe more deeply I realized that Harry had made his tutoring sessions a central part of learning to write academic English, that he used these tutoring sessions intentionally and analytically as a tool with which to hone his thinking and writing, a tool kept sharp through regular maintenance and careful use.

As an analytical and self-reflexive learner, Harry resolved to make the most of his tutoring appointments, and he developed several strategies for reaping the maximum benefit from the limited tutoring opportunities that were available to him. Harry's strategies involve a recursive and iterative process of writing, getting feedback, analyzing the feedback and rewriting: In the following paragraph, the numbers in parentheses refer to the steps listed in the excerpt below the paragraph.

First, after (1) meeting with me, Harry (2) analyzes the feedback on his paper and (3) tries to understand the difference between his original words and the edited version. Then, when writing again, (4) he tries to incorporate suggestions made in the tutoring session and then (5) seeks feedback in another tutoring session. (6) Next, he tries to write again soon after tutoring so that he can write while the points raised in tutoring are still in his mind. (7) When writing again, he tries to use new words, phrases or idiomatic expressions he found in the texts he reads. (8) Then, after getting feedback in a tutoring session, he will check whether he has used these expressions correctly and (9) how the context of his writing affects their use. He describes this process in the passage below:

I have learned about my writing mistakes by getting some (1) feedback from proofreading, but after getting proofreading and revising that one (2) I consider it and [I think] “Hmm, in this case, American use the articles, but in this case Americans do not use article, hmm.” (3) So I try to make out what’s the difference between this one and this one? And then I think I find some kind of difference between them, and based on my understanding about difference, (4) I try to use [in] my writing later based on my understanding, and then (5) I try to get another proof reading. . . . And then the proofreader comments, “This is wrong and this is not,” and [I think] “Okay, my understanding is true,” so then I try to stick to my understanding. But then on the other hand, my understanding is false because she told me that it is incorrect. . . . (6) I try to write just after that situation—while my memory is still working. . . . (7) I attempt to use new word or new idioms that I saw in my text in my articles. . . . I just try to write my new word, and then (8) I get proofreading again. [Then I find out] This is quite right; this is quite not right, these kinds of things. (9) In the meantime, I can understand the context is slightly different than my reading.

By using the strategy of writing, seeking tutoring and analyzing the difference between his words and my suggested changes, Harry is able to make the most of his opportunities for learning.

The activity of tutoring seems to present an ideal context for zone of proximal development (1978). The research on tutoring has focused on various aspects: Researchers have noted that it has both affective and cognitive components as tutors often play the role of coach and counselor as well as teacher (Harris, 1980; Krabbe & Krabbe, 1993; Lepper, Woolverton,

Myumme, and Gurtner, 1995). Of the various activities that go on in tutoring, researchers have described *scaffolding* (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976), in which the tutor supports the tutee's learning by sharing responsibility for the action and gradually withdrawing this support as the learner becomes more proficient; *modeling*, in which the tutor provides models of expected behaviors or products; and *training*, in which the tutor may provide direct instruction (Hall, 2003). Researchers have also focused on the discursive components of tutoring, noting that in most tutoring conferences tutor talk tended to predominate, and as a result, the tutee's role is often rather passive (Cumming and So, 1996; Wolcott, 1989)

While many of the features described above are found in the tutoring sessions between Harry and myself, when I review them, I find that they all imply a unidirectional flow of learning in which the tutor somehow *enables* the tutee. This seems to deny the tutee much agency in the tutoring process, and it obscures the dialogic processes that may go on in tutoring, especially when the tutee is an adult who is an expert in his or her field. The ZPD is often said to take place in a dyad consisting of an expert and a novice, but Vygotsky also asserted that tutoring may also take place between peers. In this sense it can be collaborative (Tudge 1990) rather than hierarchical, and it is in terms of collaboration that I would describe my two years' experience of tutoring Harry.

I believe that during our two years working together each of us has learned from the other. As we are both graduate students in the social sciences we have shared and discussed our research interests. In the course of our tutoring sessions, Harry has increased his vocabulary, learned more about English usage, and has refined his writing skills, but I have learned as much as he: I've learned from his reflective analysis of the topics about which he writes, I've observed how he skillfully incorporates quotations to strengthen his arguments, and I've noticed how he

reemphasizes key points to make his meaning clear. These are strategies I can pass on to other students. In other words, it is through working with Harry and other students like him that I have learned about writing and how to teach it.

As a conscientious student who believes he has a responsibility to seek out opportunities to improve his writing, Harry makes strenuous efforts to seek tutorial assistance for his papers. Yet he is already a very good writer even without tutorial assistance, so his emphasis on the importance of tutoring may be indicative of a lack of confidence in his own abilities. During one interview, we discussed the fact that the majority of the students who seek writing assistance in the learning center are Korean (approximately, 60%) even though Koreans do not comprise the largest language minority at the university (14% of international students at the university are Korean, while 15% are Chinese and 13% are Indian). When I asked Harry if he could suggest any explanation for the predominance of Korean students in the Learning Center, he gave the following explanation:

In case of Korean students, many Korean students want to be regarded as more perfect, so they don't want to be treated kind of special from the normal students. If they just turn in paper as they just written, then the professor may excuse [because] she is just international student, but many Korean students don't want that kind of treatment, so that is why they want to get feedback. Also, *most Korean students just internalize kind of identity—we are not good students at speaking English*—because even though we learn English from when we are middle school students, even in elementary school students, we had few chance to exercise English, to speak English to write English in daily lives, so just we understand grammar, but in practice it is totally different story. Here we have to use English, we should practice English, not just learn English, so they have very big challenge to practice English . . . so *that kind of perception motivate them to look for some kind of service for them that may help them improve their English*, their papers. [italics added]

It is understandable that any non-native speaking student would prefer to turn in a paper that does not compare unfavorably with those of the native-speaking students, but Harry suggests that Korean students have internalized a deficit model of themselves as language learners—an

attitude that makes them unsure of their abilities even when, as in the case of Harry, they are highly proficient writers. These comments lend some support to research that found that students seeking tutoring often had low self-efficacy (Juel, 1991; Lepper et al., 1993; Matthews, 2001). They also illustrate why it is that tutors sometimes need to play the role of counselors who provide affective support.

A Centrifugal Force: Thinking in one Language and Writing in Another

One problem with writing in English that Harry reported was the conflict between thinking in Korean and needing to write in English:

I usually think in Korean in my mind. But I have to write, I have to make it on the paper with English, so in my mind I have an idea with Korean structure but on the paper I have to write my idea with English structure. So there is between them, I felt like there is some kind of conflict.

To explain this point, Harry described the different organizational style of American and Korean writing. He explained that when writing in Korean, he would generally lead gradually up to the main point (see Tyler and Davis, 1990), but in America his professors disliked this style. Instead, they wanted him to begin with the main point and then follow up with supporting or elaborating this points, the typical method of paragraph organization recommended in writing reference books (see, for example, Hacker, 1999; Lunsford & Connors, 2001) and taught in US composition classes.

However, even as he described this difference between Korean and American writing style—a difference that had, initially, made writing seem more difficult—he proceeded to undermine it, mentioning that he had read some papers in Korean that followed the American pattern and some papers in English that followed the Korean pattern, but these, he noted tended to foreshadow their main point earlier in the text even though they introduced it later. Harry's comments lend support to the notion that genres are “extremely slippery” (Swales, 1990, p.33).

Rather than being fixed and immutable, genres change and evolve; moreover, people “mix genres and mix contexts” (Devitt, 2004). Hence, while we can trace the characteristics of genres of academic writing, these features are never absolute.

Language as a Mediator

Harry explained the differences between writing in Korean and writing in English and the effect these differences have on his thought process:

When I write my paper in Korean, I can explain my thoughts more comprehensively and more profoundly. But even though in English I think of something very comprehensively, my English is not enough to describe my thoughts. So when I try to write my paper in English, I have to think, I have to think and think and think to simplify my ideas without hurting my core ideas. So it is very helpful for me to have an opportunity to reflect on my ideas, because by repeating reflection on my ideas, I can specify my ideas more clearly and more specifically. So after that sometimes I can explain my ideas in Korean with my Korean friends. I can explain my ideas very clearly and very assertively in Korean because I have a very clear idea about that. If I don't have to explain my ideas in English, then I can't explain my ideas in Korean. After reflecting my ideas due to writing in English, I can. I have already organized my ideas very clearly.

In the example above, the mediation of another language, English, has played a key part in clarifying Harry's understanding of the concepts he is writing about. Thus, rather than having a negative impact as is often cited in studies of NNS writing (Silva, 1993) writing in a second language has played a positive role in improving Harry's writing by forcing him to think with great focus and clarity.

Another perspective on Harry's comments above can be seen in the notion of semiotic mediation: Vygotsky pointed out that thinking and speaking are inextricably intertwined (1986). Moreover, the mediation of a semiotic device (in this case, a second language) essentially transforms the activity undertaken (1978, 1986), so by casting his words in another sign system, Harry is reformulating his thought processes, clarifying and refining his thoughts. Finally, I would argue, as others have suggested, (Richardson, 2000) that thinking and writing are also

interconnected, so it is not only the process of writing in a second language that distills Harry's thoughts, but also the process of writing itself.

Writing Creatively Within the Context of the Course

Harry thought that good writing in his field had three major components: creativity, connection to the course's content, and fit with the requirements of the assignment. When discussing the various kinds of assignments he writes in graduate school, he mentioned that the most difficult kind to write are those that resemble a research article, for which one must come up with one's own original topic, and then write all the components from one's own perspective: "I have to write papers with my own perspective. It's a kind of totally new kind of . . . *creative* thing. So that is most hardest part for me." Another challenge in writing such a paper is to connect it to the course content, so when writing papers for his courses he constantly goes back and forth between his own ideas and the course requirements, as he explains below:

I have to make a connection of my ideas to the course requirement about course content. So, whenever I write my paper, I always consider the connection between the course content and my ideas. . . . even though my idea is very unique and seems very nice, but without being connected with my content and with my course requirement, I don't think it is good job. . . . I try to keep the context of the course requirement and my writing [goes] back and forth . . . back and forth between two parts throughout my writing situation.

The other characteristic Harry emphasized when discussing the qualities of good writing was comprehensibility; above all, good academic writing should be easy for the reader to understand. That is not to say that it should be conceptually simple. In fact Harry thought that even articles dealing with "profound topics such as epistemology, Foucault, and constructionism" can be easy to understand if the author has illustrated her argument using good examples. Harry's desire for comprehensibility in writing is common among the students in this study (with one exception) but it contrasts with the findings of some researchers (Benson and

Heidish, 1995; Shaw, 1991; Silva, Reichelt, & Lax-Farr, 1994), who noted that many non-native speaking graduate students thought their writing needed to be accessible only to the narrow audience for which it was intended.

Reflective Reading

In addition to keeping him abreast of the research in his field, reading provides Harry with a resource for both improving his vocabulary and springboarding his writing. In discussing how reading helps build his vocabulary, Harry stressed the importance of context: he intentionally uses expressions he has read in his own writing; however, when he gets feedback on this writing he often finds that he has used the expression inappropriately. This has given him an awareness of how the context affects word usage, as he explains in the passage below:

I attempt to use new word or new idioms that I saw in my text in my articles. I can read and I understand what they are saying, what those words are meaning, but I'm not quite sure its usage . . . most of time—my use is not quite right. So I get a proofreading, and I realize when I can use this term.

Harry understands that a word's meaning depends on its context, but as the texts he reads often share a similar context with the texts he writes, they will help him to learn much-needed vocabulary in context:

Well, my reading is totally helpful for me to improve my vocabularies, my idioms to use when I write because my writing is based on my readings, my articles, and both of them has very similar context, similar content, so [how] my texts use the word is also helpful for me to express my thought.

Harry also mentioned that his ideas come from the texts that he reads: sometimes, he simply quotes the authors he reads, but more often he reflects on their ideas and concepts and then rewrites them. This process of rewriting, or appropriating the words of others by organizing them in his own words, enables him to understand more deeply.

Harry's reflections on reading call to mind Bakhtin's notions on the contextual nature of language (1981). Moreover, they provide insight into how it is that students are able to accomplish the task of "expropriating" others' words. Through a process of reflection, rewriting, and reorganizing, Harry able to "submit them to [his] own intentions and accents" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.293). This, in my experience as a writing tutor, is one of the most difficult skills for graduate students to learn, for, as Myers pointed out, paraphrasing is "arguably the highest and most synthetic language skill of all (1998, p.7), yet it is only one of the steps students must go through to appropriate others' word and eventually make them their own.

Jacey

Jacey, an outgoing, friendly and dynamic student from China, was in the first semester of her master's program in Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD). Despite the fact that she was an entering master's student, Jacey was taking four doctoral level courses—no wonder, then, that she felt overwhelmed by the number of assignments she would have to write throughout the semester (Jacey's list of assignments is reproduced in Appendix A). Despite the huge amount of work that was facing her, she maintained a positive attitude throughout the semester and described the challenge in a straightforward and optimistic manner:

The biggest problem is about writing because I don't have any academic writing experience. I'm not familiar with APA's format, and usually when I'm writing I form a word in my mind that's a Chinese word—I have to translate it into English, but the translation process is not very easy, and different expressions with Chinese than with English, and I don't know how to write.

In her early interviews, Jacey explained that her writing process involved writing an outline in Chinese, and then translating her Chinese sentences into English. She realized that this was not an ideal way to write because it might lead to "unauthentic English writing," but it was, initially, her only strategy for writing in English. She hoped, in time, that she would begin to think and

write in English: “Maybe when I have read a lot, maybe my thinking will turn to English thinking, but now it is Chinese.” In fact, by the time of her fourth interview (conducted eight months after the first), she had already moved beyond the need to write in Chinese and translate into English, but she said translating from one language to the other had been an important stage in her development, and she recommended it as a useful strategy for other students who found they lacked the ability to write immediately in English.

In the semester during which I observed her classes, I found that Jacey was a very resourceful learner who quickly began looking for other strategies (in addition to translating) that could help her improve her writing. One strategy she tried was looking for models; in this she realized that the writing of other students might be more useful to her than the writing she found in her textbooks: “I don’t have any academic writing experience so at first I think I need to look at some other students’ writing, because the books, although they are academic, it is hard for me to achieve their standard.” Instead of relying on textbooks, she asked other more experienced students in her department if they were willing to give her examples of their writing. She also went to one of her class instructors to get guidance about the structure of her writing. The instructor gave her guidance that was very useful for the specific assignments for that class, but she could not generalize this advice to her other classes, so she continued to seek other sources of help.

Getting Help from Friends

In addition to asking her instructor for exemplars, Jacey often discussed her assignments with her classmates. For example, one class assignment was to write a book critique. Never having written such a paper before, she had no idea what to write, but when she asked a classmate she learned that it was like writing a movie review. After discussing the assignment

with her classmates, she searched the Internet until she felt she had a good idea about what components a critique should have, and when she found good resources, she was glad to share them with her classmates. Another strategy she followed was trying to adapt her writing topics so that she could write about subjects she knew well (Carson & Leki, 1995)..

One insight that made Jacey's life easier was the realization that she was not the only student struggling. Both in terms of the amount of work to accomplish and the difficulty of tackling writing tasks, US students felt as inadequate as she did:

The first time you interview me, that moment I was just overwhelmed by so many tasks, but later I find US students they are—they have the same feeling as me—they are also overwhelmed by so much work. So now I feel I slowly get used to this pace. . . . I think, first I think US students they know more about because they live in the US for so many years they know more about how to writing, but later I find those new students is the same as me in their undergraduate, they don't have such writing experience.

In fact, Jacey found it very humorous that in some of the group projects some of she worked on her US classmates were counting on her expertise because she was the oldest in the group and she had more work experience than they did.

Jacey's tendency to turn to others for help may be a reflection of her character, which is sociable and outgoing, but it also shows the importance of social interaction in learning.

Vygotsky wrote that all learning is fundamentally social and results from the internalization of processes that are initially social; thus intermental processes become intramental (1978). Jacey's knowledge that she could learn from others is seen in the ways that she turned to her classmates and her professors when she needed help; from them she received both instrumental (guidance about how to do assignments) and affective support (knowledge that she was not alone in finding assignments difficult). However, although she turned to others when she needed to, she also emphasized the importance of being able to work independently.

Being Independent

At the beginning of the semester, Jacey thought she might make use of some social contacts she had to improve her writing. Early in the semester she had met some people from a local church who had told her they would be willing to proofread her papers, but she never did ask them for help. I, too, offered to help Jacey to edit her papers, but she only asked me to read one out of the many written assignments she wrote throughout the semester. Once, for an early assignment, she did ask her brother to proofread a paper for her via email, but after this one time, she never asked him again because she thought he was too busy to help her. When I asked Jacey why she had not sought more assistance from the church people, from me, or from her brother, she said that she could not afford to be dependent on anyone for writing assistance; moreover, her brother had encouraged her to be independent:

When I first come here I ask help from my brother and later you, but I cannot always depend on somebody always proofreading that. And also my brother--he has such a view to be independent. He said, you should try to write yourself and check all the grammatical errors and this is the first stage, and the next stage you need to improve the quality. My brother teach me to be independent because I have a lot of papers to do in the future, and if you always depend on somebody you are always keeping such stage.

Jacey's attitude contrasts with that of Harry, who felt he had a responsibility to seek assistance to make his papers as good as possible. It is, however, similar to the independent attitude of Rainbow. Although Jacey was willing to collaborate with others, she felt that she never wanted to have to depend on others.

Awareness of Plagiarism

Jacey seemed to have some awareness of plagiarism, but her attitude toward it was one of astonishment that anyone would want to take credit for another's work. She did not, in fact, seem to be fully aware of what constituted plagiarism. At one point she asked a classmate if she could use part of a paper she had written for one class as part of the paper for another class. Her

classmate told her that to do so would be plagiarism (showing that American students, too, lack understanding of the concept). Jacey was not sure if she could plagiarize her own words. I told her that in my experience, it was a common practice for graduate students to “recycle” parts of their papers, and that unless the professor insisted that students write on a new subject, it was useful way to save time⁸.

Miri

Miri, a quiet but engaging student from China, arrived midway through the second class in the semester. She, quite literally, did not know what she was getting into. Before coming to America, Miri was pursuing a master’s degree in international business at a Japanese university. She joined our university as an exchange student from Japan, but as she arrived a week after the semester began without having registered for any classes, she was placed into the Program Evaluation class by the Office of International Education. Before joining the class, Miri knew nothing about program evaluation, nor was it a subject she would have chosen to study; hence she really felt like a stranger in the evaluation class. This factor was to have a strong impact on her learning experiences. Furthermore, in addition to the fact that she was speaking English as a third language, Miri was the youngest student in the class by far, and had no work experience to draw upon as a resource.

Before coming to America, Miri had done very little writing in English although she seemed more comfortable talking in English than most of the other students. This may be explained by the fact that her boyfriend in Japan was American, and it was in Japan that she had learned much of her English by spending time with English-speaking friends. While studying for her master’s in business, she remembers that she did take an advanced English class as an

⁸ In my work as a writing tutor I have seen hundreds of students employ this strategy as they hone and refine their knowledge of their subject areas

elective, but it did not require much writing. When I asked her if she was familiar with American essay-writing style, she told me that she had never heard of it.

While studying in Japan, Miri had taken a business class from an American professor. She had done two assignments for this class: one was a group assignment, and the other was an individual assignment that involved writing a case study. Miri noticed that unlike her Japanese professors (whose only feedback was the grade), the American professor wrote feedback on her paper. When I asked if it was useful she made this rather wry observation:

But I think Americans are very um . . . I mean . . . they compliment people all the time, so that's why the feedback, it's not all the bad things about your paper, he also wrote a lot of the good points of your paper.

She seemed to doubt that she deserved the positive feedback she had received, but in some ways her comments echo Harry's desire for more substantive, critical feedback.

When talking about her writing assignments during her first semester in the US, Miri felt that as she was writing in a second language, she was more dependent than native speakers on using the ideas and words from the authors she read. During the first three interviews, she told me that she was aware of the importance of properly attributing sources and added a pragmatic reason for doing so:

You have to read books, read a lot of references—of course for a foreign student you cannot write a paper in your own words, all the paper—you have to insert some ideas from the books. I would not use exactly the same sentence from the book—I would change a little bit, but the whole idea, probably, is from the book. And if you use the same sentences you have to use which page and which line you cited from. . . think it's common sense, because those sentences are not yours so probably the professor already read it, and the teachers know where you are, so they would not believe that you can write such a good paper!

However, with hindsight I concluded that although, in theory, Miri could explain use of citations, in practice, she had not internalized her own words, as I will discuss later.

Being Distanced from One's Department

More than the other students in this class, Miri seemed to be somewhat distanced from the academic world of graduate school that seems to revolve around one's department, one's advisor, and one's assistantship. She had earlier pointed out that she had no advisor or major professor here ("I don't think I have a professor here to take care of me"), and it also seemed that she had limited contact with other graduate students outside of her classes. Unlike the other students who either lived in married family housing (which is largely occupied by married and single international graduate students) or in apartments off campus, Miri lived in one of the dorms on campus, which are occupied almost entirely by undergraduates:

Probably my situation is a little bit different because I'm living with undergrads, so I don't have many connections with graduate students, and I'm also exchange student not a regular one so I'm not very connected with this department so I don't know many people here.

When I asked her if she had anyone to whom she could go for help with her writing, she expressed her reluctance to ask for help: "Everybody looks like they are very busy, so I don't want to ask them to do such a favor for me if they don't feel like, but probably they will not refuse me." I also wondered if she asked her boyfriend for assistance via email (as Jacey had asked her brother), but she responded that although she felt he would be willing, even glad, to help her, she didn't want to put that pressure on him as he was already very busy.

Being Independent

I asked Miri what she thought about Rainbow's remarks about Chinese students' preference for independence. She replied that she had never thought about that, but that personally, she had always wanted to be "strong and independent." After a little more thought, she told me that although she had noticed Japanese and Korean students studying together in the university's student center, she had never noticed Chinese students doing that, and she herself

did not like to study with others, especially on writing projects, as she preferred to work quickly and didn't want others to slow her down. In this respect, Miri's experiences seemed to echo Rainbow's and Jacey's preference for working independently.

Maya

Maya is a Canadian citizen who came originally from India. She is outgoing, funny, and very insightful. Maya's history of writing mirrors her evolution from a positivist undergraduate student in the hard sciences to a feminist, postmodernist graduate student in qualitative inquiry who is strongly influenced by her theoretical and epistemological perspectives. Unlike the other students in this study who had spent, on average, less than two years in the United States, Maya had spent some sixteen years studying and working in an English-speaking country. Her family emigrated from India to Canada when Maya was fifteen, so Maya completed high school and did her bachelor's degree in Canada before doing her master's degree in the United States. Like many students from India, Maya was already tri-lingual when she arrived in the Canada, able to speak and write in Bengali, Hindi, and English. However, rather than acknowledge her existing language proficiency, Maya's first Canadian schoolteacher told Maya's parents that her English language proficiency would never equal that of a native speaker. In fact, the teacher was quite correct, as Maya speaks and writes English far better than most native speakers.

Noticing the Gap

Maya first experienced difficulty in writing in college when, as a science undergraduate, she took several classes in the social sciences. At that time, she realized that the short, almost bulleted style of writing she had done for her science classes was inadequate for writing in the social sciences. In short, she realized that she had to learn a new genre of academic writing. Fortunately, help was at hand. Maya turned to the graduate teaching assistant who assisted in

teaching the class, and she was able to explain the process of writing in ways that made sense to Maya by “breaking it down in terms of the scientific language [she] was used to” and comparing how the parts of a science paper related to those of a social science paper.

After this first successful tutoring experience, Maya continued to seek tutorial assistance while working on her master’s degree, and there she learned about sentence construction, building good arguments, and learning to look at her own work “with a critical eye.” However, when she moved from her master’s degree to her Ph.D. program, she realized that writing at the doctoral level was different again, as she explains below:

My master’s writing was just a first step towards what I am doing in my Ph.D. A lot of my Ph.D. writing involves heavy interaction with citations and really building arguments from citations. So I didn’t do a lot of that in my master’s writing, you know. Most of it was opinions and ideas, and sometimes citations were embedded, but now some of my ideas are foundations for citations, and some of the citations are foundations for my ideas. There is a lot of play in the writing. . . I do a lot of play that I didn’t do in my master’s writing.

In the above passage, Maya is alluding to the notion that much of academic writing at the doctoral level revolves around use of citations, a fact that has been noted by several researchers (Bloch & Chi, 1995; Dong, 1995, 1996; Swales, 1990). Learning how to use citations appropriately is a difficult task for graduate students—as I know from personal experience—and it is a skill that is seldom explicitly taught.

When I asked Maya how she had learned to interact with citations in this way, she recounted an incident that had been instrumental in her learning: the shock of receiving a low grade on an assignment: “I got like a three out of five, which was, like, Aagh! So then I went back and I talked to the instructor and I said, like, this is a shock to my system. What can I do, to not have this grade? Where is the gap?” Her instructor responded by directing her to read more and to read more analytically, and Maya responded by reading the professor’s own published

work and also by seeking help from some other students in her class and asking to read their writing, which she then analyzed:

I got together with a couple of other people who did well, and I read their writing, and I saw how they were structuring their arguments and how they were using their citations. And then I started reading the instructor's work, and I saw how her work was doing that kind of play with citations and foundations and going back and forth, so I started doing that.

Maya found that reading this instructor's work was to have a profound influence on her writing:

She [the instructor] drew my attention to her style of writing and how she wrote, and she almost compelled me to, you know, use words of certain authors if they expressed an idea well, and then support that with my own ideas or thoughts. So they really, like, forced me to sit up and pay attention to the way I'm thinking and how I can express that best through my writing.

Moving Through Genres

Maya was to receive one other low grade on a written assignment, this time when she wrote her first observation for a participant observation class, a class that required a genre of writing that she was then unfamiliar with:

I thought that describing a setting is kind of like writing a little short story, and I didn't realize that in writing everything has to be still described with academic rigor. So I was describing it in ways that were colorful but didn't have any academic rigor, so I didn't get a very good grade for that. The instructor said to me—and I went to her—she said there's nothing supporting this. You're just stating opinions and there's nothing in your writing that's working as evidence to support your opinion, so I realized that it requires a lot of rigor, which I hadn't perceived. So between my self-reflexivity and the rigor and stating opinions, I realized that I'm moving away from cold positivist factual reporting, which was what I was doing before, so that's how the move happened.

The move Maya described above was one of several that occurred in her academic career as she moved between different fields: she studied biochemistry and psychology for her undergraduate degree in which she described her writing as “scientific and positivist,” did a postgraduate certificate in human resources where the writing required was “very corporate and technical,” pursued a master's degree in instructional development where she describes her

writing as “very much on the surface level,” and finally entered a Ph.D. program in qualitative inquiry where she has taken classes in postmodernism, feminism, and qualitative methodology, each of which calls for a somewhat different genre of writing. Throughout these moves, Maya became aware that each of these disciplines has its own requirements, and she had to adjust her writing accordingly to match the generic expectations of each field she entered.

Swimming in the Text

Maya reports being profoundly influenced by her theoretical and epistemological perspectives, and she attributes this to her deepening interaction with the texts she reads, a process she describes variously as swimming in the text: “I’m like right in the middle of it, and all these words are just circling me, and I’m swimming in it swimming out of it, swimming there, breaking it apart, putting it together differently”; as wrestling with the text: “I’m getting dirty with it, I’m playing with it, and sometimes I’m wrestling with it”; or as being surrounded by a 3-D image of the text: “I’m there and all these words and ideas are just floating by and I’m like picking choosing, picking choosing. It’s very sci-fi like.”

Reading is clearly a very active and dialogic experience for Maya in which she says, “I’m questioning it [the text] and it’s questioning me . . . I argue with it and it argues with me—I know it sounds funny, but I think the text argues back . . . I play with it, and it plays with me.” And all the while, “The author is in all the words, personified in all the words, not like standing outside of it somewhere.” Maya was also given specific guidance about how to read by her advisor: “She said, when you read, don’t, like, relax. Don’t be in a relaxed position and read. Sit in front of a computer and as you read, if there are codes and things that are speaking to you, type it up right away in some sort of data base so that you can retrieve it, and along with that state whatever you are thinking or feeling.” No wonder, then, that Maya reports being deeply

engaged in her readings (mostly in the areas of postcolonial theory, women's studies and postmodernism) and that the theory and worldview of these fields are reflected in her writing.

In her active and dialogic attitude toward reading, Maya instantiates Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism, heteroglossia, and the responsive reader. In Bakhtin's heteroglossic world, the word "enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with such a third group: and all of this may crucially shape discourse (1981, p. 276). The way Maya describes her reading process is very reminiscent of this complex and dynamic world of words; I imagine her following the words on this journey, dialoguing with the text, always responding, and adding her own links to the chain of utterances.

Becoming an Academic

As she has moved between fields and has immersed herself in the reading of these fields, Maya's beliefs about writing have evolved. I was fortunate enough to interview Maya two years ago, when we took a qualitative research class together. Consequently, that interview is a snapshot of Maya when she was qualitatively in a very different place from where she is now. The change in Maya's perspective on writing becomes apparent when I compare Maya's comments on writing three years ago with her comments a recent interview:

June 2001, Maya—I always wanted to make sure that I was communicating at a level where somebody who didn't know the topic would also understand. And that's one of my goals for writing, and now I find in academic writing they use so much jargon that only the person in the field would be able to understand, and they do that because they want to keep people out of the field—actually out! And I don't think that's in the true spirit of knowledge sharing. And that is the purpose of publishing—sharing your knowledge . . . I want to have that passion so that the reader would understand it . . . so it's not as cryptic as these academics.

Sept. 2003: Interviewer—Does your writing have to be accessible to people who are not in your field?

Maya—No, I don't think so. Not any more. I used to think that before, but I don't think so, because quantum physics is not accessible to me, and I don't go criticizing quantum physics for having all kinds of jargon in it and all kinds of complicated ways of writing it, so why should somebody have such an ease of access to my field, without having doing the work that I have done in my field? Why should they have that kind of access to it? Why shouldn't I gate keep it somewhat to the people that have done this work?

Three years ago, Maya was still in the field of instructional technology (the field in which she did her first year of doctoral coursework before transferring to qualitative inquiry). At that time, she had not yet read widely in the disciplines of postmodernism and feminism—disciplines that are often charged with favoring dense, jargon-filled, convoluted prose that may be incomprehensible to outsiders. By the time of the later interview, it seems that Maya has become one of those cryptic academics she upbraided in the first interview.

Writing Through the Lens of Theory

Maya's theoretical perspectives have influenced not only her ideas about writing but also her ideas about language. She is aware that her perspective constrains how she uses language and even what words she can use:

Maya—When I say the language, I don't necessarily mean that English is a barrier for me. I meant in the sense that I buy into the fact that language is not adequate to represent everything that you think . . . I feel like language is incomplete; language is always shifted and deferred—it exists in relations.

Interviewer—Are we getting into deconstructionism now?

Maya—[laughing] Sorry, if I buy into that, and I do, I buy into that and when you so then it becomes a problem. When I have stuff in my head, and I want to express it in a language where I'm constantly choosing certain words over others because there are certain words I just can't use any more. I don't use words like *truth*, *accuracy*, *origin*, *will know*—*I will know this*, I don't use assertions like that any more, so I have to think about what words could I use that will still keep most of what I am thinking and do justice to it.

Maya's postmodernist, post-colonial, and feminist perspectives serve her well when she writes for classes in those areas, but not all the classes she takes are in this area. In her major,

qualitative inquiry, the main research paradigm is interpretivism, not postmodernism, and this may be problematic for Maya, especially as her advisor strongly favors interpretivism.

Relationship with Advisor

Of all the students in this study, Maya's relationship with her advisor is the most complex. On the one hand, she admires and respects her advisor who has "opened a few doors for her," but on the other hand, the relationship is problematic in several respects. The first problem Maya has with her advisor is the advisor's extreme busyness—a factor that has led some of her advisees to go to almost ridiculous lengths to contact her, as Maya explained:

She's extremely busy, extremely busy, so she cannot provide the support . . . her email responses are never on time, and sometimes I would have to request something three times by email before she would respond. I've asked other students what they do. They just sit in front of her office until they can meet with her to get an appointment. One of the other students says she pretends to run into her but she paces back and forth where she [the advisor] might be, because that's the only way of developing a relationship with her and she advised me to develop that relationship with her; otherwise, I'll never get her to mentor me the way I need to.

