Dissertations, Master's Theses and Master's Reports

2017

ON THE SAME PAGE: THEORY, PRACTICE & THE ELA COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Jessica Lauer
Michigan Technological University, jlauer@mtu.edu

ON THE SAME PAGE: THEORY, PRACTICE & THE ELA COMMON CORE STATE
STANDARDS

By

Jessica R. Lauer

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In Rhetoric, Theory and Culture

MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

2017

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Rhetoric, Theory and Culture.

Department of Humanities

Dissertation Advisor: *M. Ann Brady*

Committee Member: *Robert R. Johnson*

Committee Member: *Marika Seigel*

Committee Member: *Kedmon Hungwe*

Department Chair: *Ron Strickland*

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations

CCSS: Common Core State Standards

ELA: English Language Arts

Abstract

This research sought to examine how writing was happening in high schools. States across the country, including Michigan, began implementing the Common Core State Standards in 2010. The standards place a heavy focus on informational texts particularly as a student reaches high school. The standards also suggest that writing should be a shared responsibility among teachers, acknowledging the importance of cross-disciplinary writing skills. Using a grounded theory approach to analyze the semi-structured interviews conducted with eight English teachers in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, this research revealed a disconnect between theory and practice when it comes to how educational standards related to writing were - or were not- being implemented in the classroom. This does not suggest fault on the part of teachers; on the contrary, it suggests a problematic division between how administrative powers conceive standards (in theory) and the support given to actually implement these standards in the classroom (in practice). While solutions to these tensions require systemic change to take place in education, this dissertation uses the concept of technê to illustrate the importance of theory and practice working together, as well as giving us insight into the implications that such divisions create.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement and Background of the Problem

This research was inspired by the question that came to mind before I taught my first freshman composition course as a graduate student: what do the students already know? I had no idea what kind of writing was being taught in high schools, and neither did any of the fellow graduate students I asked. It seemed odd to me that I was about to teach writing to a classroom full of students who only months ago were in high school and I had no sense of their prior knowledge on the subject. This, in turn, lead me to question why there isn't a better bridge of communication between high school and college teachers, in particular those who teach writing. Over the last several decades, there have been waves of interest in fostering relationships between academia and industry, attempting to dissolve the theory/practice and academic/industry binaries that have existed when it comes to writing and communication (Bosley 1992; Brady 2002; Dorazio 1996; Miller 1989; Tovey 2001). The relationship with industry is one that continues to be fostered in specific areas of writing studies, in particular, in technical communication. This continued relationship has shown itself as fruitful for several reasons. For one, instructors are made aware of, or kept up to speed, with industry trends that they can prepare students for in the classroom[1]. Yet, in my experience, there seems to

---

[1] This relationship does raise ethical concerns regarding whom universities are then serving: students, or corporations? See Miller (1989) for a more detailed discussion of this dilemma in relation to teaching technical writing in particular.

be very little communication between high school educators responsible for teaching writing and between college writing instructors in general. In 1959, Albert Kitzhaber responded to a NCTE annual meeting that focused on eliminating freshman composition by arguing that it did not need to be abolished, but it *did* need to be improved. One of his suggestions was that while certain improvements did need to be made in high school writing instruction, university English departments also needed to "become cooperatively involved with high school teachers in developing better methods for teaching writing" (Berlin, 1987, p.126). Kitzhaber even went so far as to develop, at least on paper in a 1962 *College English* article, two courses specifically meant to prepare high school teachers in writing instruction -- both were also rhetorically based, incorporating selected texts from Plato and Aristotle. Forging a better line of communication between these two entities can help address issues both high school and college writing instructors' encounter.

To return again to my own tale of preparing myself to teach a composition course for the first time, after reading through the Common Core State Standards (from here out, referred to as the CCSS, or "the standards") in order to gauge an idea of what was happening in the classroom, I then had a phone conversation with my younger sister who was a high school student at the time. At the end of our conversation, I was left with more questions than answers. My sister told me something I found particularly intriguing: that the current assignment in her English class was to write a technical report. What was the purpose of this assignment? Does this teacher have a background or a special interest in technical writing? What other assignments did they have in this class? She called me the next week and tell me the report had been switched to an oral presentation because, in her

words, the teacher did not want to read a bunch of boring technical reports. Why would a teacher give an assignment they had no interest in? Was it a requirement?