Maya feels that the difficulty she has getting in touch with her advisor is exacerbated by her physical distance from her advisor: "Most of the other students have their assistantships in that building, so I think being invisible has had its disadvantages, so I rely on sending her an email and making her an appointment, because I can't just hang out in the building all the time." As a result of her difficulty getting in touch with her advisor, Maya feels that her ability to progress might have been constrained: "I feel like had I got the benefit of those sort of dialogues earlier on, I may have been in a very different place right now with my own work."

However, what has made Maya's relationship with her advisor still more problematic is their differing theoretical perspectives; this difference in perspective has had a negative impact on Maya's ability to write:

There's just a real conflict between her paradigm and mine . . . I'm writing my comprehensive exams and I can't form very good arguments. I'm trying to frame an argument where I situate it in my perspective and I buttress it with citations that I think she will respect, not certain citations I know she will not respect because she already told me that she doesn't think they're doing anything great, or she thinks they're an idiot. . . . but it's very hard to make strong argument when you can't cite certain people that you think help you think in a certain way. . . . I can't write. I have to continue to think about what will set off an alarm. That's why it is so hard to write, why it is hard to build an argument.

Maya's advisor has frequently counseled her "not to fall into the postmodernist trap." But the problem is the "postmodernist trap" is no trap to Maya: it is exactly where she wants to be.

Because of their clashing theoretical perspectives, Maya explained, "I think that it's going to be hard for me to coauthor anything with her just because we have such different understandings." As a result, Maya had not experienced the opportunities for collaborative writing that students such as Rainbow had experienced. However, Maya told me that this was not atypical for students in her department, as they did not tend to collaborate with their professors on research projects: "We are very fragmented, everybody is doing their own thing and we're not visible to each other. We don't necessarily have a strong community." Consequently, in Maya's case, we do not see the kind of socialization into a discourse community through mentorship that Rainbow described, and the mentor/apprenticeship model does not describe Maya's relationship with her advisor. Rather, it is a relationship that involves considerable negotiation as Maya tries to find a voice that will allow her to express her own postmodernist perspectives without offending the interpretivist perspectives of her advisor.

What is unfortunate is that Maya, because of the size of her department, has no other choice of advisor, yet she is aware that things would have been very difficult if she were able to have a different advisor:

It's not the work that I would do, if I had my own agency to do it the way I would want to do it. "If [another faculty member] were my advisor, it would have been really different

because she would have loved it and I would have loved working with her, I wouldn't have to do this linear representation of my work, I would have done so many different things with my work. I would be more free to explore my understandings.

Despite these difficulties, Maya remains confident that she will have her own publications—she has already written several successful conference proposals—and she will eventually be able to pursue her own theoretical perspective. She also believes that she has learned some valuable lessons by having to modify her perspectives to fit her advisor's, and by learning these lessons, she may even be able to find a niche for her own research:

I'm coming to terms with learning how to do it in the political framework of representation and argument, presenting an argument, so I think it's a good lesson to learn but it's just a little uphill battle for me. I think it's still a good lesson to learn. It's stressful but I think I'll still get published because they're asking me to carve a niche in an area that may not be carved yet.

Thus, even though Maya lacked the positive mentoring experiences described by Rainbow, she felt that she was moving closer to her goals of becoming a productive member of her discourse community.

Summary

The students described above have very different experiences of and views about writing. Harry and Rainbow, as third year doctoral students, are comparative old timers who already have considerable experience in academic writing. Harry's major influences in writing have been his interaction with the texts he reads and his interaction with me as his writing tutor. Rainbow's major influences have been her positive experiences of mentoring with an instructor and with her major professor. Jacey and Miri, in contrast, are newcomers who have very little experience in academic writing, and they were well aware of the challenges they faced. Maya, as a third year doctoral student, is another old timer who has plenty of experience in academic writing, but she

was experiencing a conflict between her own theoretical perspective and that of her advisor. She also wondered how her theoretical perspective and epistemology would fit within an evaluation class. It is to this class that I turn next.

CHAPTER V: MIXED GENRES IN PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Classroom Context

The program evaluation class met on Friday afternoons in a large, bright, overheated modern classroom in the Department of Adult Education. The class instructor, Dr. Newman, exudes an aura of professionalism, efficiency, and intense enthusiasm. Unlike most academics, Dr. Newman is always immaculately coiffed and attired in smart business suits, and her persona evokes the business world rather than the academic world. Her image, her enthusiasm, and her intensity imply that she is eager to get to work without wasting time.

On the first day of class, Dr. Newman drew our attention to a large file box that she had carried to class with her. In the box were folders for each class member; each folder was labeled with the name of a class member (myself included). Every week we were to collect our folders at the beginning of class. The folders contained the materials (handouts etc.) to be used in class. At the end of class we were to return our empty folders to the file box so that they could be refilled for the following week. We were all extremely impressed by this efficiency, which most of us had never encountered before.

The first day of class followed the standard procedure: Dr. Newman introduced herself and told us about her background; then she asked the students to introduce themselves and share their own backgrounds and experiences. Next Dr. Newman went through the syllabus, discussing the required texts, the class assignments, and her expectations for the students and the class. She also asked the students to complete a short intake form describing their experiences, if any, with program evaluation, and explaining what they hoped to learn from the class. During the

first class the students took notes, but this was the last time most students would do so, as Dr. Newman mentioned that she would provide each student with handouts based on the week's PowerPoint presentation.

After the first week, most classes followed a similar format: each week the instructor would make a PowerPoint presentation, and classroom activities would be divided between 1) viewing the presentation, 2) participating in small group activities in which students might discuss a short case study or discuss a question posed by the instructor, and 3) participating in whole class discussions. During class discussions, the instructor generally posed questions to the entire class, rather than calling on specific students. The typical form of discourse in the classroom was the IRF (Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur and Pendergast, 1997; Nassaji & Wells, 2000). In this pattern, the instructor initiates (I) a question, a student responds (R), and the instructor follows up (F) on this response by asking the student to elaborate or by reformulating the response or developing it into another question.

During class, students rarely took notes, but divided their attention between the presentation and the handouts. The non-native speakers in the class paid particular attention to the handouts that accompanied the PowerPoint presentations, often reading these handouts rather than looking at the instructor, and several of them told me that being able to read the material as well as hear it facilitated their understanding. One other point worth noting is the timing of the class. It took place on a Friday afternoon, a rather unfortunate timeslot as the students often appeared to be tired when they arrived for class and often showed signs of lethargy and sleepiness in the overheated room in which the class was held. Dr. Newman, however, maintained her unflagging energy and intensity throughout the three-hour class period.

Students' Attitudes Toward the Class and the Instructor

The students' attitudes toward the class were diverse and evolved throughout the semester. Every student had different expectations for the class, and these expectations varied according to the student's background, experience, their goals for the class and for their future careers. All of the focal students in the study liked Dr. Newman, and almost all of them said how kind she was, making comments such as "Dr. Newman is very nice professor" and "Dr. Newman is very nice, so I recommend this class to other people." However, the fact that they liked the instructor personally did not mean they were uncritical of the class as the excerpts below⁹ (from different students) show:

Dr. Newman—she is very good in evaluation, and her class the quality is very good, but it is a little bit abstract. She didn't tell us how to do the evaluation. Just we learned some approaches and theories, but I'm still not very clear about that.

I just think we have very nice instructor, maybe too nice, um. I think she could have challenged us more because I don't work as hard in this class as in other classes although I like evaluation, and evaluation is something that I will do in the future. I know that.

One reason for the students' ambivalence toward the class was their opinion of the textbooks, as I describe below.

The Required Readings and the Students' Attitudes Toward Them

There were two required textbooks for the course: *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, by Michael Patton (1997), hereafter described as "Patton," and *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach* by Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (1999), hereafter "Rossi." Most of the students liked the Patton book, but all the students, both the native and non-native speakers of English, disliked the Rossi text, and even the one student in the class who reported that it was useful described it as "very dry." In fact, the students disliked the text so much that only one student in the entire class

⁹ The students were anxious lest any negative comments they made might be read by their instructor; accordingly, the above quotes are unattributed to protect their confidentiality.

reported doing all the readings in this text. Of the others, some reported skimming it (reading headings and summaries), and the others had read either less than half, or in some cases, none at all of this text. The main problem with the text is best described by the student quoted below:

I just don't understand the language, it's maybe that's their jargon. There's some jargon, that's the style of writing in the field of evaluation, but I still am not used to that kind of writing style and that language—the wording maybe.

The difficulty of this text and the ensuing result—that most of the students read very little of it—was to have considerable impact on both the students' participation in class and their attitudes toward the class.

The Assignments

The program evaluation class had three graded assignments

1. Evaluation model or approach. This midterm assignment included a five-page written paper describing a selected model or approach to evaluation, and a class presentation based on the model.
2. Participation in a program evaluation workshop to be presented to agency heads from local charitable agencies. Preparation for the workshop included an interview with one of the agency heads.
3. A five-page summary paper and a one-page business letter based upon the interview with the agency head and the workshop described above.

As this study is centered around the students' written work, the main focus of discussion will be (1) the papers produced for the evaluation model and (2) the summary paper and business letter.

The Instructor's Expectations for the Written Assignments

Dr. Newman told me that her own writing was influenced by the dual roles she had played throughout her career as an administrator and a practitioner in program evaluation: "Being a

practitioner along the way and being an administrator, one needs to be able to communicate clearly, briefly, and concisely.” In fact, I would describe the genre of the assignments for the class as mixed in that they demanded the analysis of academic genres coupled with the conciseness of a business genre. Her concern for conciseness was certainly reflected in the written requirements for the course (two five-page papers and a one-page business letter), but the fact that these assignments were shorter than is usual for graduate school does not mean that she had lower expectations. In the following passage, she describes what she hoped her students would achieve in their writing:

They need to understand the message: What are they writing about? What is that concept? And then being able to organize a response to that content . . . and then kick in all the mechanics of clearly written sentences—you know I’m a big bugger on APA so they follow the format because that is just going to serve them well in the future.

In terms of her overall expectations for the class, Dr. Newman made the following comments:

My expectations of all the students in the class is that they write at a graduate level, meaning that there would be a minimal amount of editing on my part, and that when I am correcting their papers, I am looking for content, and presentation of grammatical issues will not impede that. . . . [Also] I stress APA compliance because I think it is so basic as they go through their program and professional careers in adult education.

As we can see, Dr. Newman emphasized APA compliance in both of the above excerpts; this is consistent with some of the comments she would make on the students’ papers. Although she did not always correct superficial errors in their texts, she did correct APA errors on their reference pages.

The Midterm Assignment

The first written assignment for the program evaluation class was described in the syllabus as follows:

Table 3

Project # 1	Evaluation Model or Approach: Presentation, Description and Critique Paper (5 double-spaced pages)
The purpose of this assignment is to provide the opportunity for students to become knowledgeable about one particular approach to program evaluation and to share that approach with the class. An example of an evaluation model may be Fetterman's Empowerment Evaluation or Kirkpatrick's The Four Levels for Evaluating Training Programs. You are to identify which model or approach you will examine by September 12. Working with another student on this project is encouraged Write a descriptive and critical analysis of the approach in a paper of no more than 5 pages. (If you work with another student on this project, each person is responsible for their own paper.) In the paper summarize some features of the model such as: What are the key features of this evaluation approach? What is the major purpose of and who is the primary audience for this approach to evaluation? What are the likely questions to be pursued? What is the role of the evaluator? What criteria are used to judge the program? How is the data reported and utilized? What vision of education, teaching-learning process is being assumed? Where and under what condition is the model applied? What are the strengths and limitations of the approach? What is your overall critique of the model? Papers will be evaluated on: • Critical description and assessment (5 points) • Integration with course readings and discussions (5 points) • Discussion of relevance to practice as adult educator (5 points) • Appropriate grammar and correct APA format (5 points) Note: The original syllabus did not include the grading points in parentheses. These were added after the students had already written their midterm assignments.	

Analysis of the Midterm Assignment

Since the students could write about any model of their choice, they had wide discretion in terms of choosing an assignment; consequently, they chose to write about different models and took different approaches toward the assignment. In the following analysis, I will discuss all of the focal students' assignments and present their reflections on the assignment. I begin by

discussing Rainbow's and Harry's assignments, as they have several features in common; then I will move on to discuss the assignments Jacey, Maya, and Miri respectively.

The Traditional Approach

Both Rainbow and Harry began by comparing their approaches with traditional approaches to evaluation, and both, in the second paragraph, used a long quotation from their primary sources to describe the fundamentals of the approach they were using. Throughout their papers, their paragraphs had topic sentences, often the first sentence in a paragraph, and they developed their paragraphs by adding supporting or elaborating sentences. Both papers were written in academic English, both contained description of the model and discussion of limitations—in both papers the discussion of limitations came in the second to last paragraph—and their overall tone was objective and factual.

Both Rainbow's and Harry's papers originally contained a small number of errors: Rainbow's paper contained a few superficial errors (mostly subject/verb agreement errors, article errors and a couple of awkward sentences), most of which were not remarked upon or even underlined by the instructor. I had offered to proofread Rainbow's paper, but she declined my offer, as she did not finish her paper until the last minute (literally). Harry accepted my offer to proofread his paper, and in doing so I corrected a small number of errors (article errors, preposition errors, and two awkward sentences).

The instructor had mentioned several times in class that she required strict adherence to APA style guidelines, and both papers generally followed APA conventions for in-text citations. Rainbow's paper diverged somewhat from APA style in that she used numbers (1), 2), 3) etc.) and bulleted headings throughout the text, neither of which is recommended by APA. Both students lost points for their reference page: Rainbow's page was single-spaced rather than

double-spaced, and Harry accidentally handed in his paper without the reference page (though he did have one as I had seen it earlier).

Both papers received a score of 18/20 (though Harry's was incorrectly summed to total 19/20). Both Rainbow and Harry lost one point in the area of "discussion of relevance to the practice of adult educator" and another point for "appropriate grammar and correct APA format." On both papers, the instructor wrote the same question, "How would you use this in your practice?" and both papers received a brief complimentary remark: Rainbow: "You have a good grasp of the model"; Harry: "Well-written case."

The instructor reported being pleased with all of the midterm papers, and Rainbow and Harry both found the paper easy to write. Both of them had written similar papers before for other classes and neither of them had trouble understanding what the professor expected in this assignment. Harry told me that he was already familiar with his chosen evaluation model and had written about it briefly in his comprehensive exams. He was even able to use some material from his exam, though he also reported reading some more references and considerably adding to his original material.

Rainbow told me that although she had written the paper at the last minute, she had begun reading for it several weeks earlier and had "mentally rehearsed the paper on the bus and at home" several times, so writing it was not a problem. She also had a mental plan of the paper (the headings and what she would include in each section), so when she came to write she just fleshed out the plan; then, after writing the bulk of the paper, she wrote the introduction. All in all, both of them found the assignment straightforward and fairly easy to write.

Drawing on Work Experience

For Jacey, though, the situation was different. Unlike Rainbow and Harry who were in the third year of their doctoral programs, Jacey was a first-semester master's student. In her first interview she had told me, "The biggest problem is about writing because I don't have any academic writing experience. I'm not familiar with APA's format, and usually when I'm writing I form a word in my mind that's a Chinese word—I have to translate it into English, but the translation process is not very easy." However, although Jacey lacked academic experience compared to the other students, she did have considerable work experience in human resources, and she drew on this experience throughout her paper.

Jacey accepted my offer to proofread her paper, so although the original paper contained a large number of superficial errors, the paper she handed in was relatively error free. The paper she wrote did not conform to APA conventions in that it did not use APA heading guidelines (Jacey preferred to use larger fonts). Also, the paper was laid out rather differently than a typical research paper, with large spaces at the end of sections and around headings. Actually, the overall appearance of Jacey's paper was rather attractive and more reader friendly than the typical APA style paper, but as a result of its layout, her paper resembled a business report rather than a typical research paper.

However, the main way that Jacey's paper differed from those of the others was not in its appearance, but in its tone, which had an energy and vitality quite different from the cool academic tone of the other papers. This is immediately apparent when we compare Rainbow's and Jacey's opening paragraphs:

Rainbow—Traditional evaluation models exclusively focus on the program objectives, with the evaluation completed at the end of the efforts. Some evaluators have questioned this approach, as the evaluation findings are not likely to be utilized. In response to these limitations, management-oriented evaluation emerged, with the emphasis that program evaluation should be used prospectively to help improve a program as well as retrospectively to judge its merit.

Jacey—As a professional HR trainer, have you ever asked yourself, “What will help me improve my training design process in the future?” “How can I find out if participants learned what I hoped?” “How can I find out if the employees’ behavior improved as a result of training?” In order to answer these questions, I’d like to introduce Kirkpatrick’s Four Level Training Program Evaluation Model to you.

This lively and direct tone continues throughout the paper, and while Jacey does as good a job as any other student of describing the model, she also makes frequent reference to her own work experience and poses the kind of questions that are of real concern to business people, as we can see in the passage below:

As Kirkpatrick (1998) said, “How can we transfer the knowledge, skills and attitudes studied in the classroom into working practice? How can we measure a person’s change on the job?” This is the task of behavior evaluation. However, I think this level is more complicated than the last two. In my company, my boss always complains, “I spend one million on the company’s training program, but I haven’t seen any results—none of them apply the knowledge in their daily working!”

In the remainder of the above paragraph, Jacey goes on to make specific, concrete suggestions, based on the model she is presenting and on her own experience as a human resources trainer. Her paper continues to evoke a practical, business genre throughout, rather than the dispassionate research genre evoked by Harry and Rainbow.

Like Harry, Jacey was able to use part of a paper she had written for another class for this assignment. Saving time was a vital concern for Jacey since, although only a master’s student in her first semester, she was enrolled in four doctoral level classes, and the list of assignments she had to write throughout the semester was stupendous (see Appendix A). At first Jacey was hesitant to tell me that she had adapted part of her paper from another class, as she had been told

by an American student in her program that to do this would be plagiarism. I responded that recycling parts of old papers into new papers was a common practice in graduate school, especially when writing the literature review section of papers. Relieved, Jacey pointed out that she had only used part of her paper from the other class, and that she had had to modify it considerably to adapt it for Dr. Newman's class.

Jacey's paper was received very well by her instructor. It was awarded a grade of 19/20, losing one point in the area of "appropriate grammar and correct APA format." It also received positive feedback even though it exceeded the page length the professor had stipulated (and re-emphasized several times in class). The professor's summative comment was, "Well done paper! Even though it went to 7 pages!" Dr. Newman clearly appreciated the way that Jacey drew on her experience, and although the style of Jacey's paper was unconventional, evoking a business rather than an academic genre, the instructor found that it met her requirements and awarded it a grade equal to the highest in the class. Though Jacey had begun work on this paper without any clear idea of the professor's expectations, in this case, she clearly met them.

Dr. Newman's sincere appreciation of Jacey's paper may result from the fact that the paper was so engaging. In describing academic writing, Dr. Newman reflected that it was sometimes difficult in this genre to make the writing interesting:

So frequently the academic kind of writing is very boring and doesn't engage people and you'll lose them because it's too pompous and, um, almost pejorative toward the reader because it's so complex. So one needs to, not simplify, but deal with the complexity in ways that are interesting to engage the reader, and then clearly enough so one can understand it.

Jacey's paper certainly met these criteria, but it is rather ironic Dr. Newman's comments in the above passage echo the comments the students in this class made about one of the assigned textbooks.

Tailoring the Task to One's Interests

Maya's paper was just as distinctive as Jacey's though in a very different way. Maya strayed farther from the boundaries of the topic than any other student and adapted the topic to her own interests (Leki, 1995); rather than describe and critique an existing evaluation model, she created her own, which she designed to fit precisely with her own theoretical perspectives and research interests in postmodernism and qualitative inquiry. The title of her paper, *A Rhizomatic Line of Flight: Qualitative Practice of Evaluation Informed by Postmodern Critique*, clearly delineates its focus on her own areas of interest.

Unlike Jacey's paper, which offered pragmatic and concrete suggestions for practice, Maya's paper, in typical postmodern style, raised many more questions than it answered. Rather than suggesting answers to practical questions, Maya sought to "trouble" various notions that she thought remained unquestioned in the evaluation literature. In fact, she frequently mentioned the contingent nature of the ideas she discussed, and cautioned against using them as guidelines, as we can see in the following passage:

A cautionary note about qualitative methodologies and postmodernism is necessary before we proceed. Postmodernism and qualitative research are not homogenous, generalizable, or fixed in meaning and practice. Thus, ideas offered are only offered through my understandings of these theories, methodologies, and praxis.

Another way that Maya's paper differed from those of the other students is in its use of references. Several times in her paper, Maya incorporated relevant quotations from the author of one of the course textbooks (Patton, 1990, 2002), but not from one of the assigned textbooks. Also, Maya's paper differed from those of the other students in terms of the number of references: Maya's paper listed 22 references, many more than the other students in the class: Harry listed 6; Rainbow 5 (two of which were websites); Jacey 3 (two of which were websites); and Miri 2 (both websites). Maya's extensive use of references may reflect her personal belief

that it is essential to read both widely and deeply in her field, or it may simply be that she knew that it is wise as a graduate student to give the appearance of being very well read.

Maya's paper was also very positively received by Dr. Newman. It elicited more comments from the instructor throughout the paper than the other papers (mostly in the form of questions). Like Jacey's paper, it received a high score of 19/20, losing one point for "discussion of relevance to the practice of adult educator." It, too, received a complimentary summative comment: "I am pleased that you attempted a non-traditional examination. Super title!" Although she departed considerably from the assigned topic, Maya, too, seemed to satisfy her instructor's expectations for the assignment.

Rainbow, Harry, Jacey and Maya all took different approaches to their assignments and produced different kinds of texts, yet all of their papers were awarded A grades. The diversity of the students' papers reflects previous findings that students have varied and creative strategies for meeting the demands of their writing assignments (Leki, 1995). While none of the students completely addressed all of the questions listed under the assignment guidelines, all of them addressed most of the points. While their texts differed in subject, tone, and use of citations, they were all well received by the instructor. This is in line with other research that has found that instructors show a great deal of latitude in terms of the texts they will accept (Prior, 1998). Some students made the pragmatic decision to choose assignments for which they could use part of research they had done previously, thereby saving themselves valuable time; another crafted the assignments so that they fit more closely with her own interests (Leki, 1995). All in all, the students were able to produce texts that satisfied their instructor's expectations. Furthermore, they reported that they found this assignment to be relatively easy. For the fifth student in this study, however, the case was otherwise.

Miri's paper differed from those of all the other students in one important respect: her paper was composed entirely of passages she had taken from other sources and pieced together¹⁰. When I began to analyze Miri's paper, I immediately began to suspect its authenticity, as it was written in flawless idiomatic English that very few non-native speakers of English can produce. Moreover, the paragraphs had some peculiar characteristics: some of them seemed to change direction in the middle, or contain information that seemed quite out of context or irrelevant to the rest of the paragraph. Miri had mentioned in an interview that she tended to use Internet sources and that she would keep the Internet text open in one window while typing her paper in another window. In analyzing her paper, I realized how easy it would have been to cut and paste from one window to the next.

Miri had listed two Internet sources as her references, and when I checked them, I discovered that about half of her text had been cut and pasted from these sources. I believe that they were cut and pasted rather than retyped because they still retained some distinctive features from the original text such as underlining for hypertext links. As I continued to search, I found two other Internet sites from which Miri had taken the rest of her paper. I was eventually able to track every sentence in Miri's paper to one of four Internet sites, the two she listed as references and an additional two that were not listed. Based on American concepts of academic honesty, Miri had plagiarized her entire paper.

In the final interview, I asked Miri about her midterm paper, trying to find out whether or not she was aware of how to document sources and why she had chosen to use the words of the texts she read rather than to use her own words. Miri reiterated that she was aware that she was supposed to cite, but gave the following explanation for her midterm paper:

¹⁰ I was unaware of this fact until after the semester had ended and after my final interview with the instructor.

You have to say where you got this information, so you have to write down the source. I guess, actually, I should have write down 1,2,3, where it is from, but it's APA, and a student told me you don't need to write down 1,2,3, you just have to write down the references in the end of the paper, so I changed it.

She also gave the following reason for using the exact words used in the Internet sites from which she borrowed:

I think I couldn't write my paper without quoting from those Internet sites because I couldn't find any other sources and better way to explain. And the thing is almost every site has the same 4 steps about the theory in the same words, so I couldn't see any reason for me to paraphrase them again. I think my main reason is I don't know anything except what I got on the Internet. If I have resourceful information about that theory, I think I would like to use my own words.

Miri's comments raise some interesting questions: what is the point of paraphrasing words if you find that several Internet sites use almost the same words? As Currie (1998) noted, students often find that "the best words have already been taken by the original writer" (p.13). Furthermore, for a student who is placed in a doctoral level class in which she has no interest and about which she has no knowledge, the task of writing about a theoretical model that has no relevance to her interest or previous experience might seem insurmountable.

Miri was genuinely unaware that she had committed any serious transgression. While she said she knew she was supposed to document sources, she didn't have any understanding of why this was necessary or how it should be done. She believed that a more grievous transgression would be not meeting the requirements of the APA style guidelines.

Given Rainbow's earlier comments about Chinese attitudes toward plagiarism, Miri's actions are more understandable. Rainbow had described the situation as follows:

I don't think that's a matter of honesty or dishonesty. Just in our country we have different way to define plagiarism. In China a lot of students think, if you copy the whole article, that's plagiarism, but if you borrow something [it's not]. Of course everyone borrows things from others' words, but our problem is we are not taught or we fail to learn to give credit for authors. Students think, "I did the readings; I put this together; that's not plagiarism." So I really don't think that's a matter of honesty or dishonesty.

Miri had not copied the whole article. She had, in fact, borrowed fairly equally from all four articles. She found the articles, she did the reading, and she put the paper together. If she shared the attitude Rainbow described above, her actions seem less surprising.

A number of researchers have noted that attitudes toward textual ownership are diverse and that many countries do not share Western proprietary attitudes toward texts (Pennycook, 1994; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Scollon, 1994, 1995). In particular, some scholars have pointed to the different attitudes toward learning that obtain in China. For example, Pennycook (1996) pointed out that some of his Chinese students were accustomed to memorizing large segments of text. In reviewing his Chinese students attitudes toward plagiarism, Penneycook (1996) found that many of them had been accustomed to incorporating others' words into their own texts in a way that would be considered academically dishonest in the US. For example, one student said, "It's my usual practice . . . when find something that seems to be meaningful I will try to take it from the article" (p.223), while another said, "In secondary school, no teacher forbids us to do something like that" (p.224). Evans and Youmans (2001) interviewed students about plagiarism and found that for some it had been a normal practice in their home countries: "The professors like don't really don't even try to catch plagiarism, or even if they catch it, there is no punishment for plagiarism" (p.58).

Considering that students may bring such attitudes to the US with them, it is unfortunate that appropriate use of citations is seldom explicitly taught in graduate classes. The syllabus in Dr. Newman's class, as is typical for most graduate school syllabi (I compared it with many from classes I have taken), contained the following paragraph about academic honesty on the last page:

Table 4

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy:

All academic work must meet the standards contained in A Culture of Honesty. Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. A Culture of Honesty is the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonest and can be found online at . . . The student honor code states, "I will be academically honest in all my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty in others."

I doubt that the new students in the study even knew what the expression "academic honesty" means. I certainly did not, when I began graduate school.

Dr. Newman, who awarded Miri's paper a grade of 17/20, was unaware that Miri had committed plagiarism. In both our interviews at the beginning and end of the semester, we had discussed the problem of plagiarism. In the first interview, Dr. Newman told me that in the past, she had sometimes been concerned that international students in her class had committed plagiarism, especially when she noticed a great disparity between the student's email writing and the student's assignment writing:

Well, I wasn't sure that some of them [some international students] were doing their writing. As a faculty member, when you get great discrepancies between, for example, and email, which is more colloquial conversation writing, and then a paper, when I see such great discrepancies, I wonder who is doing the writing.

In our second interview, I asked Dr. Newman if she had any concerns about plagiarism in the class I had observed, and she replied that she did not.

Dr. Newman's failure to notice that Miri's paper had been copied is not, perhaps, surprising. Given that this was the first piece of writing she had seen from Miri, she had no basis for comparison. Moreover, as Dr Newman pointed out in the first interview, many international graduate students' writing skills exceed their speaking skills, so she could not have inferred Miri's writing ability from her speaking ability. However, she did note that while she could see most students' personalities reflected in their papers, she could not see Miri's personality

reflected in her paper. With hindsight, the significance of her comment becomes apparent. Furthermore, considering the discrepancy between Miri's midterm paper and her final paper, Dr. Newman did say that she was disappointed with Miri's final paper.

The Final Assignments

The final written assignments for the evaluation class were part of a four-part project. While this study focuses mainly on the latter two parts of the project, these parts were based on the earlier parts of the study, so I describe all four parts below in their entirety.

Table 5

Project #2 Outcome Assessment Training Workshop. Letter and Analysis Paper (5 double-spaced pages) This is a four-part assignment. It is to provide experience in planning and implementing an evaluation training program and in serving as an evaluation consultant. 1. You will assist in planning, delivering, and evaluating a workshop for non-profit agency executives and staff on outcomes measurement and performance. 2. In addition to contributing to the overall training workshop, you will select one agency and work with the program director prior to the workshop to assess their learning needs and b) post workshop to identify performance metrics, process measures, mission validity, demonstrating ROI, outcome data for program consultants. 3. In the role as an evaluation consultant, draft a letter to the President of [the charitable organization] that: • Does a meta analysis of agencies readiness to implement and outcome assessment approach • Makes recommendations to increase individual agencies and the [charitable organization's] evaluation capacity 4. Prepare a summary paper including: • Features of your experience in agency diagnosis and consultation • Reflection on the i. Theoretical, political and practical elements of program evaluation based on this experience ii. Application of the standard of evaluations in this setting iii. Your view of evaluation and your potential future in program evaluation Letter and paper will be evaluated on • Critical observation and assessment • Integration with course readings • Judgment of lessons learned • Appropriate grammar and correct APA format
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The findings presented below focus on the last two parts of the assignment, the two written assignments the students produced. However, we should keep in mind that successful completion of these last parts is, in some ways, contingent upon successful completion of the first two parts.

All the students in the study expressed some degree of apprehension or confusion about the final assignment. It was somewhat complex; moreover, it did not seem to fit into any of the genres they were familiar with. What several students struggled with was the length of the summary paper assignment—they did not see how it could be accomplished within a five-page paper. Others were apprehensive about the business letter because they had never written a business letter before (in the US), and were unfamiliar with the genre.

Textual Analysis of the Summary Papers

For ease of comparison, I have summarized the main features of the students' summary paper and present them in the Table 6 (see next page). In analyzing the papers I found that the students varied in the proportion of text they devoted to description and the proportion they devoted to analysis. Rainbow's, Harry's and Maya's texts contained very little description, except where it was needed to illustrate their argument. The bulk of their texts consisted of discussion, analytical reflection, and critique. In contrast, Jacey's and Miri's texts were almost entirely descriptive, and although they did contain reflection also, this reflection was more often personal ("the workshop was a wonderful experience to me") rather than analytical.

Table 6

Characteristics of Summary Paper	Name, Grade & Instructor's Summative Comments
• Summary of the interview. Details how the charity is funded & present system of evaluation (1 page) • Critique of the evaluation system and discussion of features that should be included (1 para.) • Reflection upon essential features of outcome evaluation, including references to the literature. (1 page) • Reflection on what she learned at the workshop, including reference to the Joint Committee on Standards of Educational Evaluation (1994) (1 page) • Reflection on what she learned in class, what she still needs to learn, and how she will use this knowledge in her future (1 page) • References: 2—the class textbooks	Rainbow 20/20 “Good analysis and synthesis”
• One sentence outlining organization of the paper • Description of purpose of the workshop (1 para.) • His experience working with agency heads at the workshop (1 para.) • Problems the agency heads experienced at the workshop (1 para.) • Reflection on the workshop incorporating points from course textbook, the logic model, social processes of workshop, references to Joint Committee on Educational Standards and their application in the present situation (2 pages) • Discussion of points to consider for charities’ future evaluation and description of areas that should be included with reference to the other textbook (1 page) • Summary of what he learned and how he will apply it in future (1para) • References: 2—the class textbooks	Harry 20/20 “Interesting, thoughtful, reflective synthesis. Well done.”
• Introduction stating the purpose of the workshop. • Description of the logic model (1 page) • Characteristics of good outcome evaluation citing instructor (1 para.) • Summary of interview with agency head (1 page) • Charts and tables describing agency’s aims and funding (1 page) • Summary of ways evaluation should assist the charities (1 para.) • Statement about the importance of evaluation (1 para.) • References: 4—the charity’s annual report, its document on program evaluation, the class itself, and one of the class textbooks	Jacey 16/20 “Good summary. Where does PE fit in your future?”
• Description of goals of the charity (1 page) • Description of the activities of the charity (1 page) • Summary of performance measures listed by AACAPC (1 page) • Summary of the workshop (1 ½ pages) • Statement of what she learned at the workshop and how she enjoyed it (1 para.) • References: 2—the class textbooks	Miri 16/20 “I am pleased this was a good experience”
• Discussion of the complexity of evaluation (1 para.) • Description of what her agency found easy and difficult at the workshop (1 para.) • Suggestion that a multi-layered rather than linear model is needed (1 para.) • Discussion of agencies’ problems and her suggestions to overcome them (1 page) • Reiteration of complexity of evaluation, supported by citations (1/2 page) • Discussion of agencies problems and her suggestions to over come them (1 page) • Critique of logic model and suggestions for improvement (1/2 page) • Discussion of what she learned and how she will use PE in future (1 page) • References: 6—the class textbooks and four other texts	Maya 20/20 “Interesting, substantive synthesis”

In reading Dr. Newman's comments on the previous table, we can see that she used the word "synthesis" in evaluating each of the papers that received a grade of 20/20. Furthermore, if we refer back to the description for this assignment, we see that the assignment was to be graded on 1) Critical observation and assessment, 2) Integration with course readings, 3) Judgment of lessons learned, 4) Appropriate grammar and correct APA format. In rereading these criteria, I find that points 1) and 3) are somewhat ambiguous, and were, in fact misinterpreted by Miri and Jacey, both of whom have less academic writing experience than the other students

In writing their "summary" papers, Jacey and Miri overemphasized "observation" while underemphasizing "critical." In fact, Jacey told me that she did not realize that the word "critical" was related to "criticize" and "critique." She had looked it up in the dictionary and found that it meant "important." Also, Miri and Jacey interpreted "Judgment of lessons learned" to mean only, "What did I learn?" While I believe the instructor did want to know what students learned, I expect she also wanted to know what the agencies learned, and how they could apply this knowledge. However, there were also other factors that negatively impacted Jacey's and Miri's performance in the summary paper, and this will become clearer when I refer to the students' interview discussion of the final assignments.

Textual Analysis of Business Letters

Just as they varied in their responses to the summary paper, the students also took diverse approaches to writing their business letters. Once again, I have summarized the features of their letters overleaf in Table 7 to facilitate comparison. Two weeks before the summary paper and business letter were due, at the students' request, Dr. Newman emailed the students rubrics, detailing how their work would be graded.

Table 7

Characteristics of the Business Letter	Name, Grade, and Instructor's Summative Comments.
• Paragraph about her pleasure in working with charities • Paragraph about the agency and its existing evaluation procedures • Paragraph complimenting the charity leadership but pointing out some of the evaluation problems it faces • Longer paragraph making 3 recommendations for evaluation improvement • Short paragraph thanking organization for the opportunity to help • Length 1 ½ pages	Rainbow 10/10 “Well done!”
• Short paragraph giving reason for letter • Paragraph about the interview, saying agency has good evaluation measures and is using them systematically • Paragraph identifying areas where evaluation could be improved • Paragraph recounting usefulness of logic model used at workshop and identifying some problems the agency mentioned at the workshop • In various paragraphs, 3 specific suggestions for improvement • Sentence expressing gratitude and good wishes • Length 1 page	Harry 10+/10 “You got it all in one page! Very nicely done!”
• Paragraph expressing gratitude for workshop and presenting what participants learned there • Paragraph critically analyzing the way the agencies do evaluation • 3 bulleted suggestions for improvement, and an offer of future assistance • Sentence expressing desire to help in future • Length 1 ½ pages	Jacey 9/10 “Excellent recommendations. Regarding grammar, watch prepositions, be careful to clarify referent”
• Paragraph expressing gratitude for workshop • Paragraph describing workshop activities, including logic model • Paragraph describing aims of agency and saying logic model is useful for them • Paragraph describing interview (conducted with another agency) and making 1 suggestion for improving performance • Sentence expressing gratitude and good wishes • Length 1 ½ pages	Miri 7/10 “Summarized evaluation & interview. Good suggestion regarding volunteers.”
• Paragraph giving reason for letter with bulleted points about 1) interview, 2) the workshop & 3) analysis of various documents • Paragraph complimenting the agency leadership and describing how they are currently implementing evaluation • Paragraph identifying areas where evaluation could be improved • Paragraph on agency's readiness to implement evaluation • 5 numbered suggestions for improving evaluation • Paragraph about importance of evaluation and ROI • Length 2 pages • Additional Feature: Creative letterhead design	Maya 10/10 “Creative. Could tighten organization.”

These rubrics were generally very similar to the guidelines given in the syllabus, but the rubric for the business letter was slightly different. It informed students that they would be graded on 1) meta analysis of agencies' readiness to implement an outcome assessment evaluation (5 points), 2) Recommendations to increase individual agencies and the organization's evaluation capacity (5 points), and 3) appropriate business style (0 points).

Unlike the guidelines for the summary paper, which were somewhat ambiguous, the guidelines for the business letter seem to be clearer. Dr. Newman was looking for analysis, recommendations, and appropriate style. With the exception of Miri's letter, this is generally what she received. In fact, I would argue that the students gave her more than she asked for, because in addition to including the analysis and suggestions, all of the students attempted to write letters that were also graceful and sincere. Miri's letter, once again, lost points because it was descriptive rather than analytical. Also, Miri made only one recommendation for improving performance, while the other students made at least three. Jacey also lost one point, and although this point was deducted from her grade on "meta analysis of agencies' readiness to implement an outcome assessment evaluation," I suspect, but cannot prove, that she really lost this point for the number of superficial errors on the letter. There was no allowance in the grading rubric for deduction of points for grammar errors, but the instructor's summative comment on the paper, "Regarding grammar, watch prepositions, be careful to clarify referent," indicates that these errors concerned her.

All in all, the students satisfied their instructor's expectations for writing the business letter. In fact, two of the business letters, Harry's and Maya's, were chosen, together with a third letter written by a US student, to be exemplars and were shared with the entire class. However,

despite the fact that the students mostly did well, they did have some difficulty completing this assignment, as I describe below.

Participants' Comments about the Summary Paper and Business Letter

Not Doing One's Best

Not all of the students found the two final assignments difficult to write. In reference to the summary paper, Rainbow reported that she had found it “too easy—it gives a lot of leeway to students.” She also reported that she had spent little time working on the paper and had, once again, written the paper at the last minute. Rainbow’s summary paper received a grade of 20/20, yet she was not satisfied with the paper she wrote or with her performance in the class.

Explaining that she usually high expectations for her own work, Rainbow felt that in this class she had not met those expectations. She told me that she had not put as much work into the class as she should have, and this she attributed to the fact that we missed two class sessions because the instructor had prior engagements elsewhere: “I started to become lazy and irresponsible. I know it's my problem, but I think it's a good idea to meet every week. . . . It was kind of a bad turning point.” Rainbow felt disappointed with her performance in this class in several respects: first of all, she had not kept up with the reading (more discussion on this point will follow in a later section); second, she had not put as much time or effort as usual into writing the assignments as she explains below:

I kind of did my final paper at the last minute. I had planned to finish my paper on Thanksgiving during the break, but . . . I had two papers due in that week and I'm sorry but I gave priority to [the other] paper. It [the summary paper] could have been a much better paper if I had done more research and if I had reviewed the textbooks I could have incorporated more readings, more discussions into the paper. That's what I had planned to do but I did not have the time to be honest.

Like Rainbow, Jacey reported that she had not met her own standards for her performance in the evaluation class, and she felt that the A grade she ultimately received was not

deserved. Jacey believed she had not put enough time into writing her summary paper and business letter. This was due to a number of factors as she explains:

During Thanksgiving, I have the flu and I have three big papers to write. . . . Because I feel very hard to write this one, I have made preparations for a B, so I didn't pay more attention on this. But for other classes, I [paid] more attention on those papers.

Because she found the summary paper difficult to write, she anticipated getting a low grade and made the pragmatic decision to focus her effort on other classes where she expected she would do better.

Understanding the Task and Meeting the Instructor's Expectations

For several students, the problem with the final assignments, especially with the summary paper, was understanding the instructor's expectations. Harry reported that the final assignment was an unusual one to him—he had never written one like it before—and he was unsure about how to tackle it. Rather than ask the professor for help he relied upon the guidelines in the course description and the rubrics that had been emailed, but he was still dubious about how to approach the final assignment, which he described as “a moving target.” Even after beginning writing he changed his mind about how to proceed: perhaps misled by the title of the paper (“Summary Paper”), he started by devoting much of his paper to summarizing the workshop. Then he thought that the professor would not want to receive identical summaries of the workshop from each student, so he condensed much of his summary and added his reflections on the experience. Seemingly, this change was a good one as he received a grade of 20/20 for this assignment.

Jacey also reported having difficulty knowing what to write for this paper, as she also found the guidelines unclear. Attempting to clarify them, she asked some of the native speaking students in the class, but they told her they also found the guidelines unclear. Finally, she

emailed Dr. Newman asking for clarification, and received this email message (sent to all the students) in response: “The bulk of the summary paper relates to your overall experience with the related agency(ies); the last part of the paper is the opportunity to do personal reflection about evaluation and its relationship to your future.” Despite this clarification, Jacey still found writing the summary paper arduous, especially when it came to meeting the required page length, because as she described, “five pages is not enough and she has too many requirements in such a small paper.”

Other students made similar comments: Harry and Maya, in particular, made strenuous efforts to meet the page length stipulated by the professor. They both found it extremely difficult to satisfy the guidelines for the final assignments within the required page limits (one page for the business letter, and five pages for the summary paper). The only way they were able to do so was by starting with a much longer paper and then cutting back. Harry describes this process below:

In order to summarize my paper, . . . I read through my three-page paper and [say] this should be included, and then I cut and paste, cut and paste, and [if] something is not quite relevant then I exclude it. Then I combine the rest of the sentences, I read through again and I change it or I revise it . . . Then I kind of combine the sentences and reduce adjectives and adverbs, those kind of things. So I try to make it shorter.

This was the process Harry went through to reduce his business letter, which was initially three pages long, to a one-page letter. Dr. Newman appreciated his efforts, noting on his paper and saying several times in class that she was glad he was able to write the letter in one page—he was in fact the only person to do so.

Maya went through a similar process to the one Harry described above to get her summary paper down to five pages. After she had written the paper she emailed me a copy of

her paper and the “outline” she had used to write it. The “outline” was a six-page, single-spaced document, and this she condensed to form the five-page, double-spaced paper she handed in.

The organization of Maya’s “outline” is based on the assignment guidelines listed in the syllabus and in the evaluation rubrics emailed two weeks before the assignment was due. She used each guideline as a heading, and listed various bulleted points below each heading. In making her “outline,” Maya explained the process that she went through:

I put the rubric on one side, and whatever I was reading, I would only take out stuff that I thought would meet something of the rubric, so that's how I strategized because otherwise I didn't know what else to put in there because I had a lot to say, but I knew I had to say it in a defined amount of space.

Working from the course guidelines and rubrics helped to keep her on track. In fact, Maya made extensive use of the course guidelines and rubric referring to them repeatedly as she wrote:

I really wanted to make sure that I read the criteria, the very little that she had given, over and over again, but I made sure that when I wrote it that repetitiveness would give me some way of making sure that I would include that, given that the paper was only, like, five pages long, it was a little difficult to write.

In this way, Maya was able to write a summary paper and business letter of the correct length.

She was also aided by her familiarity with the form of the business letter. Harry, however, had never written an American business letter before and found it a difficult task.

Conflicting Genres: American and Korean Business Letters

What made the business letter so difficult for Harry to write was the way in which the genre of an American business letter differs from that of a Korean business letter. While such letters in the US tend to be direct and straight to the point, in Korea they are less so, as Harry explains below:

For me it [an American business letter] is very bold, compared with Korean style. When we write a business letter, we always put some kind of greetings in introduction—not, actually not closely related to what I want to put in the letter: “Hope the weather is fine. I hope you enjoy this beautiful weather or I hope you don’t have any problem with this rain

shower.” [Or] “We have lots of snow, so I hope you and your family like the snow this winter season.” In case of American style they only focus on what they want to say and that’s all of the letter, but Korean style, we just have some kind of introduction part. And then smoothly transition to official things, but in America, no.

This cultural difference between appropriate letter-writing style, coupled with the one-page limit, made this assignment a challenging one for Harry.

“Not a Student, Just a Listener”

Miri also had difficulties with the final assignments. As they required talking about personal experiences, she could not rely on other sources, but, with no academic or work background in evaluation and no real interest in the subject, she had understood little of the content of the class, and felt incapable of writing a good paper or of making any significant contribution to the class. It was difficult for me to even get her to talk about the paper, except briefly, but she was willing to talk about how miserably inadequate she felt in class:

Yeah, a little bit difficult because I don't know what to write [nervous laugh]. It's not a language problem, it's just, you know. I'm not familiar with this field and not very interested in it, so I just . . . when I try to write it I feel kind of lost because I don't know what to say.

At the time she said these words, Miri had just received her grade for her participation in the workshop, a disappointing 15/20. However, even more damning than the grade were the professor’s comments on her workshop participation and business letter (grade, 7/10), as Miri describes below:

I wrote in the letter that I had a very good experience [at the workshop] and she said, “I'm glad that you had a good experience,” you know—because I didn't contribute too much, so she didn't mention about the contribution. She didn't mention about the contents of the letter.

The instructor’s omission of any comment about Miri’s contribution was very evident to Miri. In comparing the evaluation class to two other classes she was taking, Miri’s final comment about the class is poignant and telling:

I can participate more the other two classes, but in Dr. Newman's class I feel like I am not a student in that classroom—I am just a listener.

Miri had so many factors working against her in Dr. Newman's class. Arriving two weeks after the semester began, she was placed into the evaluation class simply because there were places available. She did not know until too late that she had no interest in the class, nor did she have relevant business or academic experience to draw upon to help her out. Throughout our interviews, I got the impression that there were two Miris: the quiet, withdrawn one who answered my questions about the class in monosyllables, and the engaging free-spirited one who told me about her travels, her friends, her family and her other classes, with interest and enthusiasm.

Feedback on Written Assignments

Some students expressed disappointment was in the amount and quality of the feedback they received on their assignments. To Rainbow, disappointment with feedback on her written work was nothing new, as she reported experiencing this throughout her coursework (with one exception). However, at the time of data collection, Rainbow was particularly keen to receive feedback on her writing because she was about to start work on her dissertation.

Another thing I had expected is comments on my writing skills. I think it's kind of unique because it's my third year, and I wanted to improve my writing skills, but really instructors do not provide that. Maybe I'm the only one in the class to bring this up because I'm very, very eager to improve my writing skills at this point . . . so I think it would be nice if they could provide some comments on students' writing skills because we are expected to at least publish something.

Rainbow was unhappy with the comments on her summary paper and business letter, not because they were bad, but because they were all complimentary! She reasoned that she could not improve her writing unless she received more critical feedback.

Harry, too, was disappointed in the amount of feedback he received on his paper, and this was an area he had found lacking throughout his coursework. The comments on Harry's last two assignments were all very positive, and he found them to be fairly representative of the comments made by instructors in his department. However, like Rainbow, Harry wanted to receive constructive criticism rather than praise:

I think it [the feedback on his summary paper and business letter] is typical feedback for my department. Many students get that kind of positive feedback from faculty members, but actually I don't like that kind of feedback. I don't want to get kind of superficial positive feedback, but some substantive feedback—even though it is negative or it hurts me—that kind of thing is really helpful for my future work.

Harry, too, was about to start work on his dissertation; consequently, he would have preferred to receive more critical feedback about how he could improve his writing:

Textbook Troubles

By the end of the semester, I had interviewed all of the students in the evaluation class, and to my astonishment all of them reported doing very little reading in the required textbooks, especially in the Rossi textbook. In fact, in response to my question, "What advice would you give a friend who is taking this class?" most students, both US and international, replied, "Don't buy the textbook." I believe that the students' failure to read the textbook led to a general lack of engagement in the class that permeated throughout all aspects of the course, including their writing. Why, however, were they not reading the texts when they had all gone to considerable expense to buy them?

There are two answers to this question. First, the students were not reading because they were almost never required to show evidence of having read in class. Dr. Newman just assumed that the students were reading; in fact in her syllabus she stated. "Class discussions will assume that readings have been done"; however, she never held students accountable for doing the

reading. Second, one of the textbooks, Rossi, the lengthier of the two, was inaccessible, jargon-filled, and almost completely opaque to those who had little or no experience in evaluation. In reading this text, I often had the experience of reading an entire chapter and then being unable to say what the chapter had been about. Only Harry, the one student in the class who had extensive experience in evaluation, reported reading this textbook and finding it useful, but even he described it as “very dry.” I found negative comments about the reading, especially about the Rossi textbook, in all of the interviews, but the following comment (quoted earlier) best sums up the problems the students had with it:

I just don't understand the language, it's maybe that's their jargon, there's some jargon, that's the style of writing in the field of evaluation, but I still am not used to that kind of writing style and that language—the wording maybe.

However, the students' harshest criticism was that they saw no connection between the class discussion, the readings, and the assignments (although this may seem unfair as most of them were not doing the reading). The students felt that in this class there was no motivation for them to read the textbooks, as they were not being held accountable for doing so. They largely justified this comment by saying that as graduate students they were very busy and had to allocate their time where it was most needed, as the following comments show:

I stopped reading and I have not found that to be detrimental in the class. I mean, as a graduate student I'm pretty busy, and I realize that this is a corner I can cut, I'm going to cut it. Because I'm not seeing the relationship between the reading—I'm not seeing her make us think critically about what we are reading and then apply that to our work or any of that stuff—I'm not seeing any of that stuff, so it just meant, like I am wasting my time going to that class prepared. . . . We didn't have to [read]. Really we weren't getting evaluated on it. Unless you're really interested in the subject you won't read it

I don't think I made much connection between writing the paper and the discussions, although I—Dr. Newman gave me five points for that—I did not make the connections.

The following comment from Harry is particularly telling, considering that he was the only student in the class who did all the reading. He recognizes that he was the only student in the class who was motivated to do so:

The reading is not related to the assignments and also it is not related to the classroom discussion. . . . It's very interesting because even though I read some chapters for that week, we talk about different things, which is not related to the readings. If I wasn't motivated to attend class because of my special interest, I have no reason to read textbook; it is so time consuming. Without that, who is going to read the textbook without special specific interest about evaluation?

Expectations for the Class

Four out of five students in this study completed the class with an 'A' grade (Miri made a 'B'). In that respect, then, they were successful students. Yet most of the students, with the exception of Harry, felt that their expectations for the evaluation class had not been met; however, they generally held themselves responsible for the mismatch between their expectations and their performance in class.

Rainbow, by failing to put as much work into the class as she felt she should have, had not lived up to her own expectations. Jacey, who was overwhelmed with assignments from other classes, had made the decision to put less time into her work on the evaluation class. Miri, had expected the class to be far more accessible (as there were no prerequisites) and reported that she felt quite lost in class. Maya was also disappointed, though her reasons were rather different. Despite the fact that she had crafted her assignments to align with her theoretical and epistemological perspectives, she felt that there was a fundamental clash between her own epistemology and the prevailing epistemology of the classroom.

Harry was the only student whose expectations for the class were not disappointed. Unlike all the other students in the class, he professed a strong interest in the class content and had worked hard in class. He also had an external motivation for studying the class materials:

during the semester I observed, he was writing his prospectus and had been able to use some of the class readings to help him write. Because of his genuine interest and his external motivation, he had worked hard and had conscientiously read all the required readings.

Revisiting the Research Questions

How do these students' experiences in the program evaluation course address the research questions in the study? In the following section, I revisit the research questions, most of which have been addressed throughout this chapter, and summarize findings.

1) Given that learning is fundamentally a social process (Vygotsky, 1978), what opportunities for social learning of written genres do international graduate students experience?

Three of the students in the program evaluation class experienced opportunities for social learning, in other words, learning through interaction with others. Rainbow experienced learning through interaction with a professor and with her advisor. Harry experienced learning through interaction with me as his writing tutor, and Jacey experienced learning through interaction with her classmates and with her instructors. On the other hand, Maya did not describe many opportunities for learning through social interaction while in graduate school, and Miri described no experiences of learning through social interaction.

1.a) What opportunities do international graduate students have to experience the zone of proximal development (ZPD)?

Rainbow and Harry both reported opportunities for working in the zone of proximal development, Rainbow with her advisor, and Harry with me as his writing tutor. These opportunities, as they described them, were valuable learning experiences that were very beneficial to their writing. Jacey did not describe experiences of learning in the ZPD; rather than learning through intense interaction with one individual such as her advisor, she described more

numerous experiences of interaction with her classmates. Maya had experienced working in the ZPD as an undergraduate and had experienced mentoring from one of her graduate professors, but this mentoring took the experience of directed reading rather than direct interaction. In other words, if Maya experienced learning in the ZPD, it was mediated through the texts her professor directed her to read and reflect upon. Miri reported no experiences of learning in the ZPD.

1.b) How does social interaction impact international graduate students' involvement in their discourse communities, especially in terms of the writing they produce?

For Rainbow and Harry, interaction with their advisors had led to collaboration on manuscripts they plan to submit for publication. In addition, Rainbow collaborated with her advisor to write several successful conference proposals. Harry, too, had written successful conference proposals, but he had written them alone. It is likely that Rainbow's and Harry's first publications will be the papers they wrote in collaboration with their advisors. In this respect, interaction with advisors had an important impact on their deeper involvement in their discourse communities.

Jacey and Miri as master's students who do not plan to pursue doctoral degrees were not concerned with becoming involved in the academic discourse community. Consequently, their discourse community was narrower: it was confined to the level of their courses, and the only academic writing they did, or planned to do, was for these courses. While social interaction with classmates did facilitate Jacey's writing for her course assignments, it did not play a role outside of the courses they took. Miri, on the other hand, reported no social interaction in writing her class papers.

Maya's involvement in her discourse community was not facilitated by social interaction. In fact, her interaction with her advisor was conflictual rather than beneficial in terms of her

writing, and she stated that it would be extremely unlikely that she would ever collaborate with her advisor for purposes of publication. However, despite this somewhat problematic relationship, Maya had already written several successful conference proposals and was optimistic about being published even without collaborating with her advisor.

2) *How can concepts from Bakhtin's theories such as dialogism, heteroglossia, and addressivity be used to explain the reading and writing practices of international students at an American university?*

In her intense engagement with her readings in which she interrogates and even argues with the text, Maya instantiates Bakhtin's notions of dialogism and addressivity. Rainbow, on the other hand, shows evidence of dialogic reading in her writing and in her reflections on the notion of plagiarism. Almost echoing Bakhtin's words, she explained, "Of course everyone borrows things from others' words." She knows one way we respond to reading is by borrowing the words we have read. Harry also reported experiences of dialogic and reflective reading. In his writing he, too, tries to incorporate the words and phrases of others he has read. By doing so, he is expanding his contextual knowledge of vocabulary and increasing his idiomatic knowledge of English. He also mentioned reading and reflecting on others' ideas and they trying to reconceptualize or synthesize these ideas in his own writing. Moreover, in his consistent attempts to match his writing to the context of his courses, he shows his awareness of the critical factor in heteroglossia, context.

Jacey and Miri, who had so much less academic experience than the other three students, did not report experiences of dialogic reading, indicating, perhaps, that the concept of dialogic reading is more relevant at the doctoral level where students must engage deeply with the readings of their disciplines. Although she did draw on her readings to write, Jacey reported

drawing more deeply on her own work experience, and Miri, by cutting and pasting her midterm paper from texts written by others, did not attempt to make those words her own. Rather than appropriate others' words into her own writing, she lifted them wholesale.

2.a) What role does the classroom context—the instructor, the discourse, the practices, and the assigned readings—play in shaping the students' expectations and in facilitating or hindering the writing international graduate students produce for the class?

The instructor is always the primary influence in the students' learning (Hall, 1998) and it is she who designs and orchestrates the other elements in the classroom context. In the present class, I believe the instructor's background as an administrator was a major influence in her requirements for the written assignments for the class. Rather than the long, fully elaborated papers that are common in graduate school, she required brevity and synthesis. This was one factor that did not match with most of the students' expectations for the written assignments.

Several students reported that either that they failed to meet their own expectations for the class or that the class failed to meet their expectations. One factor in this disappointment of expectations is the lack of connection the students perceived between class discussion, the assigned readings, and the written assignments. In many classes I have taken in graduate school, the assigned readings, the class discussion, and the written assignments are interconnected and interdependent, but this was not the case in the program evaluation class. In short, two major components of the classroom context, the assigned readings and the class discussion, were not reflected in the students' writing, and this, I believe, led to a disappointment of the students' expectations, though it did not hinder the students' writing, at least not in terms of the grades they received.

2b) What centripetal and centrifugal forces impact the students' abilities to meet their own expectations and those of their instructors?

There were two centrifugal forces in this classroom that negatively impacted the students' abilities to meet their own expectations and, to a lesser extent, those of their professor. The first and least serious of these were the unfamiliar genres of the written assignments. The written assignments, especially the end of the semester assignments, required a fusion of business and academic genres. The instructor wanted the rigor and analysis of academic writing combined with the brevity and synthesis of business writing. This mixed genre was unfamiliar to several of the students and may have exerted a centrifugal force, throwing them away from the instructor's requirements.

The major centrifugal force in the classroom, however, was one of the assigned textbooks, Rossi. Rather than act as a centripetal force bringing the students and instructor together in shared understanding, it acted as a centrifugal force in that its dense, jargon-filled prose deterred most of the students from reading and propelled them away from the demands of the classroom rather than pulling them closer.

3) As novices gain expertise through participation in their communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), what factors influence international graduate students' deeper involvement in their communities of practice?

For the doctoral students in particular, two features influenced their deeper involvement in their communities of practice: 1) collaboration and mentorship with an advisor and 2) dialogic and reflective reading of the work of others in the community of practice. For Rainbow, collaboration and mentorship with her advisor were the major influences in her participation in her community of practice, as they facilitated her writing of conference proposals and

manuscripts. For Harry, collaboration with and advisor also led to the production of a manuscript, although Harry did not report the same mentoring opportunities described by Rainbow; instead, he reported deeper involvement in his community of practice through reading the work of important authors in his field.

For Maya, interaction with texts rather than with her advisor is the means through which she participates more deeply in her community or practice. However, in Maya's case the notion of community of practice is more problematic. On a global level, Maya has participated in a community or practice through presenting papers at conferences, but on the local level or departmental level, Maya's community of practice is, in her own words, "very fragmented." This may, however, be due to the unique nature of her field; while all the graduate students and instructors in her small department have a methodological paradigm in common—qualitative research—they have diverse research interests and theoretical perspectives. This diversity may serve to fragment the local community of practice rather than draw it together. Thus, in Maya's case, the notion of legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice is inadequate to explain the complexity of her situation. In effect, Maya is trying to participate simultaneously in two communities of practice with conflicting epistemologies and theoretical perspectives—the fields of qualitative inquiry and postmodernism. If she is to make a meaningful contribution to both of these fields with their very different theoretical perspectives and genres of writing, she may have to develop a kind of theoretical schizophrenia.

CHAPTER VI

INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Students' Writing Histories

Julie

Julie comes from Malaysia and is a second-year educational psychology student in a combined master's/doctoral program. She has a personality I would describe as friendly, self-confident, and relaxed. During class, she often sat next to the instructor and seemed quite comfortable asking and answering questions. In doing so, she drew on her own experience and illustrated her points by telling stories about her nephews and nieces. Julie's first language is Mandarin (though she also speaks Malay, and Cantonese) and having grown up in Malaysia, which was once a British colony, she had considerable experience of learning English before coming to the US. Julie transferred to an American university mid-way through her undergraduate studies, and she completed a bachelor's degree in psychology at a Mid-Western university. Her fairly extensive experience with English, coupled with her engaging and outgoing personality, meant that she seemed comfortable both speaking and writing in English.

Writing Through Interaction with Others

Julie reported having many opportunities for learning to write academic English, and, compared to most of the students in her class, seemed well prepared to do the writing required for her graduate classes. As an undergraduate psychology major in her Mid-Western university, she had the opportunity to do two complete research studies for which she conducted experiments and wrote up the findings in the form of empirical journal articles (unpublished);

she described these as her best learning experiences as an undergraduate. Julie reported working closely with her instructors on these projects; thus, from a Vygotskian perspective, they were ideal learning experiences as Julie had the opportunity to learn while interacting with an expert in a goal directed activity (Wertsch, 1991, 1998). Julie would have many more such experiences in graduate school.

In her undergraduate degree, in addition to seeking and obtaining help from her professors, Julie also sought help from friends (both native and non-native speaking) and from writing tutors. She said that she regularly visited the university's learning center as an undergraduate, especially when writing for her 101 and 102 English composition classes. However, during her master's degree she seldom did so, mostly because it was difficult to find an appointment when she needed one, but also because in her graduate program all of her writing is in her content area (psychology), and when writing about her field she feels more self-confident and more proficient (Johns, 1990; Leki, 1995, 2001; Leki and Carson, 1997).

Relationship with Major Professor

The person with whom Julie describes her closest working relationship is her major professor, who has influenced many aspects of her reading and writing practices. First, her major professor always make sure that her writing "flows" according to the form of the typical empirical journal article. Second, her advisor gave her explicit guidance on her reading practices:

I have to meet with her [her major professor] regularly, and the way we do is that I will be reading and she always makes sure that I'm not only just reading and then toss the article away, but also write down my thoughts and put it all into one piece, and that's how I develop my research proposal Reading articles kind of forms the whole introduction part of the paper and also the whole theoretical framework. It is not possible to write a research article without the reading.

Julie's advisor encouraged a dialogic approach to reading that contrasts with Julie's reading practice as an undergraduate (trying to remember what she read, without writing it down). With

her advisor's encouragement, Julie began writing in response to her reading. As a result, her reading has become more dialogic and also more responsive. The above passage shows that Julie is now reading with writing in mind; thus as she reads, she is already envisioning her written response (Bakhtin, 1981). Julie's adviser also made a practical suggestion about how Julie can keep her readings organized and retrieve the information when she needs it: she recommended typing all the bibliographical information and short abstracts of the readings into EndNote bibliographic software—a suggestion Julie found useful as she has difficulty keeping her readings organized.

Julie, like Rainbow, emphasized just how critical it is to have a good relationship with one's advisor:

I think that's very important in supporting a graduate student. If you don't like, if you don't get along with your advisor, I don't think you should continue. You might as well just switch, go to another school, find somebody you can get along with because there's so much time that you spend with that person.

Julie meets with her advisor “at least once a week” and during that time they talk about various ideas for research and work in progress. In fact, as is often the case, this relationship is an important one not only in terms of learning support, but also in terms of financial support: Julie's research assistantship is funded by her advisor's grant money, and her advisor has already “written her into” a grant proposal to continue to the research next year. Julie hopes to be able to work on her advisor's funded research projects throughout graduate school.

Another important form of support Julie's advisor provides is affective. Julie says she “sometimes feels kind of isolated” in the applied cognition track of her educational psychology program, and she has often wondered if she would feel more at home in a psychology department. As her interest is in cognition, not in education per se, she finds it a struggle to write about educational implications when writing research papers. What keeps her in the educational

psychology department is her advisor, whose research interests are very similar to her own and whom she describes as “very understanding, just great.” Julie’s comments about her advisor are consistent with the findings of Belcher’s (1994) and Dong’s (1995) studies, which found that a good relationship with one’s advisor is essential for success in graduate school. However, although she learned a great deal from her advisor, Julie also reported learning a great deal from another resource that she considered invaluable in improving her writing: the *American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual* (hereafter, the APA Manual).

APA: A Centripetal Force

Most students in the social sciences are familiar with the APA Manual as a style guide that determines the form of references and citations; Julie is the first student I have met who has read it from cover to cover. Her frequent references to this manual indicate that it exerted a considerable centripetal force on her writing, pushing her to conform to its own preferred styles and genres. However, Julie did not feel constrained by the APA Manual; rather she thought it provided a framework and support essential to an inexperienced writer: “In terms of professional writing in my field, [if you] start with nothing, having that guideline [the APA Manual] is probably helpful.”

It is also important to note that to a psychology student, the APA Manual exerts a greater authority than to other social scientists, as it is published by the most important professional organization in the field of psychology, the American Psychological Association. In effect, the American Psychological Association and its manual represent to Julie what Bakhtin (1981) termed authoritative discourse: it “demands our unconditional allegiance,” and it permits “no play with its borders, no gradual and flexible transitions, no spontaneously creative stylizing variants on it; rather it is indissolubly fused with its authority” (p.343). After studying and

writing in the field of psychology for several years, Julie believed that the APA style of writing had become a kind of default mode of thinking about writing:

I have to follow [laughs] the rules and I think to me now it's become like a way of writing. It's not just professional guidelines but it's also the way that I write, the way that I organize my points, so I think that it's a very big impact. I just kind of automatically switch on with the APA thing, and that is my own mental rubric.