If this particular teacher didn't have much interest or experience with technical writing, this would not come as a surprise. As many scholars have noted, historically composition and technical communication instructors at the college level have rarely had formal training in writing[2]. To summarize this history, when the fields of rhetoric, composition, and technical communication began to gain steam in the 1970's, many of the faculty teaching the writing courses in the department were in fact not trained in writing or writing pedagogy. On the contrary, most had completed their graduate research in literature and had little to no interest in writing studies or pedagogy. Those who ended up teaching composition and technical writing courses were often not eager to do so. Many times (and this is still the case today), these courses were "dumped" on graduate students or junior faculty members to teach. Was it possible that certain genres that found themselves represented in the CCSS, such as technical reports, were being "dumped" onto high school teachers who had no interest or background in technical writing?

This dissertation sought to investigate what kind of writing was happening in high schools in the U.S. under the Common Core State Standards. The standards lay out their own vision of literacy, but what was actually happening in the classroom? I was interested in informational texts – and informational writing, specifically – due to the fact they are heavily focused on in the latter years of a student's high school career. What

---

[2] See Connors (2003) and Berlin (1987) in particular for histories of the fields of rhetoric and composition, as well as technical communication.

exactly were informational texts, in the eyes of teachers? Why were they so important

that they should make up 70% of texts a student interacts with by the time they reach the

12th grade? Further, the standards state that literacy should be a shared responsibility

among teachers. What were teacher's experiences with the different aspects of literacy,

such as writing, being a shared responsibility?

To me, my sister's tale of her 11th grade technical writing assignment being

switched to a presentation on a technical topic was an indication of how common

standards can perhaps force teachers into teaching material they have no knowledge of or

interest in, much like was the case for university instructors who taught early courses in

composition and technical writing. The Common Core suggests that 70% of texts 11th

and 12th grade students interact with be "informational texts". This was, *I assumed*, the

impetus behind the technical writing-turned-technical presentation assignment my sister

was given. Why was there such a heavy focus on what some might consider "practical"

writing? If writing is supposed to be a shared responsibility, why didn't the English

teacher collaborate with a teacher in another, more "technical" subject area, for this

assignment? Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiatives within universities have

been ongoing in the U.S. since the 1970's[3]. James Kinneavy (1983) suggested the most

effective approach to WAC would be for English teachers to "learn to speak the generic

logics of the other departments" and that the other departments move beyond the isolated

---

[3] The history of WAC within secondary education is far less researched. Childers & Lowry (2012) note that
Anne Ruggles Gere's book *Roots in the Sawdust: Writing to Learn across the Disciplines* (1985) was one
of the first works to discuss WAC in the context of secondary education, and it wasn't until almost a
decade later another major publication to discuss it was released, Farrell-Childers, et al. *Programs and
Practices: Writing Across the Secondary School Curriculum* (1994).

language of their own departments and "make the other step toward a unifying language, the dialect of the generally educated reader" (p.20). During my research, it came to light that while the teachers interviewed agreed that writing should be a shared responsibility, as is suggested in the standards, the reality was that responsibility (and thus, accountability) remained placed on English teachers. There is good reason for this, such as issues of teacher preparation and training when it comes to writing.

This research began with a seemingly simple question: what kind of writing was happening in high schools? But, as I think I have illustrated, this simple question raised many more complex ones. Reading the CCSS could give me one perspective, but interviewing teachers gave me deeper perspectives into what was actually happening in the classroom, versus what the CCSS suggested should be happening in the classroom. I began this research by focused this research on informational texts in particular due to the fact they are so heavily focused on in the standards. What are informational texts? What kind of informational writing do students do themselves? Again, the standards lay out one definition of what these genres entail, but how do teachers' define them? I was also surprised to read that the standards encourage writing to be a shared responsibility among teachers in all subject areas. I was also a bit dubious - was this really happening? I have listed out many questions in the last few pages, so I will now list the ones that ultimately directed this research project. In trying to find out what kind of writing was happening and how writing was being taught in high schools, these became my driving questions of inquiry:

- How do teachers define informational texts?

- How do their own definitions line up with the definition of informational writing as it is outlined in the standards?

- How is informational writing being practiced by students?

- Is writing a shared responsibility among teachers across subject areas?