Julie's frequent references to the APA style manual became more understandable when I found that she had taken a research methods class as an undergraduate in which it had been used as the textbook. However, this text continued to exert a considerable influence on her writing in graduate school. When I asked her to tell me about the characteristics of good writing in her field, she gave the following response:

Definitely good logical flow, there's a good theoretical background leads into the research questions, and mmm, a complete reasonable literature review, and if it's a research article, it will lead into the methodology, the reason why the research is done. And then good analysis—clear analysis—and at the end good discussion and definitely addressing the limitation of the research and giving future directions. That's good writing I think.

In a later interview, when I asked her to reflect on this description, she told me, “When I was talking about those things, in my mind I'm thinking about APA guidelines!”

Julie also offered another suggestion for the importance of the APA Manual in her writing: she attributed it to her status as a non-native speaker of English. When she sometimes struggled to find ways to write her paper that were appropriate to her field, she found guidance in the APA Manual:

In the APA guidelines they have in the beginning terms of how to phrase your sentences, something like that, and I guess for a lot of English writers they don't have to go through those guidelines, but for me I think it was a brand new learning thing for me, so I really tried to use those guidelines. If you look at the APA Manual, it's a lot of, um, English writing skills guidelines in there. So I think if you get that manual it's very important.

Julie's comments show that style manuals such as the APA can exert an irresistible centripetal force. Lander (2000) pointed out that "style conventions encode and decode storytelling in the university" and also mentions that there are "graduate student thesis-writers who . . . resist writing their research story according to the rigours of the style manual" (p.10). One example of a student who resisted the style required by his program is Nate in Berkenkotter et al.'s study (1988), who found the style required from him in the social sciences conflicted with that which he was accustomed to in the liberal arts. Richardson (1997) also bemoaned the strictures of APA style because "how we are expected to write affects what we can write about" (p.42-43). Bazerman (1987) analyzed the APA Publication Manual and found that its behaviorist underpinnings were reflected throughout its guidelines. For Julie, however, the APA Manual was a useful scaffold that served to structure and support her writing.

Writing Under Time Constraints

The one factor that Julie reported as negatively impacting her writing was the need to write within time constraints. That writing in a second language requires more time than writing in a first language is generally well documented in ESL research (see Silva, 1993 for a review). Julie believed that, compared to her native-speaking classmates, she needed more time in order to write well and described herself as a "very slow writer" when writing in English. She had often taken classes that required the writing of in-class exams, and under these circumstances, she felt acutely pressured by time constraints: "You have to be able to pull up the information and write it in a way that makes sense and integrate everything in a task situation that makes it very difficult with the time limits." Fortunately, though, she found that her instructors were generally willing to accommodate her need for extra time to various degrees—some gave her an extra half hour and others gave her unlimited time to write. The class I observed had two in-

class exams; two weeks before the first exam, my field notes record Julie's indirect request for extra time:

Julie: Are we going to write the midterm in 50 minutes? It's a challenge.

Instructor: Yes, but I will make sure that it's doable in that time.

Julie: Is it possible to bring a laptop and type it?

Instructor: I don't want to do that because I want it to be the same for everyone.

Julie: The stress level is really up [pause while she looks plaintively at the instructor who seems to be trying to avoid her gaze].

Instructor: Does everyone have a free period either before or after class? If so, I would be willing to allow everyone an extra half hour either before or after class.

Although the above exchange seems fairly innocuous, I believe it took considerable force of character for Julie to persist, in front of all her classmates, in her negotiation for more time, especially given the instructor's initial unfavorable response. This negotiation had a positive outcome for Julie: The entire class was given 90 minutes to write instead of the fifty minutes that were originally assigned, and Julie used every minute of her extra time, staying behind after her classmates had left. Another favorable result of this negotiation was Julie's grade on the midterm exam; at 99% it was the highest grade in the class. Julie's successful negotiation for extra time paid off, but a student with less interpersonal communication skills or less force of character might easily have backed down. Julie, however, as an active participant in the class had the agency to persist in her request for the time she knew she needed to do well.

Sooyoung

Sooyoung comes from Korea and is also a second year educational psychology student in a master's/PhD program. Sooyoung and Julie are also roommates. Unlike Julie, Sooyoung reported having few opportunities for speaking or writing English before entering her graduate

program. Sooyoung describes herself as shy, and tended to speak slowly and quietly during class; however, she did not allow her shyness to prevent her from participating in class, and, like Julie she drew on personal examples to make her points in class. Her classmates, realizing that Sooyoung's comments were insightful and to the point, listened attentively when she spoke in class.

Writing American Style

Sooyoung's experiences of learning English in Korea were typical of those reported by many Korean students (Chang, 2003; Park, 2000). Although she studied English in school for several years, her studies focused mainly on grammar and vocabulary, and she had few opportunities to speak or write English. Before entering her combined masters/PhD program in school psychology, she studied at an intensive English program (IEP) for a year, and it was there that she first learned about American essay-writing style and how it differed from the style she had been accustomed to in Korea. In fact her comments about these differences are very similar to those reported by Harry in the previous chapter. Sooyoung believed that the differences between American and Korean style arose from different thinking styles:

It's also related to the different thinking style. In America, you guys say, we should put the main thing at the top and then add some specific examples, but in Korea—not only in Korea—I talk about this issue with other Asian friends in [the IEP], and I think we usually put the main idea at the end of the paragraph, so it's different, but I like better the English writing style.

Another difference she noticed between writing in Korea and in the US was that writing seemed to be considered more important in the US:

Here you guys have a culture of how to write—what's the logical writing. I was taught about that in [the IEP], but I think in Korea we do emphasize writing, but compared to the American school system, we do not emphasize writing that much.

However, neither the organizational differences between Korean and American writing nor the fact that writing is emphasized more in the US than in Korea seemed to cause Sooyoung too much difficulty. On the contrary, when she understood the “rules” of American writing style she felt they were logical and easy to follow:

It’s very clear. The rules of the writing help me understand and write better. In some sense, in a good way, it sounds mechanical. There are logical rules, so all I have to is just follow the rules, just put the main thing and then add some examples, like that. So I think I like that style.

While Sooyoung liked American writing style, she still encountered some difficulties when she began writing in graduate school, and, like Julie, one problem she had was the length of time she needed in order to write well.

“I’m losing my everything”

Lack of time is a common theme that runs throughout Sooyoung’s interviews, sometimes in reference to writing, and sometimes in reference to managing the many tasks she has as a busy graduate student. Like Julie, Sooyoung believed that she needed a lot of time to write well in English. As a result, she much preferred take-home exams to in-class exams:

When I have in class tests, I feel pressured because of the writing, because the time is limited, and I have to make sentences and the sentences should be making sense. So when I take take-home exams, I feel more relieved, but still, I’m trying to be perfect with my sentences, and I want my professor to understand my writing, so it takes forever.

The semester during which I collected data was a particularly busy one for Sooyoung. She was taking four classes and a practicum that was extremely time-consuming. In addition, she was working on two book chapters to submit for publication and also had to work 13 hours a week for her assistantship. No wonder, then, when talking about how busy she was, she exclaimed, “I’m losing my everything!” Her extreme busyness had an impact on both her reading and her writing for the class I observed. She admitted that she had skipped some of the class readings

(something she would never normally do), and that, rather than finish her work ahead of time (her normal practice), she would sometimes have to work all night in order to finish in time. She also said that she had had to learn to multitask in order to complete all her various projects on time. In terms of her writing, Sooyoung felt that the many demands on her time had taught her a lesson she needed to learn: that she could not always be perfect:

I think I overcame my unrealistic wish for myself. I thought I just wanted to be perfect about everything, so when I see that I made a mistake, okay people think my writing was not good, I just got very frustrated but I kinda overcame that kind of unrealistic wish and I now see what I'm good at and what I'm not.

Ultimately, Sooyoung believed that this was one of her most significant semesters, as she reflects in the passage below:

I think I did a good job, and I think I learned how to handle several things at the same time. When I looked back on the last semester it was really productive, and I think I won't forget this semester, even after graduation, but also I think I don't want to live that way [laughs]. But, still I keep myself busy enough to be stimulated.

I believe that what enabled Sooyoung to look back so positively on a semester she sometimes described as “hell” was her increasing engagement and collaboration with peers, with her advisor, and with others in her department. In Lave and Wenger's terms (1991), through her increasing legitimate peripheral participation with her community, Sooyoung was beginning to feel more and more like a member of that community.

Collaboration in the Academic Discourse Community

Sooyoung, like Julie, reported many opportunities for collaboration with others in her community of practice. One significant aspect of her collaboration was that it afforded her opportunities to learn through doing, and to get feedback on her work from experts. Sooyoung believed that in order to improve her writing, she needed practice and explicit feedback:

I think I need personal feedback, like not a general thing. I need some person who can read my paper and give me feedback—very specific ones—with some explanations. Like

why this wording is not correct, because I don't think I have the sense of choosing the right words. So I think I need personal feedback to improve my writing.

In her first year of graduate school, before she developed close working relationships with faculty in her department, Sooyoung sought this kind of feedback in the Learning Center, where I had occasionally worked with her as a writing tutor¹¹. However, after the first year, I seldom saw Sooyoung in the Learning Center. During the semester I collected data, Sooyoung did ask me to read and comment on some of the research she was working on (a conference proposal and part of a chapter she was co-authoring), but by this time in her academic career, she had learned that she could also get valuable feedback from her advisor and from her collaborators, and these opportunities were, in my estimation, much more valuable learning experiences because she was able to learn from experts in her field.

Like Rainbow and Julie, Sooyoung had a close and productive working relationship with her advisor who seemed to respect and value her work. He told her, she admitted with some embarrassment, that she was “one of the most excellent students in the program.” She has worked closely with her advisor on several projects such as book chapters and research proposals, and she described how they worked together as follows: “We kind of discuss, and then I write, and then I give my draft to him, and he reads it and makes comments on it, but I guess, sometimes when he finds mistakes he corrects it but mainly it is about content, and then I revise it.” The activities Sooyoung describes resemble Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1978) in which a novice and an expert work together to accomplish a task the novice might be unable to accomplish alone. Another point that makes Sooyoung's collaboration with her advisor so valuable a learning experience is their joint attention and shared goal (creating a publishable text), which are characteristics that have been found especially to be

¹¹ My records indicate that I worked with her 6 times approximately two years ago.

facilitative to learning (Wertsch, 1991, 1998). However, what Sooyoung's situation adds to the ZPD is a sense of agency: Although she is the novice, it is she who does most of the work in writing the text, and though her advisor scaffolds her learning, I expect that she will soon reach the stage where she can work independently, if she has not already done so.

Sooyoung's relationship with her advisor is not the only productive working relationship in which she was involved during the semester under observation. She was also working on a psychology practicum, for which she was required to write psychology reports on the children she evaluated. Writing a psych report required learning to write in a genre that differed considerably from the genres she was accustomed to (for example writing literature reviews and empirical articles in APA style). Fortunately, as ample opportunities for feedback were built into the process of writing the report, this was another good learning experience for her. Before the final report was written each student would write two or three drafts, each of which would be given to the supervisor who would provide feedback to be incorporated into the final draft. At the end of the semester, Sooyoung was glad to find that her supervisor told her that her writing was as good as the American students in the class. Based on my own experience of reading her writing, I suspect it may have been better.

Given the productive opportunities for tutoring, legitimate peripheral participation, and mentorship described above it is not surprising that Sooyoung described this semester as "stimulating, exciting, and productive." Both she and Julie have excellent relationships with their advisors, and, as they enter their third year of graduate school they are showing evidence of the "deep participation" (Lave and Wenger, 1991) that we would hope to find in graduate students in doctoral programs. In Prior's terms, their "trajectories of participation" (1998), show them to be fully engaged in their programs, and this engagement is shown in their participation

in the wider academic community through publication and presentations at conferences. The case of the third student in this class is very different.

Inna

Inna, a native Russian speaker, was in her first semester of a combined master's/doctoral program in developmental psychology. I would describe her nature as lively, intensely curious, and rebellious. Inna's situation is different from that of the other students in the study in one respect: she has a two-year-old son, and thus has additional demands upon her time. During the semester of data collection, and throughout the following semester, I spent more time with Inna than with any other student, so I have had many opportunities to hear about her experiences in her first semester of graduate school. Throughout the last two semesters, she and I have become good friends.

Inna attended a high school that had a special track for students wanting to learn English. As a result, from the age of fourteen, she studied English more intensively than the other students in this study. After completing her high school at age 17, she came to the US on an exchange program and completed the senior year in a US high school. After going home briefly, she returned to the US to do a bachelor's degree in psychology at a north-eastern university. She has since married an American citizen, and she plans to stay in the US indefinitely.

Moving from Undergraduate to Graduate School

In describing her experiences of academic writing as an undergraduate student, Inna reported few difficulties. Like all the other students in this study, she found her first year of writing in America to be challenging, but for Inna (like Julie), this challenge took place during her undergraduate degree. During her first year in college, though, "Everything was challenging!" She had to work with a dictionary by her side both to improve her vocabulary and

to check her spelling, but by the end of her undergraduate degree, she felt she had had gained a lot of experience in writing and started her first semester in graduate school feeling fairly confident about her ability to write the genre of academic English required for her psychology classes.

Like Julie and Sooyoung, Inna felt a greater sense of self-efficacy when writing papers in her own major as she describes below:

I feel pretty comfortable in writing psychology papers because it's something, after you've been reading a lot of psychology literature, it's kinda easy flow for me. I don't really have problems with writing although I do have to use dictionary occasionally.

However, although she felt reasonably confident about her writing in psychology, Inna started her graduate program with no clear idea of the kind of writing she would have to do later in her graduate career. Near the beginning of her first semester, she asked me how long my dissertation was likely to be. When I replied that it would probably be at least 200 pages, she was shocked, saying, "I thought it would be about 12 pages! Whatever can you write about us that would take so many pages?" I was somewhat startled by her response, but, upon reflection, I realized that at the beginning of my master's degree, I, too, had no conception of what writing a dissertation would entail. Rose and McClafferty (2001) pointed out that new graduate students may be unfamiliar with the conventions of their fields; like many first-semester graduate students, Inna was unsure about what was expected from her in terms of the writing she would produce and the texts she would read, but she was excited about the prospect of "learning something new that she had never knew before."

Arguing with the Text

Many scholars have argued that reading and producing texts is what graduate school is all about (Berkenkotter et al. 1994, Swales, 1991, Hyland 2000). Throughout this dissertation, I

have asserted that dialogic reading is especially important for graduate students who are required to take up a critical stance in relation to the texts they read. What happens, though, if this stance is perceived as being too critical? Should a student be free to express her criticism in class? Are some ways of expressing criticism more acceptable than others? Inna had several bones of contention with the required reading for the course I observed. First, she was disappointed that much of the reading was familiar to her, as she had hoped to learn something new. Second, she was often critical of the class readings, and claimed—frequently in her interviews and once in class discussion—that the readings were biased. Third, she found that most of the assigned readings were unrelated to the research proposal she was writing for the class. As she was far more interested in reading texts for her own research than for the class, Inna found that it was difficult to “force herself” to do the assigned readings. This was to have some negative consequences, as I shall describe later.

In contrast to the difficulty Inna had with the assigned course readings, she reported active engagement in reading the articles she chose for her own research. When reading these articles, she (like Maya) read more dialogically: she used a highlighter, wrote questions in the margins, circled parts of the text that she disagreed with, wrote down her reflections on the texts, and was beginning to summarize the articles she read. She also asked my advice about a good way to summarize articles and keep them organized¹². She had to read actively because, as she said, “I don’t have much time to begin with. I can’t waste my time because don’t have much time”

¹² I recommended building a database using EndNote and typing in key words and abstracts of each article—advice I wish I had taken myself!

Wasting Time

Not wasting time was a frequent refrain throughout Inna's interviews. Like most of the students in this study, she felt pressured by having insufficient time to accomplish all her tasks. Like all the doctoral students in this study, Inna worked 13 hours a week for her teaching assistantship. She also spent several hours a week (in some weeks as many as 10 hours) running experiments for her major professor. Also, Inna takes full responsibility for caring for her two-year-old son. This, naturally places many demands on her time. Given her son's age, she feels that whenever they are home together, her time should be his. As a result, she told me that she was only able to study or write when he was at daycare (during which time she is usually working for her assistantship) or when he was asleep. No wonder, then, that she feels her time is valuable and should not be wasted.

One result of this time pressure is what I would describe as a hyper-pragmatic approach to reading. Because she has so little time, she feels that everything she reads must be of value. Consequently, she had little patience with readings that focused on topics she already knew and considered them "a waste of time." Rather than acquiring depth of knowledge, I sensed that, in her constant desire to read what she had never read before, Inna was focusing on breadth of knowledge. When it came to her own research, on the other hand, Inna's attitude was somewhat different. When she chose the texts she read, she was much more engaged in them, often discussing them with me at length.

Stormy Waters and Sinking Mentorship

During the first few weeks of the semester, Inna seldom saw her advisor. This situation soon changed when Inna began running experiments related to her advisor's ongoing research. Thenceforth, Inna saw her advisor regularly, but unlike the other students' advisors, who often

suggested research projects to their students or inquired about their on-going research, Inna's advisor made no attempt to get Inna involved in research projects. Instead, their conversations were limited to mechanics of the experiments Inna was running for her advisor's research. I at first assumed that these experiments were part of Inna's assistantship, but I later learned that they were not, as Inna's assistantship was a teaching assistantship with a large introductory psychology class and totally unrelated to her advisor's research. Nonetheless, Inna did not begrudge the time that she spent working on her advisor's research, but she was worried that her advisor neither invited her to become involved in her own (the advisor's) research projects nor encouraged her to develop her own.

As Inna became more proficient at running lab experiments, her advisor discontinued the regular meetings, and Inna became more concerned that her advisor was "not available" to her. She also began to notice that other students in her department, including those in her own cohort, worked much more closely with their advisors than she did. I, too, was concerned, because while chatting with other students in the class, I had learned that Inna's advisor had a bad reputation. She was reputed to be difficult to get along with, unreliable, and exploitative of her advisees. Three students told me they knew of advisees assigned to this professor who had found it necessary to seek another advisor.

Concerned about the negative impact a bad advisor could have on Inna's studies, I passed on these comments to Inna, and asked her if she had considered finding another advisor. Inna replied that she was reluctant to do so, as she had already done a lot of research for her master's thesis, which was related to her advisor's research. She was hesitant to "waste" the research she had already done, and she still hoped that her advisor would become more available to her. However, the situation of fairly minimal contact continued throughout the semester, and

communication between Inna and her advisor was almost entirely limited to emails related to the lab experiments Inna continued to run.

At the beginning of the semester after my class observations ended, Inna received her departmental evaluation about her performance in her first semester. She was rated as “satisfactory, but with some concerns.” One of the concerns listed was “minimal involvement in advisor’s research.” This comment could only have come from the advisor herself. Hurt and bewildered by this remark and assuming that it must be a mistake, Inna made an appointment to discuss the matter with her advisor. At the meeting, the advisor informed Inna that there was no mistake and that she was, indeed, unhappy with Inna’s involvement with her (the advisor’s) research. She told Inna, for the first time, that she expected Inna to come up with ideas for her (the advisor’s) research, and that as Inna had not been forthcoming with these ideas, she had given her an unsatisfactory evaluation. Since this time, Inna has been looking for a new advisor.

In the class I observed, it was not apparent whether or not Inna’s poor relationship with her advisor had a negative impact on her work. Inna did not discuss her research proposal, the main written assignment for the class, with her advisor, first, because she so seldom saw her, and, second, because the topic she had selected was unrelated to her advisor’s research. However, several other students that I interviewed in this study (Rainbow, Jacey, Julie, and Sooyoung) told me that they often discussed their work in progress with their advisors and benefited from their advisors’ suggestions about how to improve their work. In fact, Julie and Sooyoung, had worked with their advisers on topics closely related to the research proposals they wrote for the Developmental Psychology class. In that respect, their class assignments had already benefited from their advisors’ feedback.

Based on the numerous research projects the students in this study have collaborated on with their advisors, and on the many opportunities for feedback from these studies the students have reported, I suggest that successful writing in graduate school may often be contingent on a good relationship with one's advisor. Therefore, if Inna fails to find an advisor who will act as a true mentor, her writing for future classes (and for publication) may suffer because she will not have the opportunities for learning that a good mentoring relationship affords.

Inna's situation differs in every respect from the close and productive relationships described by Julie, Sooyoung, and (in the other class) Rainbow. In contrast, Inna's relationship with her advisor calls to mind the case studies introduced by Macrorie (1964), in which "current and recent graduates . . . tell of exploitation, fear, and dislocation within their programs and . . . describe themselves variously as 'drudges,' 'slaves,' . . . and 'lab rats.'" (cited in Taylor & Holberg, 1999, p.608). The negative evaluation Inna received brought to her attention the asymmetrical nature of her relationship with her advisor and the unfairness of her advisor's expectations, which were never communicated to her until after the evaluation. Fortunately, the crisis occurred early enough in Inna's academic career for her to remedy the situation. Inna believes that this event has taught her the importance of having a good relationship with one's advisor, and she has been actively networking to find a new advisor.

Summary

Through their close and productive relationships with their advisors, Julie and Sooyoung were already becoming active participants in their communities of practice and were well on the way to becoming insiders in their academic communities. Inna, however, had yet to find the opportunities for academic collaboration that Julie and Sooyoung had found so fruitful, so she was still an outsider to the academic community.

CHAPTER VI

TRADITIONAL GENRES IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

The Classroom Context

The developmental psychology class met on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12:00 – 12:50, in an ill-lit and slightly claustrophobic seminar room in the psychology building. In the middle of the room was a large, long, rectangular table, around which chairs were arranged so that students and instructor could see each other and converse fairly easily. The room was just big enough to comfortably accommodate the students. The class instructor, Elaine, an assistant professor in her department, projects an image that is both relaxed and focused. She usually wears casual clothes, seems laid back and friendly, and the students call her by her first name. Yet my impression was that she was that she had considerable authority and was always fully in control of the classroom. Her attitude toward her subject was enthusiastic, conveying a sense of strong personal interest. The atmosphere in the classroom, taking its tone from the professor, was also relaxed but purposeful. As the class met at lunchtime, students often brought their lunch to class and munched throughout the period, but generally they came to the class well prepared and ready to contribute to the discussion.

The classroom activities seldom varied. Elaine would spend part of the class lecturing, usually presenting and elaborating on the material the students had read for homework, and the rest of the period was taken up with class discussion. During her lectures, Elaine spoke lucidly and fluently, drawing frequently on her own academic and professional experience and showing clearly that she was an insider who was well informed about both the people and the latest

research in her field. One aspect of her personal experience that she drew upon in almost every class was her two-year-old son; as much of the class was about the psychological development of infants and young children, Elaine was often able to illustrate her points by giving examples of her son's behavior. She also included photographs of her son to illustrate concepts in the PowerPoint presentations she used as class handouts, but although she is clearly a doting mother who is intellectually fascinated by her son's development, the stories she told about him were usually relevant to the subject of the class discussion.

In addition to the lectures, the rest of the period was spent in group discussion, which would sometimes be interleaved with the lecture, or would sometimes take place after the lecture. In class discussions, Elaine would pose questions to the class as a whole or to specific students. The classroom interaction was fairly evenly divided between the IRE (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur and Pendergast, 1997), in which Elaine would initiate (I) a question, a student would respond (R), and Elaine would evaluate (E) and the IRF (Nystrand et al., 1997; Nassaji & Wells) when she would follow up (F) the response or by elaborating or reformulating it as another question. Because the classroom atmosphere was friendly and informal, the students felt free to interrupt with questions, which were generally well received. All of the students in class, including the focal students, participated in class discussion, but toward the end of the semester when students seemed rather more tired and tended to be less eager to jump into the discussion, Elaine tended to call particularly on two American students, Janie and Mandy. All of the students in the class were female, and most appeared to be aged between 23 and 30 years old.

Students' Attitudes toward the Class and the Instructor

Most of the students I interviewed (Julie, Sooyoung, Inna, and two American students, Mandy and Dana) reported that they liked both the class and the instructor, who had a reputation as a good teacher and has, in fact won two teaching awards in the last few years. Most students made comments similar to those expressed by Sooyoung below:

Dr. Jones . . . I mean she is very kind and generous in class, and I think her teaching is exactly fitting the level of this class, but I knew that she is pretty challenging and she's very smart. [Interviewer: How did you know that?]
I kinda felt that from the interaction with her, and also I heard about her before from my friend. She's very well organized and prepared.

Some students were a little disappointed in the level of interaction in the class, but still had positive feelings overall, as Julie describes, "I think I like the class a lot, but sometimes I wish there's more discussion and less lecture, but again it's a 6000 level class, it's supposed to be a survey course, but sometimes she tends to lecture."

The Required Readings and Students' Attitudes toward Them

The required readings for the class were two large textbooks: *How Children Develop* by Siegler, Deloache, and Eisenberg (2003), hereafter referred to as "Seigler," and *Developmental Psychology: An Advanced Textbook* by Bornstein and Lamb (1999), hereafter, "Bornstein". These textbooks were quite different from each other. The first, Seigler, was, as Elaine described it, a textbook that could be used at the undergraduate level. It was very accessible (even to a non-psychologist like me), contained many graphs, charts and colored pictures, and presented its material in a manner that was both comprehensive and easy to follow. The other text, Bornstein, an edited volume, was a graduate level text, and many students reported in class that they found it a tough read.

The three focal students' attitudes toward the text diverged completely: Julie and Sooyoung, liked the reading, especially the Siegler text, but Inna disliked the readings, reporting she found them biased and stating that she would have much preferred to read journal articles. Both Sooyoung's admiration for the Siegler text and the way her opinion diverged from Inna's are apparent in the excerpt below:

I just like the Siegler's book [laughs]. I think it's not an advanced book, but I guess it's very well written and it's very current and they have a very balanced view. I just love that book. So I was saying to Julie, some day in the future if I teach a class, I would love to use this book as my textbook.

Julie found both of the readings useful, and reported that she had been able to remember examples from the textbooks easily when doing the midterm exam:

I think they [the Siegler and Bornstein books] are very useful, especially for this test that's so comprehensive and so many things, but whatever that I read, some of it just came back to me and I could put that into the example, especially for the essay, there was a lot of examples that she want, like people's name and the school of thought, that kind of thing.

The amount of reading students were required to do was not excessive; on average, the students were required to read two chapters a week. However, the chapters in the Bornstein textbook were sometimes lengthy, ranging between 60 and 100 pages. All the students in class reported finding the Siegler book easier to read. Another feature of the Siegler book was the PowerPoint presentations that accompanied the readings. Elaine sometimes adapted these PowerPoints by adding her own material and made them available for the students to download from the Internet. In fact, she asked the students to download and print paper copies of these handouts to bring to class, as she often referred to them in her lectures; however, she never actually projected the PowerPoint presentations in the classroom.

Other Readings and Class Presentations

In addition to the assigned readings, each student in the class was required to read and present two journal articles. These presentations were dispersed throughout the semester, and were generally low key. No one used overhead projectors or made PowerPoint presentations. No one stood to present her paper. All of the students, including the focal students, seemed relaxed about presenting their papers, and most tended to present in a conversational tone while making frequent eye-contact with the other class members. The students generally listened to their peers' presentations quietly and attentively, and usually asked a few questions at the end of the presentation. Elaine's response to the presentations varied depending on her interest in the subject presented and her evaluation of the validity of the study. Sometimes she responded enthusiastically; sometimes she responded briefly and almost dismissively. However, in the Developmental Psychology class, especially when compared to the Program Evaluation class, the presentations seemed relatively stress-free, even to the presenters.

In addition to the two article presentations, the students were required to present their research proposals, the major writing assignment for the class. These presentations were scheduled in the last week of the semester and were rather more formal: they took place in a conference room, and most of the students made PowerPoint presentations and stood at the front of the class to present. However, even in this context, the classroom atmosphere was fairly stress free, almost celebratory, as students brought food to share, and the fairly relaxed attitude was also shared, even by the presenters.

Assignments for the Developmental Psychology Class

The assignments for the developmental psychology class were listed on the syllabus as follows:

Table 8

<u>Graded Assignments</u>	
Exam 1 (mid-term)	25%
Exam 2 (final)	25%
Research proposal (20%) and oral presentation (10%)	30%
Article Presentations (10%) and participation (10%)	20%
TOTAL	100%

The Written Assignments

There were three written assignments for the class: 1) an in-class mid-term examination, 2) an in-class final examination, and 3) a research proposal, drafts of which were to be handed in at different points throughout the semester. My analysis in the present study will focus on the midterm exam and the research proposals. I chose to focus on the midterm, rather than the final, because, while the two exams had similar formats, the students talked much more about the midterm in their interviews and, in some ways, it served to shape their attitudes toward the class. By the time they had done the final, the students had already mentally moved on.

The Midterm Exam

The midterm took place at the end of the seventh week of a fifteen-week semester. In the class meeting two days before the midterm, Elaine handed out a study guide for the exam. In the following table, I present only the prefatory remarks and the first four lines of the 24-line list of areas to be studied:

Table 9

**Developmental Psychology
Midterm Examination Study Guide**

This study guide should not be considered exhaustive (i.e., it doesn't necessarily cover everything that will be on the test). It is a good starting point for you in preparing, however. The exam will consist of a combination of short answer, essay, definition, and possibly a few multiple choice or true/false questions.

Definition of developmental psychology and how "age" is involved
Developmental research designs and major data analytic methods
Nature/nurture, nativism/empiricism
Critical periods and timing of environmental events

In the following section I will discuss sections of the midterm exams written by the three focal students, Julie, Sooyoung, and Inna. In doing so, I will first present the grades of the students, next discuss some contextual factors that may have impacted the performance of one student, and then compare the students' responses to a particular question. Finally, I will present the students' comments on the exam and describe some of the strategies they used to prepare for and write the exam.

Julie and Sooyoung both did extremely well on the midterm, scoring 99% and 97% respectively. By contrast, Inna scored only 77%. What accounts for the wide gap between their grades? One could say that Julie and Sooyoung studied harder than Inna, and this would be true. One could also say that Julie and Sooyoung, as second-year students, were more knowledgeable than Inna, who was in her first semester, and this would also be true. However, to obtain a deeper understanding of the wide gap in these students' grades, I believe that it is necessary to look outside of the context of the classroom.

When Personal Life Intrudes on Academic Life

Some researchers have suggested that graduate students' academic performance is often impacted by events that take place outside the context of the classroom (Casanave, 1995; Dong, 1994; Prior, 1998; Schneider and Fujishima, 1995; Sung, 2000). This was certainly true for Inna. During the semester in which I observed her class, Inna was going through some serious personal problems that made her situation precarious emotionally, financially, and even physically. As a result of her situation, there were times when her life was even in danger. These problems unsurprisingly had a negative impact on her ability to concentrate on her reading and her participation in class discussion.

Inna's personal problems preoccupied her throughout the entire semester and were at their worst around the mid-point of the semester. In the two weeks before and after the midterm, Inna's performance in class was erratic. Often she would stare into space throughout the entire class period, seeming unaware of what was going on around her, an attitude that contrasted with the interest she had shown in previous weeks. She still contributed to class discussion, but her contributions were less apposite than they had been earlier in the semester. Sometimes she seemed euphoric, and would giggle during class discussion at points that no one else found amusing. Inna later told me that when she was under stress, she tended to giggle and talk randomly. She also said that she had found it was impossible to focus on her reading at times when she was physically threatened and emotionally distraught. While Inna's personal problems were not the only factors that contributed to her low grade, they do help to explain why her performance failed to meet her own expectations and those of her instructor.

A Textual Analysis of One Midterm Question

The differences between Inna's performance in the midterm and those of Julie and Sooyoung become apparent when we compare their responses to one midterm question (see Table 10 below).

Table 10

Question: What has Piaget's theory contributed to our understanding of the mechanisms of developmental change? (Note that I am not asking you to regurgitate Piaget's theories, but rather to evaluate his contributions to our understanding of cognitive development.)
Inna: Developmental changes occur in stages, and each stage has specific characteristics of child's cognitive growth. Nature and nurture work together in this process, so that [each cognitive stage goes along with certain biological development. For instance, the age of 2, the frontal lobe of the human brain is developed (Instructor's comment: <i>But not mature</i>). One of its function is planning, organization, reasoning, symbolic representation. So that its development makes language acquisition possible.] Even though Piaget's stages are broad, and cover long periods of time, it is a useful tool for summarizing in a most simple way a rather complex developmental process in child's cognitive development. Instructor's comment: <i>Very little of this answer relates directly to Piaget</i> Grade: 10/15 [The bracketed sections mark points to be discussed in the next section]
Julie: Piaget's theory is one of the most influential theory in cognitive development. Two underlying assumptions of his theory still lay foundation for cognitive developmental research today. [First, children are not passive organisms that only receive information. Rather, children actively construct schemas/knowledge for information that they receive from the environment (constructivism). Along this line, the second assumption is that children are naturally curious about the world, and strive to make sense of it (metaphor of the little scientist)]. Many evidence have been found to dispute Piaget's stage theory. However, his broad theory has sparked many future research that contributed to our understanding of cognitive development. His emphasis on scientific research has also started many important research paradigm. Instructor's comment: <i>Good!</i> Grade: 15/15
Sooyoung: I think Piaget paid little attention to processes. But, his theory is still valuable in a variety of ways. [First, as a biologist, he was interested in the origin of knowledge, and explained the concepts of assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration. Although he did not consider sociocultural influences on development, his biological understanding provides a good background of how the organism operates. Second, he depicted child as the active child: children actively choose and construct their environment. This assumption is important in understanding children's active role in cognitive development.] Finally, although his theory has been disproved, he broadly studied cognition of children and provided a framework for researchers Instructor's comment: <i>Good. A little more on how Piaget influenced the field.</i> Grade: 14/15 or 15/15 (Instructor awarded a total response for all three questions of 44/45)

Superficially, the three responses are alike: they are each of similar length and they each contain a similar number of the superficial errors that are common for non-native speakers of English, namely, some missing articles and singular/plural errors. None of these errors was circled or remarked upon by the professor, indicating her focus on the *content* of the response rather than the *form* of the response.

There are, however, some significant differences between Inna's response and those of Julie and Sooyoung. Although Inna's response does describe some key features of Piaget's theories, it does not provide a clear picture of the significance of his theory. Furthermore, when I compared the response to the question, I found that much of the response, does, in fact, "regurgitate" part of Piaget's stage theory (the bracketed section in the table). There is very little in Inna's response about the "mechanisms of developmental change," nor is it easy to pinpoint a "specific contribution to our understanding of cognitive development." Instead, the contribution she asserts is rather general: "a useful tool for summarizing in a most simple way a rather complex developmental process."

Julie's and Sooyoung's responses, in contrast, zero in on key features of Piaget's theories by pointing out concepts that have been extremely influential in our thinking about children's cognitive processes (see the bracketed sections of Julie's and Sooyoung's responses). Their responses give specific examples of Piaget's concepts that were mentioned in the PowerPoint handouts, the textbook, and in the class discussion. They also omitted some concepts that were mentioned in the above sources, and I suspect they did so intentionally, as the omitted concepts refer to Piaget's stages (which the question requested students *not* to regurgitate). Conversely, Inna's response does repeat some of features of Piaget's stages, despite the question's injunction not to do so ("organization, reasoning, symbolic representation.").

Another contrast between the responses of Inna, Julie and Sooyoung is that the latter two highlight the points of Piaget's theories that are considered problematic:

Julie—Many evidence have been found to dispute Piaget's stage theory. However, his broad theory has sparked many future research that contributed to our understanding of cognitive development.

Sooyoung—I think Piaget paid little attention to processes. But, his theory is still valuable in a variety of ways Finally, although his theory has been disproved, he broadly studied cognition of children and provided a framework for researchers.

While Inna does signal a contrast between the broadness and the usefulness of Piaget's theories: "Even though Piaget's stages are broad, and cover long periods of time, it is a useful tool . . . ," she does not specifically mention that some aspects of Piaget's theories are disputed by researchers today.

The final difference between the students' responses is in their organization and their use of transition words. Because they begin with specific points and use transitions effectively, Julie's and Sooyoung's responses are easier to follow than Inna's. Inna's response begins very generally by talking about developmental stages, nature, and nurture. As a result, it is difficult for the reader to get a clear sense of direction. In contrast, Julie's and Sooyoung's responses begin by making specific statements about Piaget's theories: Julie: "Piaget's theory is one of the most influential theory in cognitive development"; Sooyoung: "Piaget paid little attention to processes. But, his theory is still valuable in a variety of ways." They then follow up their introductory points by using transition words to lead the reader through the points they make: Julie: "Two underlying assumptions . . . First Rather Along this line However"; Sooyoung: "First Second Finally." While transition markers are not absent in Inna's response ("For instance . . . One of its function"), they are not used as effectively, and do not

convey the feeling of logical progression from point to point found in Julie's and Sooyoung's responses.

The characteristics I found in my analysis of these three paragraphs were repeated throughout the midterm. Although Inna's responses were written in fluent and academic English, those of Julie and Sooyoung were more specific and more detailed. Furthermore, Julie and Sooyoung tended to use more transition words, more sophisticated punctuation (using colons to introduce examples and semicolons to separate closely related phrases), and their choice of expression often closely resembled the words and phrases used in the class textbooks or by the instructor herself in class.

That Julie and Sooyoung were able to ventriloquate¹³ the voices of the authors they read and of their instructor so effectively may be due to the fact that they both took notes in class, made notes based on their readings, and reviewed their notes when they studied. Inna, in contrast, took fewer notes and did not use her notes in preparing for the midterm. Also, because of the stress she was under, she reported that she had been unable to concentrate on preparing for the midterm. Julie and Sooyoung, in contrast, prepared carefully for the exam. Furthermore, I believe that many of the features of Julie's and Sooyoung's writing on the midterm can be attributed to their greater experience of doing academic writing, given their additional time in graduate school.

¹³ ¹³ Bakhtin (1981) defines ventriloquation as a particular form of multivoicedness in which the voice of another, often the voice of authority, appears to be ventriloquated by another. Prior (1998) uses this term pejoratively (p.132) in an example where a student appears to be "parroting" without understanding, but I argue that being able to ventriloquate the voices of scholars is an important stage in discovering one's own voice as a scholar.

Students' Comments on the Midterm Exam

Brevity is Not Always a Virtue

Inna attributed her poor performance on the midterm exam to the fact that she had not been reading as much as she should have been: “For some reason I don’t want to read the textbook. . . . It’s probably one of the reasons I didn’t do well on my test because I really didn’t read the chapters.” Additionally, as this was her first exam in graduate school, she said she was unsure what the expectations would be: “It’s really hard because you don’t know what to expect from a professor.” On reviewing her performance on the exam, she realized that she had not provided enough detail in answering many of the questions. In fact, one comment the professor made on the midterm was “All definitions are too brief.” I expect that Inna had not reviewed the reading sufficiently to be able to give lengthy responses to the questions; however, I also think, based on her generally short responses to my interview questions, that she prefers to respond concisely. Inna realized that her brief responses had hurt her grade in the midterm, as she explained, “My problem is I’m not very, my thoughts are very short. . . I didn’t put enough.” She planned to read more, study harder, and do better in the final exam.

Learning Through Interaction

Sooyoung and Julie were both very happy with their performance on the midterm exam. In part, they attributed their good results to the fact that they had studied together for the exam (which was easy for them to do as they are roommates). Julie describes how and why they studied together in the passage below:

Sooyoung and I, we studied together. We were really nervous the night before. That was a crazy week, and I had another midterm that week, so um . . . the night before we just kinda exchanged whatever that we know, so having the study list in front of us we go by each one by one of the terms, and if one of us knows the concept better we just talk to each other and try to make each other understand. It takes a lot of time off from trying to read all of the material by yourself and memorizing it. *So I think looking back I think*

that talking to each other and basically just teaching one another really helped a lot, really making that concept sink into my mind.

Sooyoung, too, described that studying together had been a useful and positive experience. She mentioned that she and Julie had studied together for other classes, too, and that had been helpful in the past. She also said that even though she often prefers to work individually, studying with Julie was good for her:

*I think my style is more individual work, but I really like Julie as a friend and as a student, and I think I can be better when I'm matched with someone who [laughs] can stimulate my thoughts . . . with Julie, I mean *it's really stimulating, and I think we both help each other out.* In that case it's very helpful.*

As the italicized sections in the above quotes show, Julie and Sooyoung found that studying together was a useful and positive experience. This accords well with Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (1978), and illustrates that students can scaffold one another's learning even when they are equally matched. In other words, learning in the ZPD does not always require a dyad of a novice and an expert. As Moll (2000) pointed out, the ZPD can also be understood in terms of how humans pool their resources through social interaction. Another factor that accounts for Julie and Sooyoung's successful study session is that they were working toward a joint goal. A number of scholars have suggested that joint activity, especially when goal directed, is an especially fruitful context for learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Tudge, 1990; Wells, 2000; Wertsch, 1991, 1998), and this was certainly the case for Julie and Sooyoung, as is evidenced by their excellent grades on the midterm exam.

The Instructor's Written Comments on the Midterm

Elaine made very few comments on Julie's and Sooyoung's midterm exams, and, with one exception, what few comments she made were words of praise: "Very well done" and "Excellent." These remarks affirmed Julie's and Sooyoung's status as good students, and made

them feel positive about the class. On Inna's paper, however, Elaine's comments were longer and less positive, for example: "Definitions are too brief"; "Very little of this answer relates specifically to Piaget"; and "This is true, but much too brief/shallow." Although disappointed by these comments, Inna accepted that they were warranted. There was one more comment on the midterm exam, however, that was to cause her some anguish and to alter her feelings about the class; this was the instructor's final comment on her exam:

I'll be happy to talk to you about your exam more in person. This is nothing personal—I like you and value your input to class. But perhaps you are approaching your reading for the class too much from the perspective of whether you agree with it as a mom, and not learning critically from it as a scientist.

This remark caused Inna to do a lot of soul-searching, and she reflected upon it at length in the next two interviews. At first, she was confused by Elaine's comments because, as she said, "I still don't know if she meant it as my test, or me in general participating." Also, in reflecting on this remark, Inna inferred that Elaine was saying that there was a contradiction between being a mother and being a scientist, but Inna felt that the two were not incompatible:

First of all, I think you can be a mom and still be a scientist. And second of all, I didn't think of myself as being that much biased in my opinion. I'm sure it [being a mother] influences, you can't deny that's a big part of it, and I'm a mother first of all and then maybe a scientist. A big part of me is being a mother and there's nothing wrong with comparing the research with practical use. I think that's the purpose of research.

Paradoxically, considering Elaine's comment, Inna often spoke about the importance of good science in research. She often mentioned the need to be scientific when discussing her research, even in conversations that took place before she read Elaine's comment. That Elaine would imply that there was a contradiction between being a scientist and being a mother was incomprehensible to Inna, as Elaine was herself a mother and, in fact, mentioned her son in almost every class.

Inna continued to ponder on Elaine's comment, and her final analysis shows that she had thought long and hard about what had provoked it. First, Inna acknowledged that Elaine's comment might have been provoked by her (Inna's) reaction to some of the class readings: "I do agree that sometimes I get more emotional, like in my argument sometimes I'd get more emotional than scientific I guess. That's a weakness I need to work on." She then went on to demonstrate her own analysis of Elaine's comment by offering the following hypothesis:

You know what I noticed though? Examples that I used sometimes usually were to disprove something or disagree with something that we read about but she used [stories about her son] actually to show another example of. So maybe she thought what I'm using to disprove a statement is not enough or it's not very scientific.

This analysis was confirmed by my own observations, as I shall report later.

Inna was the only student in the class who challenged the assigned readings. She sometimes said that the readings were biased, and the subject of bias in psychology was one she was especially concerned about, as she describes below:

It [psychology] is a science, because we have hypotheses, we test the hypotheses, we have experiments, so everything is supposedly scientifically based, so yeah we have to be. Otherwise, especially in psychology, because psychology can be so subjective—biased and subjective—that's why we have to use science to protect, to eliminate . . . the possible bias in our studies.

From my perspective, Inna's comments show that she is capable of the kind of critical analysis that Elaine had implied she lacked. In fact, another student in the class whom I interviewed (Dana, an American student who had majored in philosophy as an undergraduate) told me that she was glad that Inna had challenged the readings, which she felt the other students in class were accepting too uncritically.

Elaine's comment on Inna's paper had several effects. The first effect was that Inna became self-conscious about participating in class. Moreover, she reported that she made a conscious effort not to use examples based on her son's behavior (although this effort was not

entirely successful). Elaine, however, continued to use her son's behavior to illustrate her points throughout the semester. Another effect of the comment was that Inna became more aware of the asymmetric nature of the relationship between student and professor. In her first interview, Inna had mentioned that she thought what professors wanted from her was original thinking: "It has to be original thinking, not just a repetition of what everybody says, your personal opinion." By the time of her third interview, conducted after the end of the semester, she had modified this position. She realized that original thinking was more likely to be valued when it did not conflict with the professor's own opinion: "I think a lot of time professors don't like their students to argue against something, so maybe that made her notice my arguments more often." I believe that Inna's reflection upon Elaine's comments and what might have provoked them taught her a wisdom that she needed to learn: that professors do not always value opinions that differ from their own, and that professors, too, can react personally to criticism, as Inna pointed out: "Usually if you are a professor, you kind of take it personally when someone tries to argue. I don't think a lot of people like that, so I wouldn't think she [Elaine] is an exception."

Inna's response to Elaine's comments also raises some interesting concerns over the issue of identity, as Inna found it necessary to subdue her (inappropriate) identity as a mother in order to project an (appropriate) identity as a scientist. Several scholars have pointed out that that being in graduate school can lead to conflicts of identity for students, especially for students whose background differs culturally from that of the mainstream (broadly defined as white, middle-class and American). Casanave (1992) reported how Virginia, a Hispanic woman, felt she was losing own identity in being forced to write in the jargon of her field. Berkenkotter et al. (1988) described how Nate lost a sense of himself as a good writer when transferring from the liberal arts department to a social science department that required from him a completely

different kind of language. Cadman (1997) wrote that her ESL graduate students often talked of their experiences in graduate school in terms of loss of identity, a point eloquently made in the words of Fan Shen (1989 p.466, cited in Cadman, p.3): “Looking back, I realize that the process of learning to write in English is, in fact, a process of creating and defining a new identity, and balancing it with the old identity. ”

What the authors cited in the previous paragraph show so clearly is that language and identity are intertwined, so that loss of identity results from the need to appropriate an alien language, and taking on another identity requires that one assimilate this language. Thus, in order to speak as a scientist, Inna feels that she can no longer speak as a mother. The intersection of language and identity has already been seen elsewhere in this study. Maya, the feminist, postmodernist student, once disparaged the language of her field, but, through a three-year process of enculturation and assimilation, she changed her identity from outsider to insider, and embraced what she had once rejected. As Inna continues her graduate studies, she may yet find a place where she can speak both as mother and scientist (as Elaine does). I hope that Inna’s ability to speak as a mother will eventually make her voice stronger, but I fear that she believes she must silence that inner voice in order to take on the more authoritative voice of science (Wertsch, 1991; Bakhtin, 1981).

The Research Proposal

The research proposal assignment carried almost a third of the total class grade, and the instructor had designed the assignment so that students would start work on this project early and hand in successive drafts to her for feedback throughout the semester. The following chart shows how the drafts were scheduled throughout the semester:

Table 11

Due Dates	
• Week 4	Due: a one-paragraph research proposal (typed). Be as specific as possible and list any references you have consulted so far. I will give you feedback from this.
• Week 6	Due: revised paper proposal and a list of at least 3 references
• Week 11	Due: a one-page synopsis of research proposal along with at least 5 references in APA format. This needs to be more detailed than what you have turned in before
• Week 13	Due: class workshop on research proposals. Bring a current draft of your proposal
• Week 15	Research Proposals due

Opportunities for Feedback

The way Elaine had structured the research assignment, incorporating multiple opportunities for feedback, reflected her philosophy on writing, which she describes below:

I feel like learning to write on the graduate level is a skill that's acquired through trial and error, through feedback and through just trying it out and getting feedback and then improving that, so my main point in the assignment in doing successive feedback is to sort of shape their behavior along the way, and show them how to do it . . . What I see myself doing is kind of what a major professor would do on a draft of a thesis to some extent. It's just a way for them to get feedback and to learn along the way.

Elaine thought that having the students write a research proposal was a good way to “ show students how to get from point A to point B.” Because she believed that writing was so important, she provided the students with a detailed guide for writing the research proposal, a three-page guideline that set forth her expectations and described in detail the components she expected to find in the proposal (See Appendix B).

Class Workshop on Research Proposals

In addition to having the students write multiple drafts of their proposals, Elaine scheduled one class meeting during which students brought copies of their proposals for peer review. Each student worked with one other student from the class. They read each other's papers and gave each other feedback. Elaine described her aims for the workshop as follows:

I had two goals for this, first of all a fresh set of eyes, so the student would get feedback from a different perspective, secondly, they'd have a chance to read someone else's paper, for better or for worse, but they would have a chance to see, they would hopefully learn from that: "Okay this is how this person is doing this," or "Oh, that's an interesting way of doing that." Some of the papers were certainly better than others, so I know and I debated about trying to pair up papers that I knew were better with papers that I knew weren't, but then I was afraid that was going to be perhaps obvious that I was, you know, singling people out. I didn't want to make anyone uncomfortable, so I just sort of decided to hope for the best. Um, so I don't know what the students thought about it; I hope that they found it helpful.

The workshop reflected Elaine's philosophy that students would benefit from successive feedback on their papers, but the focal students reported that they did not find this session useful.

None of the focal students had positive comments to make about the workshop.

Sooyoung, who worked with Inna, reported that she had felt uncomfortable because "at that time she [Inna] has some issues and she didn't look very secure or stable." In fact, Sooyoung did not even want to discuss the peer review session because she had not found it useful and was reluctant to make any negative comments about her classmate. The only other comment she made was that "Inna didn't pay attention to our co-work, and she wasn't attentive to it." She did, however, note that Inna pointed out something about the format of the paper that she had overlooked. Inna had nothing to say about the workshop except that it was "a waste of time."

Julie, who worked with an American student, Cherry, during the peer review session, also had only negative comments to make about the workshop, but she reflected on it at greater length: "I didn't find the peer review particularly useful, I guess because each one of us really have no idea what the other person's field is all about and we could only give some very general comments that I'm sure that the author could have found [herself]. . . . It's pretty trivial I think." I recorded Julie's peer review session in my field notes, but I am not sure that I agree that the comments were all trivial. In the following passages, the first excerpt presents some of Cherry's

comments on Julie's paper and the second presents some of Julie's comments on Cherry's.

These comments were fairly typical of the exchange:

- 1 Cherry—I thought the first part is very clear, but then [pointing to the top paragraph on page three] I wasn't clear what you were talking about there. What were you trying to talk about there?

Julie—I was trying to answer the question of how is this developmental.

Cherry—I think there was some good stuff, but something about how it is phrased made me lose track. [pause while she reads]. I picked it up again in the next paragraph. It sounded really cool. The top of page five might be a little too specific, and this stuff in general [pointing to the middle of the page] it was interesting here, but maybe you should move it to the methods section? Then at bottom of page five I got lost where you switched to IQ and Learning Patterns. I didn't realize how important it would be. I think you need more explanation about why you are using them—the same thing with the IQ.

- 2 Julie—Yours is long

Cherry—I need to cut it down.

Julie—I thought the beginning was clear; maybe you need to explain in first paragraph a little bit, which you did in the middle part. Maybe you could give foreshadowing. I guess it is clear in sections but you are going back and forth [she points to definitions in two different parts of the paper]. Then maybe right up front you should talk about emotional development and then move into the violence part of it. Then here it suddenly becomes about women, so that can be moved around.

Cherry—I need to move my paragraphs around.

Julie—Yeah the flow. Is it your point if a child has more shame than guilt, there's a negative outcome?

Cherry—Vice versa, the opposite.

From my perspective, these exchanges seem to be quite useful, but Julie's perspective was different. She said she would have made most of the changes Cherry suggested without her feedback. Interestingly, Julie compared this review session with another class she was taking in which she found the peer review more useful:

[In Elaine's class] I guess part of it [the problem] is motivation factor at that point. People are not very motivated about the paper, that's what I feel.

Interviewer: How is motivation related to the peer review?

Oh, people won't put that much information in trying to critique the other person's paper—that's what I felt. Um, she [Cherry] read through my paper really quickly. I'm taking another class with Dr. Smith. He wants us to read that article that the other person wrote and write a peer review article, and I think that will be better, people will be critiquing, and we'll be graded on that. That's a different thing.

Julie's comments reflect the findings in much of the literature—that peer review needs to be thought through and set up very carefully if it is to be effective (Benesch, 1984; Berg, 1999; Huff & Kline, 1987; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Nystrand, 1984).

Selection of a Research Proposal Topic

The students were given wide discretion in their selection of a topic; the only provisos the instructor made were that the topic chosen should be developmental “that is, it must examine change in some process across some portion of the lifespan,” and “topics appropriate for the research proposal include anything related to the subjects covered in class” (Research Proposal Guidelines, see Appendix B). Since the class covered a broad range of topics, students had a wide field to choose from. Accordingly, the students wrote upon a wide range of subjects: Julie wrote about children's strategy variability and performance in solving mathematics problems, and Sooyoung wrote about elementary children's social emotional adjustment, and Inna wrote about speech perception in infants

I asked the students to give me copies of all the drafts they wrote, but only Sooyoung did this, giving me all four of the drafts she wrote. Julie gave me three drafts and Inna gave me two (two drafts were lost due to circumstances beyond her control). Consequently, my analysis will focus on their first and final drafts as all the students provided these.

Julie and Sooyoung had an advantage in writing their proposals: their considerable previous research experience. They both chose to write about subjects that were related to their previous research. Inna, in contrast, was writing about a subject she knew nothing about before beginning the proposal. Her chosen topic grew out of her personal interest in her son's language development. Fortunately, though, Elaine's criteria for evaluating the topics were based upon her expectations for students like Inna, in other words, students who had newly entered the developmental psychology program, as she explains below:

What generally happens when there is a variety of background levels is that the students who were more advanced, I don't use them as a baseline. I use the incoming students as a baseline and the students who are advanced are just ahead of the game . . . I view my expectations are for what I think a new student writing their first proposal would be, and the students who are more experienced end up getting really high grades, but that doesn't negatively impact the grades of the other students.

As she predicted, the more experienced of the three focal students did get higher grades for their assignments (Julie, 95% and Sooyoung, 93%), but Inna also got a high grade on the research proposal; at 92% it was the only A she made on the class written assignments.

First Drafts

My analysis of the research proposal will begin with a comparison of the students' first drafts. In comparing them I will focus on the major features of the drafts, their organizational structure, and the instructor's comments. Inna's first draft was one page long, and contained the following elements (the draft is not quoted in full):

Table 12

Inna's First Draft	
Background of the problem	The biggest debate as far as language acquisition is the nature of its development . . .
A brief mention of previous research	Werker et al have suggested possible universality in infant perception of phonetic sounds . . .
Werker's hypothesis	The decline in universal phonetic sensitivity could be attributed to a special function of learning a particular language.
The goal of the study	The goal of the present study is to test older infants raised in bilingual studies, in particular those who are being exposed to Russian and English through their parents . . .
Some methods	We will have a second group of infants, similar in age, who are raised in English only families."
Her own hypothesis	We will hypothesize that the bilingual group will be able to discriminate the phonemes of the Bulgarian language, but will be unable to discriminate those of the Hindi language (as is the monolingual group) . . .

In reading through the draft, Elaine marked some awkward sentences (replacing "as far as" in the first sentence above with "in the study of"), corrected a few small errors, and marked questions in the margin: "Why make this a quote?" "Why Russian?→ Okay" "Do Russian and Bulgarian contain phonetic contrasts that English does not?" She had one evaluative comment, "Good."

Although Inna's first draft contained the information needed to give the reader an overall idea of the study, it was not organized in such a way that it flowed clearly from point to point. In fact, it was necessary to read through the entire page in order to understand what the study was about. Elaine had at least one question that was unresolved until she reached the end of the page because, about half way down the page, she wrote, "Why Russian?" then drew an arrow from that point to another comment at the bottom of the page, "Okay." What was lacking in Inna's first draft was not detail but a rhetorical strategy to make the need for the study apparent and an organizational structure to make the components of the study fall into place.

Sooyoung's first draft was shorter (about 2/3 the length of Inna's) and more to the point; it contained three main elements: statement of the problem, the aim of the study, and the methods to be used.

Table 13

Sooyoung's First Draft	
Statement of the Problem	The importance of understanding normal developmental trajectories of children has been recognized in child mental health because without such knowledge we are "at risk" of misunderstanding developing children.
Aim of the study	In this vein, I am interested in conducting research on developmental pathways of children at school by adopted a <u>person-oriented</u> approach, which is more desirable in studying children as a whole than a <u>variable-centered</u> approach. Both <u>equifinality</u> and <u>multifinality</u> would exist in developmental trajectories. However, I would like to identify some developmental patterns and factors that are predictive of these trajectories
Methods	A group of first graders and third graders would be followed for three years. Every year teachers would evaluate broad behavioral adjustment/maladjustment skills of each child with the Teacher Rating Scale Children form of the Behavioral Assessment System for Child (BASC TRS-C, 1992) . . .

Sooyoung was very familiar with the topic she had chosen, and as a result, she perhaps assumed too much familiarity on the part of her reader: Most of Elaine's comments on Sooyoung's draft were about the vocabulary she used. She underlined several words (see above) and wrote in the margin, "You'll need to define all these terms in your paper." Also, she noted that "You will have to develop some specific hypotheses about which variables will be involved and why." Her final evaluative comment was, "Good start."

Julie's first draft used a more sophisticated technique. It employed the strategy of introducing research findings and then immediately problematizing them. In doing so she established a gap in the research and finally introduced her own study to fill the gap.

Table 14

Julie's First Draft	
Background statement	Researchers have only recently started to embrace variability as an important and integral aspect of cognitive development and learning
Introducing research	Siegler and his colleagues have demonstrated on a variety of tasks that children use multiple strategies Evidence suggests that mathematics strategy use is heterogeneous and variable over the course of development
Problematization 1	However, findings are contradictory regarding the relationship between strategy variability and performance
More research	There is evidence that Variability may indicate an individuals' exploration of his or her problem space . . . likely to lead to improvements in problem solving . . .
Problematization 2	On the other hand, variability is not always a desirable trait in cognition because . . .
Filling the gap & Proposing the study	Therefore the present study is proposed to . . . Specifically, the relationship between strategy variability and problem solving will be examined

Elaine's comments showed her appreciation of Julie's rhetorical moves: "Great idea and excellent justification," and she had only one question: "How will this be developmental?"

Julie's strategy employs some of the rhetorical moves identified by researchers (Cooper, 1985; Crookes, 1986; Hopkins and Dudley Evans, 1988) that are discussed at length in Swales (1990). She employs a cycling process of briefly reviewing research findings, pointing out the limitations or problems with these findings (note how she uses transitions of contrast above: "However . . . On the other hand"). In this way she establishes a gap for her research (Swales 1990), and offers her own study to fill the gap ("Therefore . . ."). These tactics show considerable rhetorical awareness and are in fact explicitly taught in some graduate rhetoric programs (for example, at Carnegie Mellon, Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman 1991). Julie told me that she had learned how to establish the gap in the research through tutorials with her advisor.

Even in their first drafts, Inna, Sooyoung, and Julie show varying degrees of familiarity with the research: Inna's fairly limited use of references, but detailed description of methods give

the impression of a novice who as yet knows little about the subject but sincerely wants to find the answer to a research question. Sooyoung and Julie, on the other hand, come across as insiders in their field who are very familiar with the research, the jargon, and the instruments in their fields. Similarly, Sooyoung's and Julie's organizational patterns and rhetorical devices give the expression that they are more experienced writers (which they are). Inna, in contrast conveys the impression of someone who is still finding her way.

Final Drafts

In discussing the research proposals, Elaine told me that she had been very happy with all three students' final drafts, especially with Sooyoung's and Julie's. Regarding these two students, she said:

If you took their papers and set them up next to the papers of the native speakers and asked someone from outside the class to rate which of the students were international, I don't think they would be able to pick them out. In general, they were excellent . . . I'm impressed, I guess I should say.

However, even though she verbally rated Julie's and Sooyoung's papers more highly, she awarded similar grades to each of the papers: (Inna, 92%; Sooyoung, 93%; Julie, 95%). In my estimation, the papers were all written in academic English, used paragraphs appropriately, and used transitions effectively to lead the reader from point to point. Yet, I agree that Julie's paper deserved its higher grade. In the following analysis, I will describe some of the differences and similarities between the papers and suggest what aspects of their writing made some papers more successful than others.

Topography of a Research Proposal

The final drafts, completed ten nine weeks after the first draft, show considerable development from the original drafts. Each of the papers was of similar length (Inna, 13 pages; Sooyoung, 14; and Julie 15) and each contained a similar number of references (Inna, 10;

Sooyoung 12; and Julie, 10). Sooyoung's and Julie's papers both contained a one-page appendix, whereas Inna's did not. While all the papers contained headings and subheadings, they were used somewhat differently as can be seen in the table below:

Table 15

Topography of a Research Proposal		
Inna	Sooyoung	Julie
Cover page with title, student name, university name, and running head (p.1)	Cover page with title, student name, university name, and running head (p.1)	Cover page with title, student name, university name, and running head (p.1)
Abstract (p.2)	Abstract (p.2)	Abstract (p.2)
Title (p.3)	Overview (p.3)	Title (p.3)
	Research Questions (p.4)	Overview and purpose of present study p.7
	A Variable-Oriented Approach (p.4)	Research Questions (p.8)
	A Person-Oriented Approach (p.6)	
Methodology (p.8-11) Subheadings: Experiment 1, Sample, Stimuli, Procedure, Measures, Proposed data analysis Experiment 2, Sample, Stimuli, Procedure, Measures, Proposed Data Analysis	Method (p.9-12) Subheadings: Sample, procedure, Measures, Proposed Data Analysis	Methods (p.10-13) Subheadings: Participants, Materials and Procedure, Strategy Coding, Strategy Variability, Categorization of Learning Patterns, Proposed Data Analyses, Research Question 1, Research Question 2
Contributions, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research (p.11-13)	Discussion (p.12-14) Subheadings: Contributions of the study; Limitations of the Study; Suggestions for Future Research	Discussion (p.14-15)
References	References	References

The above table shows that although the three students used headings to divide up their papers differently, they each devoted a similar proportion of their papers to introducing the background of the study and reviewing the literature (5-7 pages), to describing the methodology (3 pages each) and to discussing implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research (2 pages each). What varied more was their use of headings in the earlier part of their papers. In the first

five pages of Inna's and Julie's texts, there are no headings (other than the title). In Inna's case, the lack of headings gives the first few pages of the proposal a slight lack of focus: we know we are going somewhere, but we are not yet sure where. In Julie's case, however, because of effective use of a rhetorical strategy I will discuss below, the lack of headings is appropriate: it allows her to lead smoothly from point to point without breaking up the flow of her argument,

Voice and Pronoun Choice

I found fairly extensive use of passive voice in all the proposals; however, when using active voice, the writers used different strategies: while Inna tended to use "we" quite frequently, Sooyoung and Julie tended to avoid using pronouns and instead used phrases like "the present research" or "this study." All three writers used passive voice in the methods section; for example, "the children will be interviewed" (Julie), "The infants will be tested" (Inna), and "Growth curve analyses will be used" (Sooyoung). Overall, the students' use of passive voice and pronouns was effective, but Julie's and Sooyoung's more frequent use of active voice ("this study will . . ."), seemed more in line the recent trend in the social sciences to avoid passive voice if possible (APA Style Manual, Fifth Edition). More frequent use of active voice allowed their papers to sound more natural, compared to Inna's, which sounded a little more ponderous.

Use of Rhetorical Moves

In discussing the first drafts of these papers, I mentioned how effectively Julie used the rhetorical device of establishing a gap in the research. In their final drafts, all three students used this technique, and did so with varying degrees of sophistication. In the following table, I present rhetorical moves from each of the student's papers that serve the purpose of establishing a gap in the research:

Table 16

Rhetorical Moves	
Inna	
Reviews two studies:	An interesting case . . . the authors found . . . Another interesting area . . . Furthermore, infants have revealed even more surprising sensitivity . . . while adults have shown a significant decline in sensitivity
Gap move 1	In the light of these findings, we believe it is necessary to investigate this topic by manipulating different variables.
Mentions previous studies reviewed	So far, most of the previous studies have been conducted with infants raised in monolingual and/or English-speaking families.
Gap move 2	Our study is devised to see if the hypothesis on speed sensitivity perception holds true for infants raised in bilingual families
Sooyoung	
Reviews several studies	A few longitudinal studies have addressed this issue by demonstrating the developmental pathways of children
Problematizes studies' findings	Yet those studies were limited in understanding child psychopathology for the following reasons . . .
Gap move 1	Given these limitations, this research is proposed to investigate the developmental pathway of clinical problems and adaptive behaviors of children at a group level and at an individual level.
Reviews more studies	The common finding across the studies presented above is . . .
Problematizes studies' findings	However, the developmental course of internalizing problems is not clear.
Gap move 2	Based on the previous findings, the current study will investigate the developmental pathways of a broad range of child behavior.
Julie	
Establishes a pattern of reviewing studies and showing their problems, complexities, and controversial elements	The traditional approach . . . However, cognition, by its nature, is complex and multifaceted. A new set of questions has been raised from the variability research Presently, findings are contradictory regarding . . . Some evidence shows that . . . The controversial findings of the role of variability . . . An interesting pattern emerged . . . Adding to the complexity of variability
Makes gap move	To date, there has been no study that examines the developmental relationship between strategy change, strategy diversity, and performance. In view of this, the present study is proposed to examine the relationship between strategy variability and performance.

As we move through the table above, we see increasing sophistication in the students' use of rhetorical devices to establish a gap in the literature. Inna uses a basic technique: she reviews some studies and then presents her own study phrased in such a way that it addresses a limitation of the studies she reviewed. Sooyoung employs an additional technique: she reviews studies, explicitly points out the problems or limitations of their findings, and then presents her study. Julie uses cyclical pattern of reviewing studies, pointing out their complexities and their limitations; then, only at the end of a five-page review, does she propose her study to fill the gap she has established.

I believe that Julie is able to carry off this approach because of her very considerable writing skill. The way she continually emphasizes the complexities of her subject serves the purpose of drawing the reader in, of making the reader feel that this really is an area worth studying. Her paragraphs flow together effortlessly, leading the reader in smooth logical progression from point to point, and when she finally establishes the gap in the research, the reader is left in no doubt that her study will make a valuable contribution. In Bakhtin's terms, Julie has succeeded in making the language of the field her own. She is able to "populate it with [her] own intention, [her] own accent. . . adapting it to [her] own semantic and expressive intention. (Bakhtin, 1981, p.293). In short, based on this paper, it seems that Julie has already mastered the academic writing genre of her field.

Instructor's Evaluation of Individual Papers

In responding to Inna's paper, Elaine implied that Inna had satisfied her goals for writing the research paper: "to develop critical thinking skills, to become an expert in a particular subject matter, and to think through a particular research problem like a developmental psychologist" (research proposal guidelines). Elaine made few comments throughout the paper, and those

comments she made were generally requests for additional information or clarification: “Define,” “Elaborate,” “Could be elaborated” and, at one point, “This is unclear.” In evaluating the paper, she praised Inna’s ideas, but also commented on a lack of clarity in her writing: “This is a really good idea, and is mostly explained well. Parts are somewhat unclear, but overall you have researched and thought this through well. Nice job!”

In commenting on Sooyoung’s paper, Elaine asked several questions: “Why these measures?” “Doesn’t this paragraph contradict your earlier prediction?” and “Can you add a little more about why kids end up in the clusters they’re in?” Her final evaluative comment, however, was positive: “Nice job overall.” I suspect that one characteristic that made Sooyoung’s paper less appealing to Elaine was that it was targeted at a narrow audience of which she was not a member. The jargon of Sooyoung’s field was rife throughout the paper, and while reading it I frequently had to flip back and forth to find definitions of the words I was reading (based on Elaine’s comment on the first draft, Sooyoung did add definitions of all technical words in the proposal). The bulk of the proposal focused on the relative merits of two methodological approaches and on various instruments. As a result, the paper was a tough read for anyone unfamiliar with those instruments and their many components and variables. Sooyoung, too, wrote as an insider, but while her paper was well and academically written, it did not quite have the smooth flow of Julie’s.

That the instructor was favorably impressed with Julie’s writing, as well as her content, was apparent from her final comment: “This is very well written and thought through. Just a few minor issues. Nice job!” Throughout Julie’s paper, Elaine made a few small corrections: changing “questions” to “aims,” adding two articles, and twice adding “s” to make nouns plural. It seems, though, that these small corrections did not detract from her overall positive evaluation.

Elaine mentioned that based on her experiences with another NNS student (in a different class), who had considerable difficulty writing coherent sentences in English¹⁴, she had changed her expectations for the writing of international students: “My expectations have been modified somewhat to where I am less concerned about the nitty gritty grammar issues that I might have gotten hung up on in the past.” However, on the basis of Julie and Elaine’s performance she had become aware that international students could perform as well as the best native speakers in the class.

With reference to all the students in the study, she generally believed that “language problems were not a factor.” In fact, she said with reference to Julie and Sooyoung, “I don’t think about them being international students at all; I think they were indistinguishable in performance from the other students.” These remarks were supported in the overall final grades she assigned to the students: Julie received a 98% for the class, tying with two other class members for the highest grade. Sooyoung received 95%, which was the next highest grade. Inna received 85%.

The Importance of Procedural Display

My perception is that Inna’s performance in class was negatively impacted not only by her inability to focus on the readings, which led to a low score on her midterm exam, but also by her inability to engage in appropriate procedural display (Bloome, Puro, and Theodorou, 1989). I base this several comments the instructor made in the final interview and also on Inna’s comparatively low grade for participation—she received 90% although she participated in class discussion as often as Julie and Sooyoung, who each received 100%. Procedural display is defined as “the cooperative display by teachers and students to each other of a set of interactional procedures that can be counted (interpreted) as doing a lesson by teachers, students, and

¹⁴ I know this from personal experience as I have several times worked with the student as a writing tutor.

members of the community” (Bloome et al., 1989, p.266). Based on my own observations, and on Elaine’s comments, I believe that Inna failed to demonstrate that she was “doing a lesson” in a manner appropriate for a graduate student at an American university and her grade for participation was marked down accordingly.

In reviewing my field notes, I concluded that Inna’s lack of correct procedural display stemmed from three factors: 1) her more emotional attitude in class, especially her frequent laughter, 2) her tendency to explicitly state her disagreement with the readings or with other students, and 3) the inappropriateness of some of her comments in class coupled with an inability to read the instructor. This combination of factors resulted, I believe, in the instructor’s comment on the midterm exam that Inna was “approaching the readings too much from the perspective of whether [she] agreed with it as a mom, and not learning and critically evaluating it as a scientist.” These factors may also have been partially responsible for Elaine’s comments on the final interview that “Inna was coming from less of a scientific background” and that “she doesn’t argue effectively.”

Sociocultural theorists have pointed out that in order to understand a phenomenon, it must be studied in its historical context (Bakhtin, 1981; Prior, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). Accordingly, to analyze Inna’s procedural display, I looked back at her classroom contributions over the course of the entire semester I observed. I found that Inna may have sown the seeds for Elaine’s later comments as early as the first day of class, when she introduced herself. Unlike the other students (none of whom had children) who framed their interest in developmental psychology intellectually, Inna framed her interest more personally: she said she had become interested in developmental psychology since the birth of her son, who was now two years old.

Furthermore, because the content of the course focused on infant development and, to some extent, on parenting, it was only natural that Inna would respond to some of the questions raised in class as a mother. In fact, the instructor sometimes elicited such a response by asking Inna specific questions about her son. However, the primary persona Inna should have projected in the classroom was that of graduate student, not that of a mother. However, I do not mean to suggest that all of Inna's class participation was inappropriate; it was not. Many of Inna's comments in class showed that she had a good knowledge of psychology, that she was capable of analytical reasoning, and that she had considerable insight. Yet the instructor's comments indicate that she found the less appropriate comments more memorable. Perhaps it is human nature to do so. In the following section, I examine Inna's classroom participation throughout the semester to investigate her ability to engage in appropriate procedural display, and I also present excerpts that may help to explain the instructor's apparent belief that Inna was thinking as a mother rather than as a scientist.

Projecting a Scientific Demeanor

One way in which Inna's behavior contrasted with that of the other students was in her willingness to express emotion, especially laughter. My field notes record several occasions when Inna laughed loudly in class, or made comments that might have been interpreted as displaying inappropriate levity. For example, on one occasion, while talking about infants' ability to express emotion, Elaine told a story about her son lying on the bed and smiling at the ceiling fan. Inna's response was "Are you sure it wasn't gas?"[laughs loudly]. On another occasion Julie told a story about Freud; she reported that while arguing with a colleague who disagreed with his remarks on sexuality, Freud had grown so agitated that he had fainted. Inna laughed long and loud at this story.

While laughing in class seems a harmless thing to do, I feel that the frequency of Inna's laughter may have undermined her ability to project a suitably dispassionate scientific demeanor. In reality, Inna's frequent laughter was not always an expression of lightheartedness; rather it was a reaction to stress. When reflecting on the personal problems that had plagued her throughout the semester, she reported that her reaction to stress was often to laugh, sometimes inappropriately. However, as the instructor was unaware of this fact, Inna's laughter may have given her the impression that she did not take the class seriously.

Expressing Disagreement

On a few occasions, Inna disagreed with points made in the readings or by other students. When this occurred she expressed her opinion more emphatically and more persistently than is usual for female American graduate students as the following passage shows:

Elaine—What are the pros and cons of using facial expression as a tool to identifying emotions?

Inna—Elaine *I don't see much use for it* because there's so much, I think there's more chances for us to be wrong. That's why I wouldn't.

Elaine—what about babies. Would you do it with a baby?

Inna—*I wouldn't consider that.* I don't see because again, there's so much variability like within that, even with babies' facial expression.

Jackie—you can't discount them, because so much of the cross cultural studies have found that, you can't discount. If a baby doesn't like what's going on, it's going to let you know.

Inna—*I don't see that's the problem.* I think the problem is, at least for mothers, yeah it's very easy to say the baby's upset, but the question is why the baby's upset. That's the thing that we probably—mothers are very good at that, but scientists are not! *I don't think so* [laughs] think the problem is it is hard to tell why the baby is upset.

Elaine—Well, what's causing the emotion is a separate issue so we are kind of starting with that point.

Inna—but yeah, but I guess they're studying it to help with that too, right?

In the above passage, Inna frequently began her response by expressing disagreement in a way that is unusual in the cultural context of the American classroom. Moreover, Inna seemed to have been rating mothers' diagnostic abilities higher than scientists', and, based on Elaine's final comment, may have been focusing on a different aspect of the problem than Elaine was.

Cultural Clashes in Classroom Discourse

I believe that Inna's direct expression of disagreement may have affronted the instructor and her American classmates, as Americans tend to express disagreement more indirectly. Petro (2003a) points out these cultural differences can lead to misunderstanding for Russian students in American classrooms as

In general, Russians tend to have a conversational style which is more direct than Americans. It is considered perfectly polite in Russian, for example, to say such things as: "You are wrong" or "I won't do that". For most Americans, however, indirect language is preferred—"I don't think you are right" or "I wouldn't like to do that" are more natural phrases in English, and the more direct phrases seem rude or confrontational. (p.2)

In fact, compared to Petro's examples, Inna's comments are fairly indirect, but they still ring the wrong notes to American ears because "we [Americans] soften our disagreement and use indirect language or even begin with false praise, such as "I find your ideas interesting, but..."Yes, we're often direct about positive statements, but we tend to be indirect about conflict" (Personal communication, Petro. April 7, 2004).

The cultural differences in communication style between Russian students and their American instructors were also the focus of Smith's (2000) study of Russian students in adult schools and community colleges. Smith, who is herself a native Russian, noted that the Russian language itself as less amenable than English to hedges and polite formulations. She found that the Russian students in her study had trouble judging the level of formality in American classes that seemed much less formal than the classes they had been accustomed to in Russia. In the

present study, Inna reported that she, too, had trouble “reading Elaine” as she seemed very informal and all of the students in the class called her by her first name, but she still maintained considerable authority in the classroom.

Inna also agreed with another finding of Smith’s study—that in Russia, students are encouraged to express their opinions more directly than in America. Smith suggested that ESL teachers with Russian students should teach them to express themselves using indirect language, as direct expressions that were quite acceptable in Russian might sound rude in English.

Interestingly, Americans’ directness when making positive statements but indirectness in negative statements was remarked upon by another student in the present study, Harry. He noticed that when he sent proposals to conferences, the letters of acceptance he received were very short and direct. The rejection letters, in contrast, were much longer, and took a roundabout route to explaining, with great regret, that his proposal had not been accepted.

Inna’s directness, compared to her American peers, may still be causing her problems in the classroom. In the semester after I collected data, Inna told me that she was having trouble getting along with her classmates, saying with some distress, “They all hate me.” It is unfortunate that Americans, who pride themselves on their multicultural awareness, sometimes lack sensitivity to modes of communication that differ from their own. Inna agreed that her discourse style is typically Russian in that she tends to express disagreement directly and sometimes emotionally, but she wasn’t sure if she was willing to adapt her style to the norms of the American classroom, saying, “My problem is I’m too stubborn.”

Biting One's Tongue

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggested that part of becoming an insider in a community involves knowing “how to talk (and be silent) in the manner of full participants” (p.105). I believe that Inna has not yet learned this skill, as she sometimes asked questions that her instructor and her classmates deemed inappropriate. One example of this occurred during a class discussion about breastfeeding, a topic we had read about in the textbook, and one that was interesting to Inna both as a developmental psychologist and as a mother. The discussion was more frank and explicit than it might have been had men been present, but as the instructor and students were all female, Elaine was discussing breastfeeding, including her own experience of breastfeeding, quite openly:

Elaine—There are a lot of reasons to do it. I still breast feed [her son]
I was at daycare and there was a student teacher there and she did a real double take when [her son] came over and asked to breastfeed. Enough about me

Inna—Elaine, do you have lots of milk?

[Elaine laughs sounding embarrassed]

Inna—What I mean is do you still have a lot of milk?

Elaine—I don't bottle any more.

Inna—Do you still have milk though, during the day? It didn't decrease?

Elaine—It decreased—I imagine he gets a couple of ounces.

Inna—But it. I'm just.

Elaine—[Begins talking about a good book on breastfeeding]

Some other students in the class told me they were aghast that Inna had asked Elaine so personal a question, and I must admit that I, too, was rather taken aback. What the above section

demonstrates is not only that Inna asked an inappropriately personal question, but that she *persisted in asking* even though her instructor's reaction showed her embarrassment.

This, and other instances, indicated to me that Inna was not reading the instructor, that she was not picking up her instructor's reaction to her question. This was verified by Inna in the final interview. She told me that she had had no idea that the instructor was embarrassed, and that she also had trouble knowing what was appropriate in the classroom. As Elaine's teaching style was relaxed and informal, she thought that she could ask whatever questions she wanted to—something she would never have done in a Russian classroom where the atmosphere was much more formal, a point also noted by Smith (2000).

The incident that led me to carefully analyze Inna's classroom discourse was Elaine's comment on her midterm exam: that Inna was thinking as a mother rather than as a scientist. The above two excerpts would perhaps provide an explanation for the Elaine's comments, but they actually occurred after Elaine made the remark. Inna, however, may have hit the nail on the head when she said that she sometimes used examples of her son's behavior to disprove points in the readings she disagreed with, whereas Elaine used examples of her son's behavior to illustrate points in the readings. For example, in a discussion of language acquisition, Elaine was making the point that infants seem to have some innate grammatical abilities and can infer things about language from reading small cues. Inna did not disagree explicitly, but countered this point by telling a story that indicated her son did not always pick up on these cues. Elaine then told a story in which she gave an example of her son picking up on a language cue by making the gesture he habitually made for a plane upon hearing a plane flying over the house. Elaine might have construed this conversation to mean that Inna had missed the point she was making, but it

could equally have been that Inna disagreed with the point, or simply wanted to mention that children did not always pick up on such cues.

I should close by making it clear that not all Inna's comments were poorly received by the instructor. On the contrary, many points Inna made were well received and showed her insight and understanding, as the following passage demonstrates:

Elaine—Infants of depressed moms had less eye contact and smiling with either the depressed moms or the stranger. What mechanism would explain this, Inna, what do you think?

Inna—It is possible that the mothers might be depressed if the babies interact less.

Elaine—that's a very good observation. What is the underlying mechanism?

Mandy—that it is a learned behavior.

Elaine—Inna had a very astute observation there—now if this is true, then babies should have been different earlier. We'll go back and look at infants of depressed moms at birth. The problem is newborns don't smile, don't make eye contact, they're not social, they're not alert. The researchers decided to measure orienting behavior and their responsiveness to social interaction. Long story short, the newborns of the depressed moms oriented less and were less responsive.

Inna—so is it inherited.

Elaine—Yes, exactly.

Clearly, Inna is capable of making a valuable contribution to class discussions, and my review of my field notes indicates that on many occasions she did so. However, her failure to engage in appropriate procedural display meant that Inna sometimes out of tune with the other students and the instructor in classroom discussions, and unfortunately this discord was somehow more memorable to her instructor. I do not mean to imply that Elaine evaluated Inna unfairly or treated her unjustly in any way. In my estimation she did not, but I do think she may have misunderstood Inna. If Inna had taken advantage of Elaine's suggestion that they talk about the comment Elaine made on her midterm, Elaine might have been able to give Inna some advice

about appropriate ways of arguing in class—but she didn't. Inna told me at the time that she was too hurt and too stressed to speak to Elaine. Consequently, she never had the benefit of Elaine's feedback, and continued to speak in class as she had spoken before.

In Bakhtin's terms, Inna had not learned to ventriloquate the voices of her classmates, and had not yet learned to cast her speech in an appropriate genre for the discourse of the classroom community. Her speech in another genre, the more direct genre valued by Russians, acted as a centrifugal force that perhaps prevented her from expropriating the discourse of the American classroom. Bakhtin mentioned that we learn speech genres by hearing them from the mouths of others or reading them (1986); thus, throughout her graduate career, Inna should still have the opportunity to acquire the genres of her academic community. In her writing, however, and through her dialogic reading of the texts she selected, Inna was moving closer toward the acquisition of a voice that would allow her to speak with more authority.

Revisiting the Research Questions

In the next section, I restate the research questions, then answer them and summarize the findings with reference to the experiences of the three students in the Developmental Psychology class.

1) Given that learning is fundamentally a social process (Vygotsky, 1978), what opportunities for social learning of written genres do international graduate students experience?

Two of the students in this class, Julie and Sooyoung experienced many opportunities for social learning, first through collaborating with their advisors and second through working with each other. Inna, however, did not report any experiences of social learning and seemed most involved in learning when actively engaged in the readings she herself had selected for her research. One opportunity for social learning in the Developmental Psychology class—the peer

review session in which students discussed their papers in pairs and gave each other feedback—was reported as unhelpful by all the students, indicating that not all group work is useful for students and that such review sessions need to be carefully planned if they are to be effective.

1.a) What opportunities do international graduate students have to experience the zone of proximal development?

Both Julie and Sooyoung described experiences when working with their advisors that fit well within Vygotsky's description of the ZPD, in which an expert works with a novice on a task that the novice might not have been able to perform unassisted. Furthermore, Julie and Sooyoung's study sessions together also fit within the ZPD. As some researchers have noted, even students who are equally matched can facilitate each other's learning in the ZPD (Moll, 2000; Tudge, 1990), and Julie and Sooyoung described their study sessions as very useful opportunities for learning from each other. Inna did not report any opportunities for working within the ZPD.

1.b) How does social interaction impact graduate student's involvement in their discourse communities, especially in terms of the writing they produce?

Through their involvement in many ongoing research projects, through their collaboration on manuscripts with their advisors (and, in Sooyoung's case, with other faculty members, too), and through their presentations of papers at conferences, Julie and Sooyoung were actively involved in their discourse communities, and as a result had completed manuscripts that were either in press or under review for publication. During the semester in which I observed their class, Inna had yet to become involved in any of these opportunities for collaboration.

2.a) What role does the classroom context—the instructor, the discourse, the practices and the assigned readings—play in shaping instructor's and students' expectations and in facilitating or hindering the writing international graduate students produce for the class?

In the Developmental Psychology class, many elements of the classroom context, the instructor's lectures, the class discussion, the assigned readings, the research proposal guide, and the written assignments were tightly aligned and fed into each other. Consequently, in the Developmental Psychology class, in contrast to the Program Evaluation class, the classroom context facilitated the writing of at least two of the focal students, Julie and Sooyoung. Both of these students were closely attuned to the instructor and to the class discussion, did the readings, and, as a result performed well in all of the written assignments. The fact that they had closely followed the class lectures, discussions, and readings was especially apparent in the midterm and final exams. Inna, however, was less attuned to the various elements of the classroom context; indeed, at times she was out of tune with these elements, especially with the classroom discussion. Also, she did not consistently do the reading and, as a result, she did less well on some of the written assignments, especially on the midterm exam.

2.b) How can Bakhtin's concepts such as dialogism, heteroglossia, and addressivity be used to explain the reading and writing practices of international graduate students at an American University?

Both Julie and Inna reported examples of dialogic reading, especially in the texts they used as sources for their own research. Julie and Sooyoung, both had an awareness of context, a key concept in heteroglossia, in that they were able to adapt their written work to match their instructor's requirements within the context of the classroom. Their writing also shows evidence of addressivity in that it was clearly targeted toward specific audiences and was replete with the

jargon that shows they are insiders in their fields. Moreover Julie and Sooyoung were very successful at ventriloquating the voices of the class instructor and the authors of the class textbooks. Inna had yet to learn this skill. Rather than ventriloquate these voices, her voice was a counter-discourse that was sometimes out of harmony with the orchestration of the classroom.

2.b) What centripetal and centrifugal forces impact students' abilities to meet their own expectations and those of the instructor?

In the Developmental Psychology class, Sooyoung and Julie seemed to be influenced primarily by centripetal forces. For both of them, their reading of the class textbooks was a centripetal force that kept them closely aligned to class discussion and the written assignments of the class (especially the midterm and final exams). In Julie's case (and, to a lesser extent, Sooyoung's), the APA Manual was also a powerful centripetal force in influencing their writing to conform to the strictures of the American Psychological Association. For all of the students, the research proposal guide prepared and distributed by the instructor was also a centripetal force in that it helped their papers converge with the instructor's expectations.

Inna was more influenced by centrifugal forces than Julie and Sooyoung, and for her the textbooks were a major centrifugal force. She disliked them, found them biased, and, consequently, did not read them closely enough to meet the demands of the class, especially for the midterm exam. Other centrifugal forces for Inna were her classroom discourse that seemed out of tune with the other voices in the classroom and her personal problems that made it difficult for her to concentrate on her studies.

3) As novices gain expertise through participation in their communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991), what factors influence international graduate students' deeper involvement in their communities?

The notion of legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice works very well to describe the experiences of Julie and Sooyoung. For these students, the major influence on their deepening involvement in their communities of practice is their collaboration with their advisors and the opportunities for mentoring and support that this affords. Through this collaboration and through their active involvement in research projects with their advisors and others, Julie and Sooyoung had made successful conference presentations and had co-authored manuscripts. Inna, however, who was in her first semester in graduate school, had yet to experience the kind of legitimate peripheral participation described by Julie and Sooyoung.

CHAPTER VIII

A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE

We all carry with us a set of unique experiences, the cultural artifacts that we have inherited, which we may adapt or modify to suit our needs. International graduate students are no exception. They come to US graduate schools with a cultural heritage and personal history that shape their beliefs about language, about learning, and about writing. The international graduate students in this study came from different countries, from China, India, Korea, Malaysia, and Russia, and they studied in different fields, in adult education, higher education, human resources, international business, educational psychology, psychology and qualitative inquiry. These students came to class with diverse academic experiences, work experiences, and expectations for the classes they would take. Furthermore, they were establishing, or had already established different relationships with their advisors, their faculty members and their peers that led to varying degrees of interaction with the academic community. All these factors served to trace different trajectories for the students in their graduate classes, often trajectories of deep participation, but sometimes trajectories of only peripheral participation within their communities of practice.

In the first part of this chapter, I summarize the main findings of the study. Next, I relate these findings to each other and discuss their relevance to previous research. Then, I propose new theoretical contributions that the study has made, discuss the implications of the findings, and suggest directions for future research. I close with an update on the students in the study, describing their continued progress in their academic careers.

Summary of Findings

The findings in this study can be grouped into three broad areas: personal agency, life experience and cultural heritage, and social and dialogic learning.

Personal Agency

- 1) In contrast to the widespread deficit model of the second language learner, this study finds that many international graduate students are resourceful and strategic learners who create opportunities for learning the written genres of academic English.
- 2) This study found that international graduate students are independent learners who value their independence and wish to be self-sufficient in their writing. Thus it brings into doubt research that casts East Asian students as collectively oriented. Not all students from Asian countries are group oriented in their learning preferences.
- 3) Like other students, international graduate students vary in their need and ability to seek assistance with their writing. This study shows that a) while some may neither seek out nor need opportunities for assistance, b) others may require the assistance of writing specialists. When students do seek assistance in their writing, the findings suggest that not any native speaker will do; students need the help of professional writing specialists.
- 4) Consistent with previous research, this study found that peer review may be of limited use to students if they are not trained in peer reviewing.

Life Experiences and Cultural Heritage

- 5) While previous work has often focused on language proficiency as a key determinant of international students' experiences in graduate school, the participants in this study believed that their prior experiences, both academic and work-related, exerted a greater

impact on their performance in graduate school, including the assignments they write, than their level of linguistic proficiency.

- 6) This study shows that time plays a major role in how international students “do school.” Graduate students have many demands upon their time and thus may have a pragmatic attitude toward reading and working on written assignments. They may cut corners if they must in order to meet the many demands upon their time.
- 7) Previous research on graduate student writing and performance has tended to compartmentalize the professional and separate it from the personal. In at least some cases, factors in students’ personal lives have a major impact on their performance in class and in their written assignments.
- 8) Students’ written work is produced and evaluated in a web of interaction that includes face-to-face classroom interaction. The study indicates that different cultural expectations for classroom discourse can undermine students’ ability to demonstrate appropriate procedural display, and this, in turn, can negatively impact instructors’ reception of students’ writing.
- 9) This study supports the findings of previous research: that plagiarism may be a concern for a few international graduate students who may be unfamiliar with Western concepts of textual ownership. However, it finds very little incidence of plagiarism among the eight students who participated in this study.

Social and Dialogic Learning

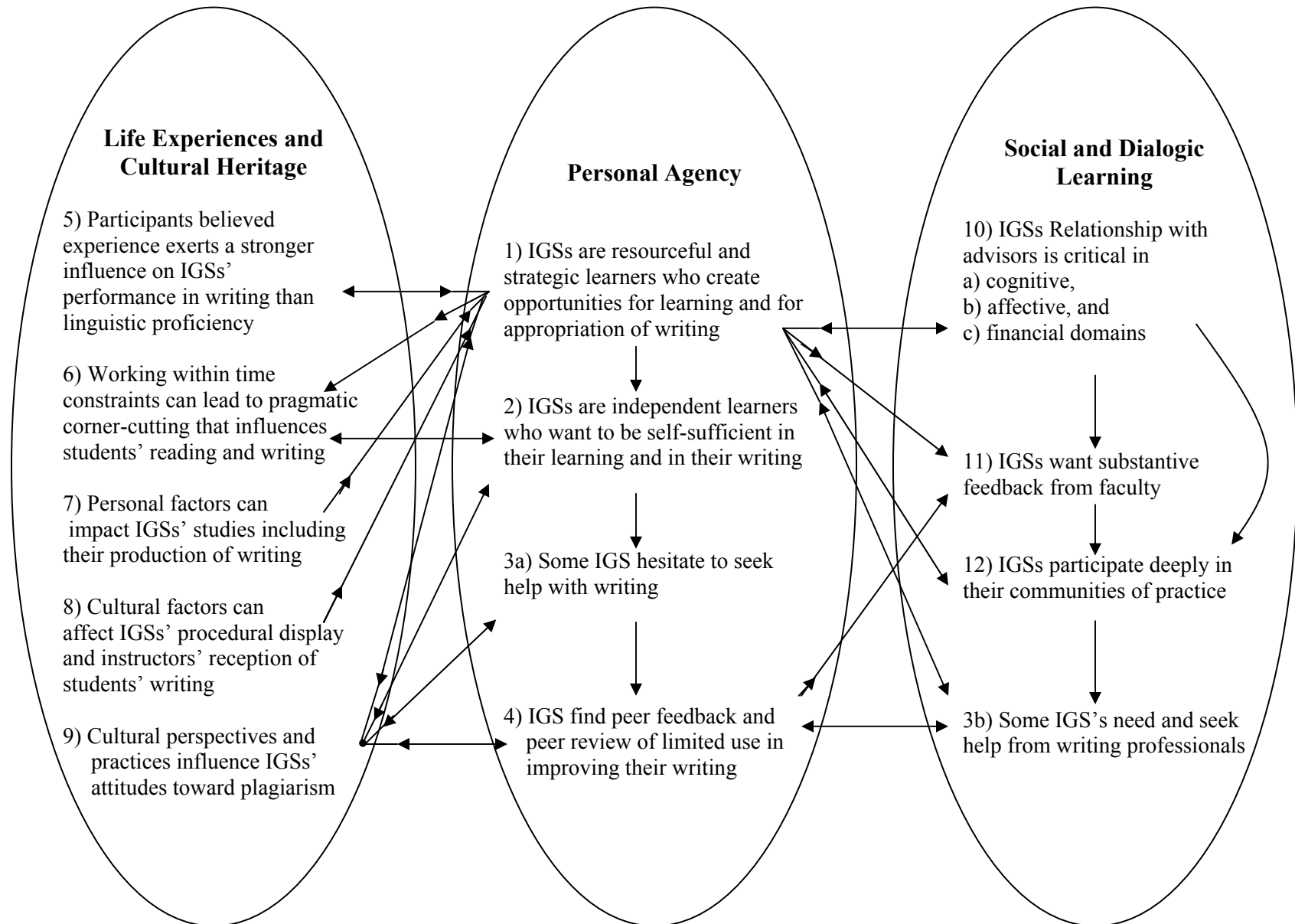
- 10) Students’ relationships with their advisors play an important role in their success in graduate school; in fact, this study suggests that the effect of this relationship has been underestimated in previous research.

- 11) This study shows that instructor feedback is a major source of learning for the doctoral students in this study. Accordingly, there is a need for more substantive feedback from instructors on students' written assignments. Moreover, students hoped to get substantive feedback on the *form* of their writing as well as the content.
- 12) This study found that international graduate students can be outstanding writers who engage in “deep participation” in their communities of practice through their collaboration on research projects and the writing of manuscripts.

Relationships Among Findings

Consonant with the goals of grounded theory, this study has aimed to generate an integrated theory of how students appropriate written genres. Accordingly, in Figure 1 (overleaf), I re-present the findings of this study in a graphic form in which their interrelationships may be more easily seen. The arrows in Figure 1 show how each finding influences and is influenced by the other findings and the directions of influence. Some arrows are unidirectional, indicating a one-way influence; others are bi-directional, indicating that the influence goes both ways. In viewing Figure 1, we can see that no finding remains in isolation—each is connected to at least one other finding—thus the findings form a network of factors, all of which influence some aspect of writing academic English at the graduate level. In short, Figure 1, presents a graphic answer to the question with which I began this study: What social, personal, cultural, and experiential factors influence international graduate students' appropriation of the genres of written English?

Figure 1: Relationships Among Findings



Some of the findings in the study are based on the experiences of only one focal student in the study—findings 7) and 8) were based on Inna’s experiences and finding 9) was based on Miri’s experiences—but data collection methods in grounded theory are “aimed toward theoretical construction, not population representativeness” (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001, p.162); therefore, I believe that the insights derived from *all* of the findings described above, are significant and robust enough to merit their inclusion in a theoretical framework that under-girds international graduate students’ appropriation of the genres of written academic English.

Throughout this chapter, as I discuss the findings and their implications, I suggest how each influences and is influenced by other findings. Moreover, in those areas where this study has generated new theoretical insights, I suggest how these insights might be used to explain factors in international graduate students’ appropriation of the genres of written English.

Personal Agency

1) International graduate students are resourceful and strategic learners who create opportunities for learning and for writing their assignments.

The students in this study were resourceful, strategic, and agentive learners who created opportunities for learning, and, as seen in Figure 1, this finding relates to almost all the other findings in this study. The students made strategic use of various resources in order to write their assignments. For example, Jacey, a newly arrived student from China who had almost no experience in academic writing, drew upon several resources in writing her assignments: She consulted with her classmates and instructors, she looked for models for her assignments, she recycled parts of her old papers into new papers, and chose to write about topics that enabled her to use her work experience. Despite her lack of experience in writing, her active and intentional

use of strategies enabled her to meet the demands of her courses and finish her first semester with a 4.0 GPA.

Other students drew upon their past academic experiences or made the most of opportunities for learning from advisors, faculty, writing specialists, or the texts they read. Harry, Julie and Sooyoung chose to write about subjects they had studied previously, thereby benefiting from past learning experiences; Julie, Sooyoung, and Rainbow, sought feedback from advisors and/or faculty in their departments, and Harry sought feedback from a writing tutor. Maya, lacking the close relationship with her advisor enjoyed by Julie, Sooyoung, and Rainbow, learned from the “distant teachers” (Gruber, 1985) in the texts she read.

The students’ resourcefulness in learning fits well with the sociocultural perspective, which rejects the transmission model of learning and emphasizes active engagement in learning. Rather than empty vessels to be filled by their teachers’ words (Freire, 1998), learners are seen as active participants in their own learning. In this respect, sociocultural theory provided a useful analytical lens through which to view the participants’ resourcefulness, especially their purposeful pursuit of learning from others and their active and dialogic engagement in the readings of their disciplines.

2) International graduate students are independent learners who value their independence and want to be self-sufficient in their writing.

Seven of the eight graduate students in this study were from East Asian countries, and most of these students, especially those from the Republic of China stated a strong preference for working independently and strongly valued self sufficiency. This independence is linked to several other findings in the study (see Figure 1). In particular, if students prefer to work independently they may hesitate to seek work from others such as writing specialists. The fact

that the East Asian students in this study placed such emphasis on independence calls into doubt research that casts East Asian students as collectively oriented.

A number of researchers have suggested that Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, and China value cooperative learning in groups or are characterized as interdependent (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Nelson and Carson, 1995). Americans, by contrast see themselves as individuals, and strongly emphasize individualism (Heath, 1991; Scollon and Scollon, 1981). Consequently, researchers such as Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) have suggested that certain concepts and practices in American university classrooms—for example, voice, peer review, critical thinking and textual ownership—may be difficult for students from “collectivist cultures” (Nelson and Carson, 1995, cited in Lee, 1998). While I do not deny that Asian societies may be more collectively oriented than some Western societies, I believe that it is important to make a distinction between societal tendencies and individual styles: even if Asian cultures do tend to be more collectivist and group oriented, these characteristics may not be found in individual Asian students. Moreover, university instructors are not sociologists, and in the classroom they deal not with groups but with individual students. In the present study several Asian student expressed a strong preference for working individually and emphasized the importance of independence. Consequently, based on the findings of this study, we can build a theory of international students as independent learners who value self-sufficiency.

The Independent Asian

While the dominant picture of Asian students in the literature portrays *all* Asian students as group oriented and tending toward collective decision-making, the attitudes of the students in this study do not accord well with this portrayal. Furthermore, there is nothing in my class observations or in my interview transcripts that suggests that the seven Asian students in this

study were less capable thinking or acting independently than their American peers, nor that the concept of “voice” was lacking in their work. (To the contrary, one of the class instructors, Dr. Newman, noted that she could quite clearly identify the students’ individual voices in their work.) Yet the predominant picture of Asian students as group-oriented and collectivist seems to deny their agency as individuals.

I suggest that the frequent portrayal of group orientation among Asian students may be another reflection of the deficit model of the non-native speaker. Further it demonstrates a kind of “othering” of Asian students and sets up a binary in which Americans are portrayed as independent in thought and action while Asians are portrayed as incapable of original thought or independent action. From a post-colonial perspective, the stereotypical portrayal of Asians as group-oriented can be seen as an aspect of Orientalism (Said, 1978) in which Asians are portrayed as weak or feminine in their need of the support of others whereas Westerners, especially Americans, are portrayed as strong or masculine in their rugged individualism. I do not mean to suggest that Asian societies are not generally more collectively oriented than Western cultures. What I do suggest, however, based on the findings of this study, is that is mistaken to see all Asian *individuals* as group-oriented or to see all Westerner individuals as individualists. To do so is to perpetuate a stereotype.

Furthermore, while I agree that the cultural artifacts that students acquired throughout their education and upbringing may predispose them toward certain beliefs and practices, educators must realize that students are capable of adapting these artifacts or building new ones. Thus several of the Asian students in this study, either due to their individual personalities or due to the influence of their new surroundings, stressed the importance of thinking and acting independently.

In a critique of Atkinson and Ramanathan (1999), Elbow (1999) claimed that if second language learners are to thrive in America, which he describes as “individualistically oriented” (p.328), they must learn to think critically. I suggest that both Elbow (1999) and Atkinson and Ramanathan (1999) are mistaken in implying that international students do not already think critically. Based on the findings of this study, especially on the incisive and perceptive observations of its student participants both in their interviews and in their written assignments, I suggest that critical thinking is a skill at which many international graduate students may excel.

3) Like other students, international graduate students vary in their need and ability to seek assistance with their writing.

The fact that students varied so greatly in their need and ability to seek assistance with their writing makes this finding difficult to categorize. Accordingly, I discuss this finding separately, first here under the heading of “personal agency” and later under the heading of “social and dialogic learning.” One of the most surprising findings in this study to me, as one who has worked as a writing tutor to international graduate students for eight years, was how infrequently the students asked for my assistance with their writing. In my work as a writing tutor in a university Learning Center, I have often had to turn away international students as demand for appointments always exceeds supply. Consequently, I had expected that the students in this study would ask for my assistance in editing the assignments they wrote for all of their classes, but most of the students in the study asked me only to read the assignments they wrote for the classes I observed.

The students’ hesitance to seek my help with their writing is related to their desire to be independent: as Jacey explained, “My brother teach me to be independent because I have a lot of papers to do in the future, and if you always depend on somebody you are always keeping such

stage. However, Jacey's attitude was not shared by all the students in the study, as I discuss later.

4) Peer review may be of limited use to students unless such sessions are carefully thought through and students are trained in peer reviewing

The students in this study who took part in a peer review session uniformly reported this experience as “unhelpful.” This finding is related both to the students' expressed aim to be independent and to the students' desire to get feedback not from their peers but from experts, either faculty members or writing specialists. This finding also points to a limitation of sociocultural theory: From a sociocultural perspective, one would expect peer feedback to be an ideal situation for learning in the zone of proximal development; however, this was not so.

Peer review is a practice that has been widespread in L1 and L2 composition classrooms for some time (Flower and Hayes, 1981; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Nystrand, 1984) and the present study shows that the practice appears to have spread to graduate classrooms. This may be due to the widespread influence of social learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991), which suggest that students learn best when interacting with others. However, some research has called into doubt the belief that peer reviewing is always useful. For example, Berg (1999), Nystrand (1984) and Huff and Kline (1987) concluded that peer reviewing may be problematic unless students are given specific training in how to review their peers' papers. This was also the case in the present study.

In the Developmental Psychology class, the students took part in a peer review session in which each student exchanged a draft of her research proposal with another student; then students gave each other feedback on their drafts. All the focal students reported that they found this peer review session unhelpful, even “a waste of time.” These findings are in line with much

of the literature on peer review sessions (Benesch, 1984; Berg, 1999; Huff & Kline, 1987; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Nystrand, 1984), which reports that, in order to be effective, such sessions need to be very carefully thought through, and students need to be given training on how to effectively review each others' papers.

Some scholars have reported that activities such as peer review are particularly difficult for non-native speakers. For example, Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) claimed that peer review is connected to a US ideology of individualism that is not shared by students from other cultures. They cited several authors who have criticized peer review practices for being rooted in mainstream American culture (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Carson & Nelson, 1994, 1996; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Connor, 1996; Linden-Martin, 1997; Zhang, 1995).

In the present study, I doubt that the students' critique of the peer review session stemmed from cultural differences, as two of the students reported that they had found peer review sessions helpful on other occasions—Julie and Sooyoung reported that they often found it useful to review materials together when studying for an exam, and Julie reported that she had found peer reviewing useful in another class in which writing a peer review was built into the syllabus, and students were graded on their reviews of their peers' work. What seems more likely is that the review session was unhelpful because the students were not given guidelines about how to review each other's work, they were not trained in how to do so, and they were not held accountable for doing so. This is congruent with research that found that peer review sessions were most useful when students were carefully trained and prepared in reviewing techniques (Benesch, 1984; Berg, 1999; Huff & Kline, 1987; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Nystrand, 1984). Had the students in the Developmental Psychology class been given training in how to

review each other's papers and had reviewing their peers' papers been a graded assignment, the peer review session might have been more useful.

Life Experiences and Cultural Heritage

- 5) The participants believed that international students' prior experience exerts a greater influence on ability to appropriate academic written genres than their level of linguistic proficiency.**

The influence of international graduate students' experience on their writing in graduate school is closely tied to their resourcefulness, as students often use prior experience as a resource for their writing. This relationship is bi-directional because using prior experience to inform their writing enables students to produce written products they may draw upon or recycle in future writing assignments as they refine their knowledge of their fields.

Several studies have found that international graduate students have varied backgrounds and experiences that help shape their socialization into graduate school (Casanave, 1992, 1995; Prior, 1998; Sung, 2000). In the present study, the students had diverse backgrounds and experiences, and their level of experience was a more salient factor in their writing of assignments than was their level of linguistic proficiency. Some students had years of academic experience while others, especially the master's students, had little; some were already on their way to becoming old timers in their academic communities of practice, while others were complete newcomers. Maya, Harry, Rainbow, Sooyoung, and Julie all had considerable experience in academia and were, on the whole, already socialized into their academic disciplines, a fact evident in their writing. Jacey, although still a newcomer, was already beginning to find her feet because of her resourceful use of strategies and her ability to draw on her work experience.

The instructors of the two classes I observed in this study considered that that “language problems” were not a major factor in the performance of the international graduate students. Dr. Newman believed that “it [their performance] didn't have much to do with the linguistics, it had to do with age and experience and that maturation that comes with age, and that usually means work experience or life experience and probably time in a degree program,” and Elaine stated that “the fact that they were international students was not an issue to me in how they were performing in the class.”

The fact that prior experience exerted a greater influence than linguistic proficiency on the students ability to appropriate academic written genres allows us to generate the theory that experience, either work related or academic, is a key factor in students’ performance in graduate school. Thus, based on this findings, we can theorize that students who have more relevant experience, either work-related or academic, are likely to perform better in their graduate programs than those who have higher language proficiency but lack experience.

6) The impact of time—and lack of time—on how international graduate students “do school”

Lack of time was a constant refrain throughout the interviews with the students in the present study. In keeping with the finding on student resourcefulness, the students’ perception that they lacked time to meet all the demands of graduate school meant that they needed to work strategically to do their coursework within time constraints; thus the students in this study looked for strategies to cope with the demands of their coursework (Leki, 1995).

One strategy students can use to gain the time they need to complete their assignments is to negotiate for extra time. This strategy was used by Julie, who used her agency and her position as a full participant in the class to negotiate with her instructor for the extra time she

knew she needed to do well on the midterm examination. Another strategy students can use is sharing the burden with friends. Julie and Sooyoung used the strategy of studying together for the midterm as a way of saving time and balancing the cognitive weight of studying. In their study session, each taught the other what she knew, thereby lessening the need for the more time-consuming task of reading through every lengthy chapter in the textbook.

The influence of time constraints on reading causes students to read only what they must. Spack (1997) noted that her focal student, Yuko, “ignored ‘unimportant’ readings and focused on “the ones the professor has been talking about in the lecture”” (p.40). The students in the present study had a similarly pragmatic attitude toward reading. This attitude was particularly apparent in the program evaluation class: With one exception, Harry, the student who needed the reading to prepare for his comprehensive exams, the students did very little of the assigned reading once they realized that they were not going to be held accountable for doing so.

Other strategies students adopted were similar to those reported in previous research. Like the students in Leki’s (1995) study, the students in the present study drew on their past experiences (Jacey, Sooyoung and Julie), looked for models (Jacey, Rainbow, Harry), and chose to work on projects that were closely related to their previous research (Harry, Sooyoung, and Julie) so that they could recycle parts of old papers into new papers. The students also showed various degrees of resistance and accommodation to the written assignments of their courses (Radeki and Swales, 1988). For example, Jacey and Maya resisted by adapting their assignments to take advantage of their own research interests and experiences, and Julie, Sooyoung, and Harry accommodated by aligning their assignments tightly with the class lectures and readings. By employing such strategies the students able to successfully meet their instructors’ demands and to save valuable time to work on other projects.

7) The impact of personal factors on academic studies

In this study, the factors in one student's personal life negatively impacted her ability to meet the expectations of her instructor. This finding is related to the finding that students are resourceful and strategic learners in that it shows the limits of students' resourcefulness as the student lacked the resources to overcome this negative influence. Much of the literature on graduate students' academic experiences paints a picture of serious students engaged in an earnest and unstinting endeavors to accomplish their assignments unhampered by the intrusion of their personal lives. However, as a few researchers have pointed out, international graduate students have personal lives, too, which may impact their learning experiences in graduate school in various ways (Casanave, 1992, 1995; Fox, 1994, Sung, 2000).

Contesting the Idealized Portrayal of Graduate Students

If researchers are to have a better understanding of the experiences that impact college learning, they must see students as real people enmeshed in a web of relationships both personal and professional. We all know how much our own personal experiences impact our own professional lives, but with few exceptions (see Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Fox, 1994), the literature pays scant attention to what goes on in students' lives outside of the classroom. The present study found that events in students' personal lives significantly impacted their academic performance, particularly in the case of one student.

The intrusion of personal life into academic life was most apparent in the experiences of Inna, who was struggling with a very serious and sometimes life-threatening personal situation throughout the semester. This situation made Inna's performance in the classroom erratic and negatively impacted her ability to concentrate on her class readings. Inna made few comments on how her personal situation affected her academic life, but as an observer, I was able to see a

clear correlation between her worsening personal situation and a deterioration in her performance in class and in her written assignments. Moreover, the few comments Inna did make about the impact of her personal life on her academic life were telling. When discussing her inability to concentrate on her readings, she shrugged and said, “It’s kind of hard to concentrate on your reading when someone has just tried to strangle you.”

Inna’s personal problems exerted a powerful and negative influence upon her performance in class and were a major factor in the “B” grade she received for the class. Interestingly, this finding was paralleled in the experiences of two American students in the classes I observed. One student was forced to withdraw from the class after her mother became seriously ill, and another student missed several classes and one major class-related activity because of the death of her grandmother. Both the latter student (whom I interviewed) and her professor agreed that her absences from class were the reason for the “B” grade she received.

The instructors of both classes I observed were aware of the students’ personal problems and expressed some ambivalence over how to make accommodation for these events. Both instructors thought it was appropriate to make some accommodation, but both also expressed some doubts about doing so because they thought it might be unfair to the other students in the class. Dr. Newman told me, “The other things that students have going on in their lives have more of an impact even than I had realized. And it’s very hard to accommodate that as an instructor,” and Elaine commented, “I do feel it is appropriate to take factors into consideration, yes, and I do, just in a human way. But it’s difficult then because you wonder what things am I not hearing about from other students where they might have benefited from the doubt as well?” This study suggests that in order to have a deeper understanding of international graduate students’ experiences, it is necessary to take into account factors from their personal lives as well

as their academic lives as such factors profoundly influence their performance in the classroom and in their written work.

8) Cultural features in discourse may impact students' ability to engage in procedural display, and this, in turn, can impact their instructors' reception of students' written products.

This study found that one student's classroom discourse, or her ability to demonstrate appropriate procedural display (Bloom et al.1989), was judged as deficient by her instructor. Similar to the last finding on the impact of personal factors in students lives, this finding shows the limits of students' resourcefulness in overcoming negative influences. Interestingly, while much of the literature in this area focuses on the problems that Asian students are assumed to have in speaking appropriately in academic settings (Gumperz, 1982; Morita, 2000; Tyler, 1990; Tyler and Davis, 1995), in the present study, it was the one non-Asian student whose classroom discourse failed to meet the expectations of her instructor.

Inna's classroom discourse negatively impacted her professor's opinion of her argumentation skills and also influenced her professor's reception of at least one of the assignments she wrote. The fact that Inna's instructor wrote on her midterm exam "Perhaps you are approaching your reading for the class too much from the perspective of whether you agree with it as a mom, and not learning critically from it as a scientist" means that these thoughts were in the instructor's mind as she read and evaluated Inna's exam. I have argued in the findings section of this dissertation that these comments were brought about by cultural differences in expectations for appropriate classroom discourse. Consequently, features in classroom discourse have relevance not only to students' classroom participation but also to their writing.

A number of researchers have pointed out that language minority students are disadvantaged in taking part in class discussion (Crago et al., 1997; Smith, 2000; Tyler, 1995; Tyler and Davis, 1990), and that when such students' classroom participation is seen as inappropriate, the students themselves may be judged as deficient. Other researchers have looked particularly at the classroom cultural clashes between Russian students and their instructors (Petrov, 2003a, 2003b; Smith, 2000).

These findings of previous researchers were also found in the present study and suggest that for a holistic and contextualized understanding of graduate students' acquisition of academic discourse, even in studies that focus on writing, researchers should consider the role of students' classroom interaction as the classroom is the major point of contact between student and instructor; thus a student's performance in the classroom may predispose the instructor positively or negatively toward a student, and, in turn, the instructor's responses toward a student may affirm or undermine that student's image of herself/himself as a good student who is valued or as a poor student who is seen as deficient.

9) Incidence of plagiarism among international graduate students

This study found one incident of plagiarism among its eight participants; thus, it only partially supports the findings of previous research: that plagiarism may be a concern for international graduate students who are unfamiliar with Western concepts of textual ownership. Like many of the findings in this study, this finding is also related to student resourcefulness: in this study, Miri, the student who plagiarized her midterm paper, used plagiarism as a resource that enabled her to complete the assignment with a B grade that compared favorably to the C grade she received for the paper she did not plagiarize. In this way—though it is uncomfortable to admit it—Miri used plagiarism as a resource. It is evident, however, that had she been

“caught” this resource would have become a negative influence that could have had severe consequences: she could have failed the class or she might even have been asked to leave the university.

This finding is also related to the findings on peer editing, seeking help with writing, and independence. It is easier (though more risky) to plagiarize a paper than to seek help from a peer or a writing specialist. Plagiarism also indicates a negative form of independence as it obviates the need for help from others (though, of course, the words are being taken from others at a distance). In the present study Miri declined my offer of assistance in editing her plagiarized paper, saying that she did not need my help—though she did ask for my assistance in editing a later paper that she wrote herself. It is also possible that she avoided my feedback because she realized I would recognize her plagiarism.

Previous researchers have suggested that a major problem in ESL writing is the attribution of authorship or, more bluntly, the question of plagiarism (Barks, 2001; Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Bloch, 2001; Currie, 1998; Deckert, 1993; Evans & Youman, 2001; Howard, 1995; Hsu, 2003; Hyland, 2001; Myers, 1998; Pecorari, 2001; Pennycook, 1994, 1996; Scollon, 1994, 1995; Spack, 1997; Stanley, 2002). Some researchers have implied that Chinese students, in particular, may not share Western proprietary attitudes toward texts (Fox, 1994; Matalene, 1986; Pennycook, 1994; 1996; Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1996; Scollon, 1995). Given that the subject of plagiarism is so prevalent in the literature, it is perhaps significant that in the present study I found only one incident of plagiarism.

Social and Dialogic Learning

Most of the students in the study took advantage of opportunities for social learning with their advisors, other faculty members, or writing specialists, and several students also found

opportunities for learning through their dialogue with the texts they read. These practices fit well with a sociocultural perspective on learning in which a fundamental assumption is that knowledge is socially constructed. Most of the students in this study were active participants in the social construction of knowledge.

10) The importance of the advisor/advisee relationship

In many respects, the findings of the present study underline the critical importance for doctoral students of developing and maintaining a good relationship with their advisors. This finding is consistent with previous research (Belcher, 1994; Dong, 1995; Luebs et al., 1998), but also suggests that previous studies have underestimated the importance of this relationship. The importance of the advisor/advisee relationship is strongly related to the finding on student resourcefulness as a key resource students availed themselves of was the mentoring of their advisors. Consequently, the students took care to cultivate and maintain these relationships wherever possible, as they recognized its value.

Several of the students in this study reported good relationships with their advisors. In particular, Rainbow, Sooyoung, and Julie describe this relationship as close and supportive. As a result of their collaboration with their advisors, Rainbow, Sooyoung, Julie, and Harry had all written successful conference proposals (either alone or with their advisors) and had completed manuscripts (written with their advisors) they were in the process of submitting for review and publication.

In contrast, the relationships of two students, Inna and Maya were more problematic. Inna, the one student who had a poor relationship with her advisor reported various problems that stemmed from this asymmetric and exploitative relationship, a finding also congruent with the literature (Belcher, 1994; Dong, 1995; Taylor and Holberg, 1999). Despite spending

considerable (unpaid) time working on her advisor's research, Inna was given a negative evaluation by her advisor and is now in the process of looking for a more supportive mentor.

Maya's relationship with her advisor was problematic in two respects: first, her advisor was very busy, so Maya had great difficulty getting in touch with her; second, Maya and her advisor had quite different epistemological and theoretical perspectives. These differences constrained Maya's writing, especially in her comprehensive exams, and made it unlikely that Maya and her advisor would ever collaborate on writing. While Maya's relationship with her advisor is not characterized by the lack of trust and respect described in some of the literature (Belcher, 1994; Dong, 1995), it does show the complexity inherent in a relationship in which two people are required to come to an understanding. It also shows that the student—as the person with less power in a relationship that is inevitably asymmetric (Luebs et al. 1998)—is the one who is most likely to have to adapt to meet the expectations of the advisor, who has more power.

Reevaluating the Advisor/Advisee Relationship

Based on the findings of this study, I theorize that for international graduate students, a good relationship with one's advisor has benefits in affective, financial, and academic domains. Conversely, a poor relationship or a mismatch in terms of research interests or theoretical perspective can negatively impact one's experiences in graduate school. In the present study, several students mentioned the affective support they received from their advisors. In one case, this support extended far beyond the boundaries of campus: In the semester after my classroom observations took place, Rainbow needed to have fairly major surgery. Her advisor stayed at the hospital throughout her operation and was there when she awoke. Over the next few days, Rainbow's advisor spent many hours at the hospital, demonstrating that her support for Rainbow went far beyond mere academic counseling.

One factor that is seldom mentioned in the research is the financial aspect of maintaining a good relationship with one's advisor. Of the six doctoral students in the present study, three had research or teaching assistantships related to their advisors' research and a fourth would begin an assistantship related to her advisor's research in the following year. If the students do not maintain good relationships with their advisors, these assistantships might be in jeopardy. At the university where this research was conducted, full time tuition and fees for international graduate students who study year round total approximately \$24,000 per year. If a student has an assistantship, these fees are waived. In addition, doctoral students typically earn about \$9000 per year for a one-third-time assistantship. Consequently, if a student were to lose her assistantship, she would lose benefits amounting to \$33,000 per year. Considering that the majority of the doctoral students in the present study had assistantships related to their advisors' teaching or research, the financial value of maintaining a good relationship with their advisors and, hence, keeping their assistantships was enormous.

The students in the present study who reported good relationships with their advisors had all collaborated with their advisors to write publications, either articles or book chapters, and some had also collaborated with their advisors to write successful conference proposals. However, to date, none of the doctoral students in the study had American publications they had written alone, though some had publications in their home countries and several had written successful conference proposals alone. If we accept that the publication of written texts is how graduate students demonstrate their membership in the academic discourse community (Berkenkotter et al., 1988, 1991) and that such texts are often constructed through social interaction (Hyland, 2000), doctoral students' advisors have a crucial role to play in

collaborating on manuscripts with their students, thereby facilitating their entry into the academic discourse community.

Finally, this study demonstrated that a poor relationship with one's advisor or a mismatch in terms of theory and epistemology can have severely negative consequences; in Inna's case, the poor relationship led to exploitation, a total lack of mentorship, and a poor evaluation. In Maya's case, the differing theoretical perspectives and epistemologies that she and her advisor held constrained Maya's writing. In writing for her advisor, especially in her comprehensive exams, Maya always had to keep in mind the fact that she was writing for someone who disagreed with her theoretical and epistemic stance. Consequently, she could not write as she wished to write, and she realized that she was never likely to collaborate with her advisor in writing for publication.

11) Doctoral students' need for more substantive feedback on content and form

Feedback from a tutor is good, but feedback from an instructor is better by far because then, ideally, the students can receive feedback on both the content and form of their writing. This finding is related to international graduate students' understanding of the value of the advisor/advisee relationship because if they can get good feedback from their advisors, they realize that other faculty members who are experts in their field are also a good source of feedback. Unfortunately, however, several of the students in the study were disappointed with the feedback they received from their instructors on their written assignments. This disappointment was felt keenly by doctoral students who were about to start work on their dissertations. Rainbow articulated this problem most clearly: first she described how useful she had found the experience of working with a professor who did give her substantive feedback:

I think he tried to show everyone in class and in individual tutorials how important it is that writing should be, how you say, graceful: how to write gracefully. It's from him,

from his class I learned you need to work hard to improve your writing. . . . I just learned so much about writing from that course and about content.

Second, she expressed disappointment at the feedback she had received in other classes:

Another thing I had expected is comments on my writing skills. I think it's kind of unique because it's my third year, and I wanted to improve my writing skills, but really instructors do not provide that. I'm very, very eager to improve my writing skills at this point . . . so I think it would be nice if they could provide some comments on students' writing skills because we are expected to at least publish something.

The subject of instructor's comments on students' papers also appears to have received little attention in the literature. While several researchers have investigated the effects of instructor feedback on students' papers in ESL writing classes (Conrad and Goldstein, 1999; Ferris and Roberts, 2001) and even the effects of peer feedback in ESL writing classes (Berg, 1999; Nelson & Murphy, 1993), few researchers have studied the effects of instructor feedback in content courses. Even those researchers who do focus on writing in content courses (Leki, 1995; Leki and Carson, 1994, 1997; Spack, 1997) have paid little or no attention to the effects of instructor feedback on students' writing. However, research on graduate students' writing (Berkenkotter et al., 1988; Luebs et al. 1998; Prior, 1998) found that instructors' feedback on graduate students' writing is an important component of success in graduate school, even though instructor feedback was not the main area of interest in these studies. It is not surprising, then, that the students in the present study hoped to find what Luebs et al. (1998) described as feedback from "thematic areas [to] sentence level nitty gritty of page numbers and references" (p.76).

3b) Seeking help from writing specialists

As stated earlier, international graduate students vary in the extent to which they need or seek help from writing specialists. This finding is related to the other findings under social and dialogic learning since all these findings indicate that students learn through interaction with

others. One student in the study, Harry, placed great emphasis on the value of writing assistance and asked for my feedback all the assignments he wrote, explaining that “most Korean students just internalize kind of identity—we are not good students at speaking English. . . so that kind of perception motivate them to look for some kind of service for them that may help them improve their English, their papers.” Harry’s comments about his feeling of inadequacy as a language learner are consistent with some of the literature on students who seek tutoring which found that such students often had low self-efficacy (Juel, 1991; Lepper et al., 1993; Matthews, 2001).

Most of the students in the study had sought assistance with academic writing in English at some point in their academic careers, Julie, Maya, and Inna as undergraduates and Harry, Sooyoung, and Rainbow as graduate students. These students indicated that tutoring in writing was particularly important during their first year of writing in English. They also noted that assistance from American friends was inadequate: In Sooyoung’s words, “I need some person who can read my paper and give me feedback—very specific ones—with some explanations.” They wanted help from a writing specialist who could diagnose and explain their difficulties in writing and this person needed to be either a writing specialist or an instructor.

12) Many international learners are skilled writers who participate deeply in their communities of practice and compete on an equal footing with their native-speaking peers

In contrast to the deficit model of the second language learner, this study found that many of the students in this study were skillful writers who were described as “excellent” and “outstanding” by their advisors and instructors. This finding is consistent with the finding that international graduate students are resourceful learners who create opportunities for learning; indeed, this finding is the result of this resourcefulness. The doctoral students in the study

achieved their deep participation in their communities of practice through their strategic use of resources that enabled them to create opportunities for social learning with advisors, with faculty, and with writing tutors, and also through their dialogic interaction with the texts they read.

Based on the instructors' comments on the focal students' performance and on the generally high grades they assigned the students, the present study does not support the findings of research that found linguistic proficiency, or lack thereof, played a major role in these international students' experiences in graduate school (Prior, 1998; Schneider and Fujishima, 1995). The students in this study, like those in Morita's study (2000), performed on a level with their native-speaking peers.

Celebrating Scholarship: "They were outstanding"

A major finding of this study is that international graduate students are resourceful learners who are willing and able to compete with the American students in their classes and who participate deeply in their communities of practice. In the words of one of the instructors, Elaine, "In general, they were outstanding." Clearly, these instructors did not perceive their students' non-native speaking status as a deficit, and, on the whole, neither did they students themselves.

In sum, while the fact that they must write in a second language means they may require more time to write, it does not mean that the writing they produce will be inferior. Julie, one of the most skillful writers in this study speaks English as a *fourth* language (she also speaks Mandarin, Cantonese and Malay), and Maya, another adept writer speaks English as a third language (she also speaks Bengali and Hindi), yet these students' writing abilities exceed those of most native speakers of English. I believe that rather than persisting in perceiving these

students as disadvantaged, we should celebrate their achievements and be glad that they have chosen to study in the US. These students add not only to the diversity of graduate programs, but also to their academic rigor.

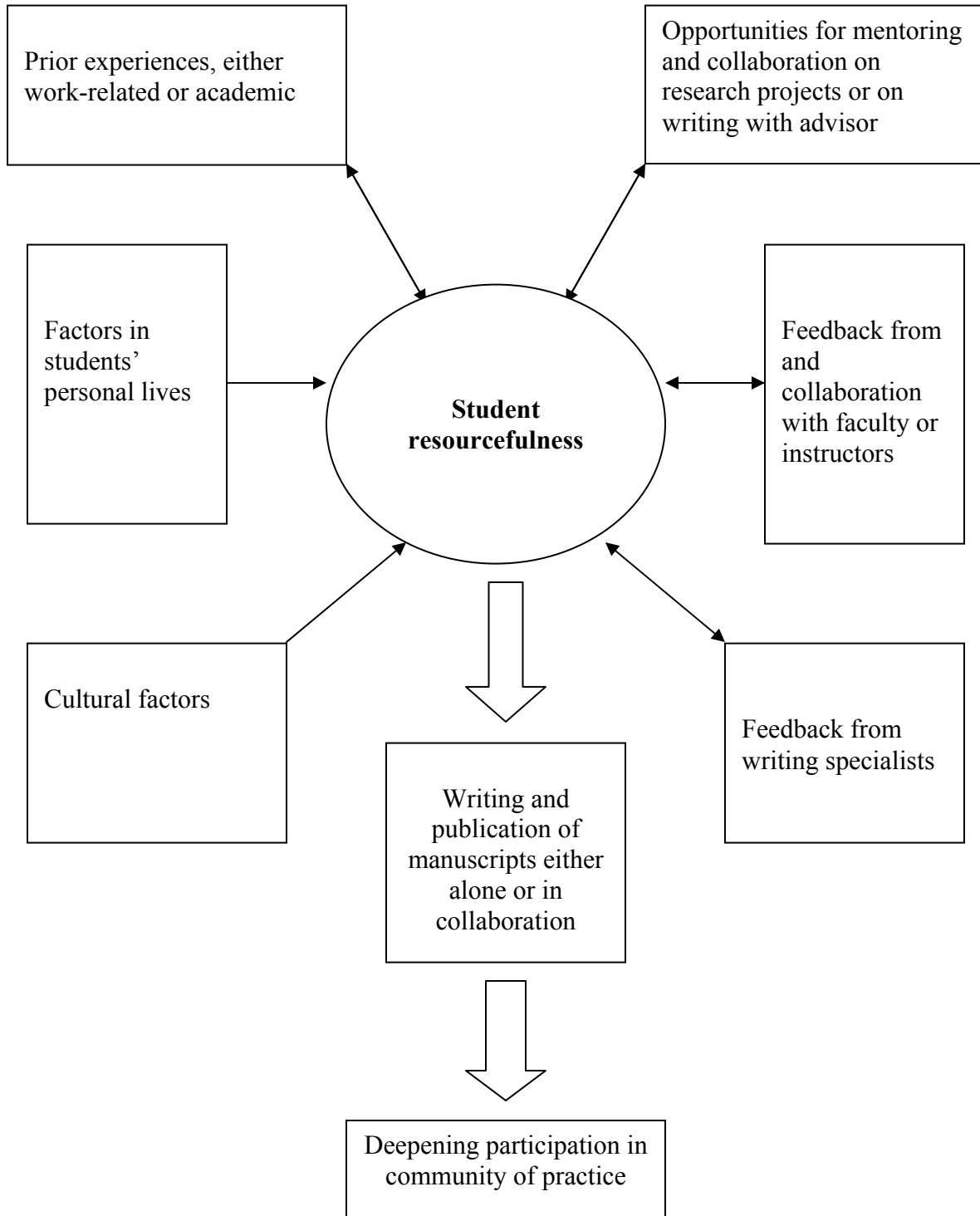
Generating New Theoretical Insight

A primary aim in grounded theory study is to generate new theoretical understandings. As this study uses both grounded theory and ethnographic methods, generating theory is also one of the aims of this study. In this section, I suggest how the findings from this study can be used to generate a theoretical model of how international graduate students appropriate the written genres of academic English. However, a word of caution is needed: As Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) noted, there is no often no unifying theme into which every finding may be neatly slotted. Furthermore, the theory generated from this study should be considered as “*theory as process*”; that is, theory as an ever developing entity, not a perfected product” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.32). Thus, while I state the theories I generate from my data analysis as factual and existential, they are also subject to discussion and reevaluation by future researchers.

Many of the findings of this study are interconnected, as was shown in Figure 1. I believe that several of the findings can be used to generate a theoretical model that encompasses many of the factors that influence international graduate students’ appropriation of academic English in a second (third, or fourth) language. In Figure 2 (overleaf), I propose a model graduate students’ acquisition of academic writing. At the hub of the model is the international graduate student as a resourceful, strategic, and agentive learner. Connected to this hub are the resources that students avail themselves of in order to appropriate written genres: feedback from advisors, faculty, and writing specialists and the experience that they draw upon. Also connected are other factors that influence students’ performance: cultural factors and personal factors.

Figure 2

Model of International Graduate Students' Appropriation of Academic Writing



While in the present study, cultural and personal factors exerted a negative influence, they could equally well exert a positive influence. The outcome of the interaction of all these factors is the students' writing of manuscripts and their deepening participation in their communities of practice. In sum, I suggest that as international graduate students are resourceful and agentive learners, they draw upon and are influenced by a variety of factors, social, personal, cultural, and experiential. By drawing on these resources, they are able to appropriate the genres of academic writing through the activity of writing itself and, in consequence, become more deeply involved in their communities of practice.

One question raised by this model is whether or not it is limited only to the experiences of international students. I believe that the broad outline of the model applies equally well to the situation of native-speaking students: where the experiences of international students diverge are in the details. For example, the findings of this study indicated that most of its participants had sought help from a writing specialist at some time in their academic careers; the same might not be true for native-speaking students. Furthermore, cultural factors are more likely to be a centrifugal force for international students than for native-speaking students. For students who have grown up in the mainstream culture (in other words, for White middle-class students), cultural factors are more likely to exert a centripetal force.

International graduate students may also have some advantages over their native-speaking peers. Often, they have made considerable financial and personal sacrifices in order to attend university in the United States. As a result, they may be more invested (Pierce, 1995) in their programs and more motivated to succeed. International students may also have some cognitive advantages. The process of being accepted into a university in their home state and of being accepted into a U.S. university is often highly competitive, so despite their comparatively

lower linguistic proficiency, it is possible that international students may be better equipped intellectually to handle the cognitive challenges of graduate school than some of their U.S. counterparts.

While international students studying at American universities differ from U.S. students in that they are influenced by different cultural factors and life experiences and they may require more support from writing specialists, they share many experiences in graduate school with their U.S. counterparts and, as this study has shown, can compete on an equal level with U.S. students. Thus, most elements of the substantive theoretical model described above could be raised to the level of formal theory and applied to the situation of all graduate students' appropriation of the genres of academic writing in U.S. graduate schools.

Implications

In this section I will discuss the implications of each of the major findings of this study. This discussion includes suggestions for both pedagogy and administration because, unfortunately, universities often have no graduate writing classes specifically for international students. Accordingly, my discussion of implications includes suggestions for administrators who plan graduate orientations and doctoral seminars for new graduate students and for instructors who teach international graduate students. In addition, some of the suggestions I make are directed at administrators or instructors who would plan and teach a graduate-level writing class.

1) Communicating the importance of advisor/advisee relationships

One major findings of this study is the important role that graduate advisers play in mentoring and supporting their graduate students, especially their doctoral students. However, I suspect that very few students who enter graduate school are aware of the importance of this

relationship. None of the new students in this study understood how important this relationship could be at the outset of their studies (and nor did I when I began my graduate studies).

Therefore, my first recommendation is that graduate students should be made aware of 1) the potential importance of this relationship, 2) the need to find a good match in terms of research interests and theoretical perspective, and 3) the fact that it is possible to change advisors, so if students find that their interests diverge from the advisors to whom they are assigned, they should know that they can seek another advisor. I suggest that all of the above should be made clear to students at the beginning of their graduate studies, either in departmental orientations or in introductory doctoral seminars.

2) Accounting for different levels of experience

In many graduate schools, classes may be open to any graduate students; thus, in graduate classes new master's students may rub shoulders with fourth year Ph.D. students. Clearly, there may be a wide disparity in these students' levels of academic experience. The instructors in the present study were willing to make accommodation for these different levels of experience, and one specifically mentioned that she used entering master's students as the baseline for evaluating the students' work. However, not all instructors are so accommodating. I suggest that it is important that graduate instructors clearly explain their expectations for their students on the first night of class, while students are still able to drop and add classes. Ideally, instructors should be willing to meet students where they are and evaluate their performance based on their level of experience and on their development throughout the semester; however, if instructors of doctoral level classes are unwilling to do this, they should consider limiting their classes to doctoral students; otherwise, entering master's students may be too severely disadvantaged.

3) Providing writing assistance to those who need it

International graduate students may or not require assistance in writing their papers. When they require it, it should be available to them. One finding of this study that surprised me was how seldom the students requested my assistance with their writing although each student did ask me to read a paper at least once, and one student, Harry, asked me to read all of his assignments. However, the students in the present study were fortunate in that their instructors (in the classes I observed and in their other classes) were willing to accept the superficial grammar errors in their papers as long as they did not obscure communication of ideas. Not all instructors are as accommodating. Furthermore, several students mentioned that although they now felt capable of writing independently, in their first year in graduate school, they had needed assistance in editing their papers. Accordingly, I suggest that universities should provide writing assistance to all students who require it, probably in the form of a Learning Center or Tutorial Center.

All of the students in the present study who had sought tutorial assistance with their writing emphasized that it was important to work with an expert. As Sooyoung explained, “I need some person who can read my paper and give me feedback—very specific ones—with some explanations.” Furthermore, the students who had sought writing help from friends or classmates generally found this assistance unsatisfactory. They wanted help from a writing specialist who could diagnose and explain their difficulties in writing. Accordingly, Learning Centers should be staffed by professionals who have training and experience in teaching English as a second language—not just any native speaker will do.

In addition to offering tutorial assistance, I believe that universities should also offer writing classes specifically designed for the needs of international graduate students. In short, I

echo Rose and McClafferty's (2001) call for the teaching of writing at the graduate level.

Ideally, such classes would be targeted toward specific audiences (for example, one class for students in the sciences and another for those in the social sciences), and these classes should also include a tutoring component (as suggested by Fox, 1994) so that students could get individual help with their writing.

4) Encouraging faculty to give students more substantive feedback

Several students in the present study, especially those who were about to embark on their comprehensive exams and doctoral dissertations, expressed a desire for more substantive feedback from their professors. They recognized that their professors were experts not only in the subject matter of their fields, but also on writing about this subject matter. Thus they hoped that their instructors would give them feedback on both the content of their papers and the *form* of their papers. Consequently, departments should have some protocol in place whereby instructors should be encouraged to give more substantive feedback, either on students' papers or in the form of tutorials. The department of one of the classes I observed was about to implement such a program. I would also suggest that the evaluation forms students complete at the end of each class should include items related to professors' feedback on papers or in tutorials.

5) Using peer review sessions thoughtfully and training students in how to review others' work.

The findings of this study confirm the research reporting that students find peer reviewing unhelpful if they have not been trained in its use (Benesch, 1984; Berg, 1999; Huff & Kline, 1987; Leki, 2001; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Nystrand, 1984). Consequently, instructors need to think carefully about how peer review sessions should be structured and train students in advance if such sessions are to be useful. In the Developmental Psychology class, the students

found the guidelines for writing a research proposal to be very helpful; I suggest that guidelines for the peer review session or a peer response sheet (Berg, 1999) would also have helped students to make the most of this opportunity for feedback.

Also, based on Julie's suggestion that students are much better motivated to do a good job of critiquing their peers' papers if they know they will be graded on these critiques, I suggest that students be graded for their review of their peers' work (although I do not think this should be a major part of the grade). However, if students are to be graded for peer reviewing, they should also be given some guidelines, training, and practice in how to review their peers' work. In this way, peer reviewing could be transformed from being "a waste of time" (Inna) to "sessions that significantly influence revision types and subsequent writing quality" (Berg, 1999, p.231).

6) Assigning appropriate readings and holding students accountable for doing them

In this study, two features that detracted from students' engagement in the Program Evaluation class were the difficulty they had understanding one of the textbooks and the fact that these readings were not discussed in class. In consequence, most students did very little reading. The instructor of this class assumed that students were doing the reading, but she did not check that they were doing so. Therefore, I recommend that instructors should make sure that the assigned readings are well integrated into class discussions and connected to the writing assignments so that students are required to show evidence of having read. Instructors should also pay attention to students' feedback about the class readings and consider finding alternate texts if the students report that the readings were unhelpful.

7) Avoiding stereotypes and appreciating students' individual learning styles

Despite the fact that Asian cultures are often regarded as being more group oriented than Western cultures, individual Asian students may be as independent, if not more independent, than American students. One of the female Asian students in this study was described by a male American student as “one of the most independent people I know.” I believe that researchers and practitioners in TESOL need to be careful about perpetuating stereotypes that may be harmful to individual students. If Asian students are always described as group oriented and consensus building rather than independent, their instructors may assume that they are also incapable of thinking independently. Several researchers have already suggested that notions such as “voice” and “critical thinking” may be more difficult for Asian students (Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1999), but this finding is not supported in the present study, in which several Asian students stressed the importance of creativity in writing, and showed evidence of critical thinking in their own writing.

I suggest that TESOL practitioners, out of a well-intentioned desire to explain the behavior of students from different cultures, may have been guilty of over-generalizing characteristics such as group orientation. I myself have been guilty of this on many occasions. However, it may be more important to emphasize that while cultural groups may share certain characteristics, individual students from these societies may not share them; all students should be regarded as individuals rather than as representatives of their ethnic or racial groups.

8) Educating students about Western notions of textual ownership

In considering the notion of plagiarism, it is important to emphasize the distinction between practices that are common within a society and the actions of individuals from that society. In this study, I have reviewed literature that suggests that plagiarism may be a problem

for students from countries such as China, where different attitudes toward textual reproduction may obtain. I do not mean to suggest, however, that *individual* Chinese students are more likely to commit plagiarism once they are made aware of American attitudes toward the practice. What I do suggest is that reviewing the literature about attitudes toward texts that differ from those common in the United States might help explain the actions of an individual Chinese student who is unaware of or lacks understanding of American attitudes toward plagiarism.

The implications I draw from the one incident of plagiarism in this study (Miri's midterm assignment) and from classmate Rainbow's comments about her own lack of awareness of plagiarism in her first year of graduate school, are that all students, native and non-native speaking, should explicitly be taught about plagiarism, and that students should be encouraged to discuss attitudes toward textual borrowing in their own countries and compare them with attitudes in America. It is simply not sufficient to put one paragraph on the syllabus directing students to look at a website about academic honesty. The best venue to teach this subject would be in a graduate level writing class for international students, which, ideally, the students would take in their first semester in school.

I also suggest that as well as explicitly discussing plagiarism in class, instructors should be understanding if their students engage in patchwriting, what Howard (1993) describes as "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures or plugging in one for one synonym substitutes" (p.233). Like Hull and Rose (1989, cited in Howard, 1995), I believe that patchwriting may be an important intermediate step in novice writers' appropriation of the words of others, which truly is, as Bakhtin describes, "a difficult and complicated process" (1986, p.294).

Finally, I propose that instructors should avoid giving the kinds of assignments that lend themselves to plagiarism. Assignments that are merely descriptive and do not require integration with students' own experiences are much more amenable to plagiarism. In another course that Miri took, she had two assignments: one involved gathering, organizing and reproducing information (it did not require original writing) and the other required writing a personal reflection upon her own experiences. The nature of these assignments rendered plagiarism virtually impossible.

9) Understanding and accepting different communication styles

As a result of their previous experiences working with Asian students, the instructors of the classes I observed mentioned that they thought Asian students might be less likely to participate fully in class discussion than their American peers. What they did not suspect was that the participation of the one student from a non-Asian country might be problematic. However, Inna's participation in class was influenced by a Russian style of communication that differed from that of her American and Asian peers, even though her English is very fluent. Inna, believed that her communication style (for example, stating disagreement directly) was typical for Russians, and this was supported by my reading of several studies on the discourse style of Russian students (Petrov, 2003a, 2003b; Smith, 2000).

On the basis of this finding, I suggest that instructors need to be aware that students' communication styles may be influenced by cultural factors, and if they find that their students are not participating effectively, they should discuss the matter with the students tactfully and with understanding. Similarly, ESL practitioners should draw students' attention to features in their discourse that Americans might perceive as rude or inappropriate and model alternate ways

of communicating. If this is done with humor and understanding, students may be able to avoid the potentially serious problem of offending or alienating their peers and their instructors.

10) Keeping channels of communication open and understanding the impact of personal problems on academic performance

Three students in the classes I observed (Inna, and two American students) had personal problems that negatively impacted their performance in class. In Inna's case, the instructor was not aware of the problems until near the end of the semester. Although the instructors of the two classes I observed said that they were aware of how personal problems negatively impacted students' academic performance, they reasonably pointed out that they could not make any accommodation for these problems unless they knew about them.

I suggest that students should be encouraged to make their instructors aware of any unexpected factors that may negatively impact their performance in class or in their written assignments. Once they know that students have problems, instructors may be willing to make some degree of accommodation. Most American students know that it is generally considered acceptable to make their instructors aware of any serious problems they have that might impact their academic performance, but I am not sure that all international graduate students know that it is culturally acceptable to do so. In the present study, Inna was very hesitant to tell Elaine about the problems she was going through. I suggest that discussion of such matters would be appropriate either at graduate orientation, in a first-semester doctoral research class, or even in a graduate writing class for international students. I believe that such classes have a role to play in communicating the norms of academic culture as well as research or writing strategies.

11) Rejecting the deficiency model of the non-native speaker and celebrating bilingualism

Recently, a number of researchers have pointed out how non-native speakers have tended to be regarded as inferior (Johns, 1990; Schneider and Fujishima, 1995) linguistically and sometimes even cognitively (Harklau, 1999a, 2000) by their mainstream instructors. In fact, many researchers have pointed out that the term “non-native speaker” is itself pejorative as it sets up a binary between a (deficient) non-native speaker and an (idealized) native speaker (Kachru and Nelson, 1996; Liu, 1999; Leung, Harris, and Rampton, 1997; McKay and Wong, 1996; Rampton, 1990; Rampton, Harris, and Leung, 1997). The instructors in the present study began the semester with mixed expectations for the performance of their international graduate students, but by the end of the semester they realized that most of the international graduate students in their classes could compete on equal terms with the American students.

Unfortunately, not all instructors achieve this realization. Given the number of international students present in many graduate-level classes, I believe faculty could benefit from some sensitivity training of what it means to communicate in a second (or third, or fourth) language. First, I believe that all doctoral programs should require students studying in their native language to experience learning a second language, and this experience should not be limited to reading in a second language. Second, I believe that the faculty retreat common in many university departments would be an ideal arena for language consciousness-raising! It is common for employees in large organizations to undergo training on gender-appropriate and diversity-appropriate language as part of their orientation process.

I believe that it is important for faculty members to know how it feels to communicate in an unfamiliar language. By doing so, they might avoid the colossal arrogance of academics such

as the editor of *Science*, Floyd E. Bloom, who stated, “If you see people making multiple mistakes in spelling, syntax, and semantics, you have to wonder whether when they did their science they weren’t also making similar errors of inattention” (Gibbs, 1995, cited in Myers, 1998). Linguistic ability does not equate to intellectual ability, and while the faculty members in the present study were well aware of this fact, others are more ethnocentric and less astute.

Directions for Further Research

The present study included interviews with class instructors and students, but not with those students’ advisors. Given the crucial role advisors play in graduate students’ success, future research could address this limitation by including interviews with students’ advisors in addition to the other sources of data. I would also suggest that one semester is too short a period of time to get a full perspective of graduate students’ appropriation of academic writing. Spack (1997) pointed out that there is a need for more longitudinal studies of learning in college as students’ experiences may differ considerably from semester to semester. Case studies that follow international graduate students throughout their years in graduate school, ideally from orientation to doctoral defense, would provide a more accurate and more holistic picture of writing at the graduate level, as appropriating the written genres of their disciplines is a task that might take students several years to accomplish.

There is also a need for more studies that take a sociocultural perspective on international students’ oral experiences in the graduate classroom. The present study indicates that students’ classroom participation can strongly influence their instructor’s opinions of their abilities. More studies, such as Morita’s (2000) study on the oral presentations of international graduate students, need to be conducted to understand how international students’ class participation is

related their academic performance in various areas, such as their relationships with faculty members and with peers.

Finally, more ethnographic studies need to be conducted that capture a more complete picture of studying at the graduate level. Such studies have been conducted on American undergraduates (Chiseri-Strater, 1991) and American educators (Wolcott, 1984), but I have found no such ethnographies of graduate students. While some studies have provided insight into writing at the graduate level (Berkenkotter et al., Berkenkotter et al, 1988,1991, Dong, 1995, 1996, 1998; Prior, 1995, 1998; Scheider and Fujishima, 1995;), especially into the characteristics of the written genres of academia (Bazerman, 1981,1984, 1989; Swales, 1990), I know of no studies that have taken an ethnographic approach to describing what it means to leave one's home country to face the cultural and cognitive challenge of studying at the graduate level in the United States. Such studies would be particularly useful to international students who are considering attending graduate school in America.

Valuing Diversity

This study would be incomplete without restating the enormous value, in terms of outstanding scholarship, in terms of diverse perspectives, and—it must be admitted—in terms of financial income that international graduate students bring to our universities. Recent experience¹⁵ has taught me that university administrators, while touting the value of multiculturalism and diversity, do not always provide the support that international graduate students need to study in American universities. In John Swales' words, "Academic English training has typically had to compete for resources—and typically unsuccessfully—against other interest groups which usually have more campus prestige and power" (1990. p.2): Never more so

¹⁵ My own university has recently cut the number of hours available to international students in its Learning Center and has decided to close its intensive English program.

than in the current economic climate when support services for international students, such as writing assistance programs and university-affiliated language programs, are disappearing at an alarming rate. Reduction in these services is a factor that has caused many international students to consider studying elsewhere (Open Doors, 2003). I urge university administrators to recognize the short sightedness of making cuts that will discourage international graduate students from attending American universities. By encouraging such students to come to our universities and by providing the resources they need to study here, we will be adding to the scholarship and diversity of our universities and making them a better place for all students, both international and American.

Epilogue: Where Are They Now?

Five months have passed since I finished my observations of the focal students' classes, and in this time these students have continued to make progress through their academic careers. Spack (1997) pointed out that there is a need for more longitudinal research studies and her own case study of Yuko demonstrated that a student may have very different experiences of learning from semester to semester. I have stayed in touch with all the students in the study and will probably keep in touch with them at least until they graduate. Accordingly, I end this study by describing where the focal students in this study are now in terms of their studies and to report the progress they have made since the end of last semester.

Rainbow has made a decision about what to study for her dissertation research. Last year she was unable to decide between pursuing a topic related to her own interests or one related to her advisor's research and her assistantship. She has recently made the decision to pursue the latter course and has begun writing her prospectus. Next year she will continue in the research assistantship that has enabled her to conduct research leading to several successful conference

proposals. Since last semester she has made two conference presentations and has had proposals accepted for two more conferences that she will attend this summer. In addition, she is busy working on three manuscripts (co-authored with her advisor) that she plans to submit by the end of this month. She still has not joined a writing group.

Harry has written his prospectus and successfully defended it. A few weeks ago he returned to Korea to begin collecting data for his dissertation, which focuses on the perspectives of stakeholders in a corporate training evaluation. He has applied for an assistantship in his department, but like many graduate students in the current under-funded university system, he does not yet know if his application has been successful. He plans to return to the university this fall to write his dissertation.

Maya recently completed her comprehensive exams. I read them all¹⁶ and considered that they showed evidence of her deep, broad and dialogic reading. She was, however, very anxious about her exam defense. In all of her exams, she tried to find a balance between postmodernism (her own theoretical perspective) and interpretivism (her advisor's). She was concerned that the gap between her theoretical perspective and her advisor's would lead to conflict. Despite her concerns, she was able to successfully defend her exams and believed that ultimately she had the agency to write the exams in the way she wanted. Maya has also continued to have trouble getting her busy advisor to respond to her emails and hopes that this situation will improve next year when she will work in the same building as her advisor. She already has an assistantship for next year—in fact one has been created for her to suit her broad knowledge of qualitative research and her strong interpersonal skills. Next year she will work as a consultant on

¹⁶ In the college of education of which Maya's department is a part, many departments allow students to have their peers read and comment on their comprehensive exams.

qualitative research, advising students and faculty who wish to conduct qualitative studies but lack experience in this area.

Jacey is still working on her master's degree, which she plans to complete in December. This semester she has continued to be stimulated and challenged by her classes, but has found the coursework heavier and her advisor less accessible than last semester, as she has too many advisees. As a result, Jacey, like Maya, has had trouble getting her advisor to respond to her emails. She has no interest in pursuing a PhD, but is looking forward to using the expertise she has acquired in her master's degree in her future career in human resources. Since the study began she has met and become engaged to a young Chinese professor working at another US university. She looks forward to her future with the same buoyancy, optimism, and enthusiasm that she displays in her approach toward her coursework.

Miri has also found her workload heavier this semester, but has enjoyed her classes more, as they are all related to her major in international business. One class she has particularly struggled with is a French class she decided to take just to have another language (a fourth language!). In a few weeks she will be returning to Japan to complete her master's degree, and is already actively engaged in an Internet search for a job with a large corporation. She laughed when I asked her if she was interested in an academic career explaining, "I'm not very into all the research and writing, so that's why I know I will never go to graduate school for the Ph.D." Like Jacey, Miri is eagerly looking forward to a career in business.

Julie has successfully completed the master's part of her combined master's/Ph.D. degree and continues to be actively involved in several research projects with her advisor and with other faculty in her department. This semester she has made two conference presentations and will make two more next semester. She currently has two articles, co-authored with her advisor,

under review, and is hoping that these will soon be accepted for publication. At the end of the spring semester, she still did not know if she had an assistantship for the following year.

Eventually, she told her advisor that she had applied to Ph.D program at another university. At this point, her advisor was able to find the funding necessary to continue Julie's assistantship. .

Sooyoung has also successfully completed the master's component of her combined master's/PhD program. This semester she made a conference presentation at one of the most prestigious conferences in educational research (AERA) and she will present at another conference this summer. The two chapters she co-authored with her advisor and other faculty in her department will be published this year. Sooyoung, like Rainbow and Maya, has found a research assistantship for next year that will enable her to continue working on some ongoing research projects and is looking forward to continuing her doctoral studies next year.

Inna's situation has improved considerably since last semester. Her personal problems have been resolved, at least to the extent that they no longer hinder her ability to study. Also, she has found a new advisor who has already been acting as much more of a mentor than her old advisor. Her new advisor has encouraged her to use the data she (the advisor) has collected for her own research to write a conference proposal. Inna is currently working on the proposal which she will submit this summer. Like Harry and Julie, Inna did not know until mid summer whether or not she would have an assistantship for the following year, and she was concerned that the negative evaluation she received from her old advisor and the low (B average) grades she received in her first semester might have impeded her ability to get an assistantship. However, even without an assistantship she planned to apply for loans that would enable her to at least complete the master's component of her degree. Eventually, Inna did receive an assistantship that will fund her studies for the next academic year.

All of the students continue to meet the written requirements of their courses and to make progress in their degree programs. Based on the findings of my study and on my continuing communication with the students, I expect that the doctoral students will continue to make valuable contributions to scholarship and research, and the master's students will make their own contributions to the business world either in the U.S. or in their home countries.

We are fortunate to have such students in our colleges and universities, but we should not take their continued presence in American universities for granted; unless we make provisions for these students by offering them the financial support they need (through assistantships) and academic support they might like (through learning support services), such students may choose to study elsewhere. The *Open Doors Report* (2003) reports that international students may already be beginning to forsake American Universities for other English-speaking countries where visas are more readily obtainable and where support, both financial and academic, is more readily available. Although international student enrollment in American universities continued to grow in 2003, this growth slowed considerably compared to the last five years. I would like to close with the words of Dr. Goodman, President of the Institute of International Education: "Foreign students bring intellectual, economic and cultural benefits to our campuses and communities . . . the United States remains the premier destination for foreign students. At the national, state, and campus level, we need to take concerted action to insure that we retain that position."¹⁷

¹⁷ Institute of International Education Press Release, paragraphs 6-7.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Jacey's First-Semester Written Assignments

(Reproduced from her handwritten note)

Jacey's Writing Assignments

Sep 9 HRD Value Survey, Short Assignment # 1
Sep 10 Organizational Change Project Proposal: Self Learning Contract
Sep 12 Evaluation Approach Decision
Sep 16 Research Questions and Initial Annotated Bibliography
Sep 24 Case study: Organizational Development Intervention
Sep 25 Book Critique Plus Summary of Book Review
Oct 7 Progress report on survey of HRD Team project
Oct 10 Project Paper #1
Oct 14 HRD Research Paper
Oct 15 Individual Change project # 2
Oct 16 3 Abstracts on reading of Gender and Race
Oct 22 Case study report
Nov 4 Progress report on Survey of HRD Team Project
Nov 5 Case study report
Nov 6 Corporation project (group work)
Nov 11 Short Assignment # 2
Nov 12 Self Directed Learning Project
Nov 13 Corporation Project (group work)
Nov 19 Organizational Change Project
Nov 20 2 Abstracts on Reading
Nov 21 Project paper # 2
Nov 25 Career Autobiography
Dec 3 Individual Change Project # 3
Organizational Change Project Presentation
Dec 4 Final Paper, Gender and Race
Dec 9 Survey of HRD Written Project and Oral Presentation

Appendix B

Developmental Psychology Guidelines for Research Proposal

Writing a research proposal provides an opportunity to develop critical thinking skills, become an expert in a particular subject matter, and think through a particular research problem like a developmental psychologist. A research proposal describes a research study designed to answer a substantive empirical question. It may contain formal hypotheses (e.g., “Personality traits will show higher heritability estimates among younger than older twin pairs”; “Cognitive ability scores will show greater decline with age when studied cross-sectionally than longitudinally”) and/or exploratory research questions (e.g., “Is there a relationship between parenting style and infant temperament?”; “Do Personality traits show the same levels of stability across different epochs of the lifespan?”). The difference is that hypotheses propose a specific directional effect whereas research questions do not. You should propose hypotheses if you have strong theoretical and/or empirical evidence to support the relationships you are interested in studying. You should propose research questions for new areas of research where such rational is lacking.

Your research proposal for this class must propose a *developmental* study. That is, it must examine change in some process across some portion of the lifespan. However, remember that simply studying some behavior in children does not make a research question “developmental.” The proposal does not have to involve humans, nor does it have to involve children—as we discussed in class, developmental research looks at the process of change and the principles underlying change in a behavioral domain, in some type of animal, across a portion of the lifespan. Your proposal must address some relevant developmental question within some domain of research. Your “developmental” research proposal for this class will need to include different age groups in either a cross sectional or a longitudinal design. Not all “developmental” research includes different age groups, but I want you to do that for this assignment. Topics appropriate for the research proposal include anything related to the topics covered in this class. **All students must discuss their topic with the instructor and have that topic approved before proceeding.**

Your research proposal should not be on the exact topic of your masters or dissertation research, nor should it be in an area where you have written in the past. However, I do want the assignment to be relevant for you, so it is fine to tailor it toward your own interests, as long as you are exploring some new (for you) area.

In developing an idea for a research proposal, you should be primarily concerned with making a unique contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge. That is, what you propose to study should build on and extend existing research, not simply replicate previously published findings (there is a place for replication work, but this is not the purpose of this assignment).

The research proposal should be no longer than about 20 pages total (including title page, references, etc). Papers should have 1 inch margins, 12 point font, be double-spaced, and be in APA style. Remember that this proposal is not expected to be an exhaustive review of the literature but a starting point for future research.

The proposal should include the following items, in this order, which is the same order found in a research article submitted in APA style: a title page, abstract, an overview of the pertinent literature, research questions/hypothesis development, methodology (including proposed data analysis strategy), a section on contributions, limitations, and suggestions for future research (a discussion section is not relevant since you have not results to discuss), references, and appendices and figures (if applicable). Follow the APA style manual for guidelines on how to organize and develop these sections (you should purchase your own copy of the APA style manual if you don't already own one).

Title page: The title page contains the title as well as your name and affiliation. This information should appear on the first page of the proposal.

Abstract: The abstract summarizes the study and its hypothesized findings. This should be the second page of the proposal.

Overview: This section provides a brief introduction to the topical area. It should set the stage for the research question/hypotheses by making a case for why there is a need for the proposed study. The purpose of the study should be clearly stated. This part of the paper should be no more than 2 pages.

Research questions/Hypothesis development: Once you have provided an overview, you should develop the rationale for your research questions/hypotheses. This part of the paper will probably be about 5-6 pages.

Methodology: In this section you need to explain how you plan to test your research questions/hypotheses. This will probably be about 3-4 pages. A method section should contain the following sections (some of these may not be relevant depending on the type of study):

Sample: Describe the participants in the study. Who are they? How many participants are there? Be sure to describe any other important characteristics of the sample (e.g., demographic characteristics of your population, type of species if your participants are non-humans, how the participants will be recruited).

Procedure: This is where you describe the process that you will use to study the phenomenon of interest (e.g., survey, laboratory experiment, etc.). Be sure to describe any necessary equipment in sufficient detail.

Measures: this describes the behaviors or constructs you will be measuring. If you are measuring observable behavior, be sure to describe how behaviors will be coded. If you are using surveys or other research tools which have already been developed, be sure to provide citations.

Proposed Data Analysis: This is where you will outline how you propose to analyze the data. Be sure to lay out what specific questions you will seek to answer from the data, which variable will be involved in analyses, etc. I'll be glad to provide guidance on this if you get stuck.

Contributions, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Research: In this section, you should outline what specific contributions your study will make to the field, any limitations of your study, and some ideas for future research which builds on your study. This should be about 2-3 pages.

References: Alphabetized list of references used in the paper. These references should be in APA format. Length will depend on the number of references cited.

Appendices and Figures: you may or may not have appendices and figures. Appendices are used to display materials that were developed for the study. This might include a figure depicting a stimulus display, other materials to be used in an experiment, or survey items. Figures are used to graphically depict relationships among variables under examination. Length will depend on the number of appendices and figures.

Additional Resources

The APA Manual provides detailed information on how to structure a research proposal. It also provides much more detail on what to include in various parts of the methodology and samples of how to appropriately cite references.

Another resource I the empirical studies assigned for this class. These articles use a variety of research designs, methodologies, samples, etc. and some are an excellent source of information on how to structure a research paper. You can skim through some of the leading development journals, which include Developmental Psychology, Child Development, Infancy, Cognitive Development, and many others.

If you are struggling with ideas for your proposal, skim the discussion sections of empirical articles you have read for class. Often these articles contain very clear recommendations for future research. If you find such an idea in this manner, be sure to conduct a literature review to be sure that someone else has not already taken this idea and conducted their own study.

Finally, don't hesitate to ask questions. Most of you have never written a research proposal before, and this is not something you are born knowing how to do. It is a skill developed through practice.

Deadlines

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Sep. 8: | One paragraph rough description due (schedule a brief conference with Elaine some time this week to discuss your idea) |
| Sep. 26: | Revised paper proposal due, along with a list of at least 3 references in APA style. |
| Oct. 29: | 1-2 page synopsis, including preliminary hypotheses, with list of at least five references in APA format. |
| Nov. 14: | In class workshop on proposals. Bring a current draft. We will share them with each other to read, for feedback. |
| Nov. 24: | Proposal due |
| Nov. 24 – Dec.5: | Proposals presented to class |