Because the nature of this research is inextricably tied to - and in some ways influenced by - the CCSS, I will begin first by providing a brief background of the standards, in order to provide a contextualization for readers and illustrate the impact the standards have had on the types of writing (and reading) focused on during a student's high school career. I will provide a little bit of background on the CCSS in order to contextualize this research, and I will also summarize some of the important scholarship related to my own research questions and project that has been conducted previously. Lastly, I will provide a preview of what the remaining chapters of this dissertation research hold.

1.2 Background and Development of the Common Core

I will begin by noting that I am not opposed to the idea of having common standards in general, nor am I opposed to the CCSS in particular. The standards themselves I believe address important educational goals that are relevant to the 21st century student. Any major critique I personally have of the standards rests in the issue of standardized testing, something which has been intertwined into the standards from their very conception. While this aspect should not be ignored, my concern at present is with establishing some context for the reader who may not be familiar with the standards, and focusing on the elements of the standards that relate to my own research. Namely, I will

focus on the ELA Standards for 9-12th grade students. So, while I focus here on tracing

the development of the standards, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge that the

issue of standardized testing is always present in conversations about the Common Core.

The core standards claim to "lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate

person who is prepared for success in the 21st century" (NGA Center, *Introduction*), with

the all-encompassing goal of the standards is to ensure that "all students, regardless of

where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life" (NGA

Center, *Development Process)*. Making sure students are prepared for all of these things

upon graduation of high school may seem like a rather lofty goal altogether. Some have

suggested that lumping together these different goals indeed seems unrealistic:

> Ze-ev Wurman, a former DOE official under George W. Bush, points out what he
> feels is the absurdity of claiming these standards can create a student mass that is
> both college and career ready. Wurman believes that no single set of standards
> that are measured by a single test can do this. The result will be standards either
> too high for "career readiness" after high school, or too low for college readiness.
> This makes sense when one simply asks, 'What kind of career is a student ready
> for armed with only a high school degree?'" (Owens, 2015, p.186).

Reconciling these two different paths of college and career has been on educators' minds

for at least a century. John Dewey also addressed this question circa 1903, when he wrote

in *The Educational Situation* that one of the most pressing "practical problems" facing

secondary education specifically was "problems relating to the adjustment of preparation

for college to preparation for other pursuits in life" (p. 405). Ostergaard and Ludwig

(2014) also discovered in their archival research that teachers at the Oak Park and River

Forest High School in Illinois between 1912 and 1928 that teachers then were concerned

with this very problem as well. It seems to be an issue educators have been grappling

with for at least a century, and an adequate solution has yet to be found. This goal of preparing a huge variety of students for the multitude of situations they may encounter after they graduate from high school and they question of how to do that is a question that looms over this dissertation research, especially when it comes to writing.

Discussions of creating common standards goes back to 2007, according to the development process that is outlined on the core standards website (NGA Center, *Development Process*). On the website, the motivation for the creation of the standards is what is described as a "lack of standardization" among states' standards. In 2008, Congress gave the U.S. Department of Education $5 billion dollars[4] for education reform and Race to the Top (RTTT) was formed. Essentially, Race to the Top provided a portion of the $5 billion dollars of federal funds to schools in order to prepare teachers to begin implementing the cores standards (Office of the State Superintendent of Education). In order to receive part of the $5 billion, schools had to agree to the following[5]:

1. They had to agree that teachers would be evaluated based on students' test scores
2. They had to agree to increase the number of privately managed charter schools
3. They had to agree to adopt 'college and career ready standards' (what would become CCSS)
4. They had to agree to "turnaround" low-performing schools, including firing principals and teachers

---

[4] This number does not include the significant funds donated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which were used to research and write the Common Core State Standards (Layton, 2014).

[5] It is also important to keep in mind that while they may get a cut of the funds, consider also that under core standards that the schools would now have to invest in the technology to comply with them: all Common Core testing is done online, which translates to the need for more computers, software, and bandwidth to support the testing (Ravich, 2014a).

5. They had to agree to collect personally identifiable information about students and store it in a data warehouse[6]
(Ravich, 2014b)

While it is noted in several sections of the core standards website that "the federal government played no role in the development of the Common Core" and that "state adoption of the standards is in no way mandatory" (NGA Center, *Myths v. Facts*), the above rules shed light on how monetary incentives from the federal government could potentially have a strong influence on a state's willingness to adopt the core standards.

Even perhaps more troubling, very few of the writers involved in composing the standards were actually educators. While some of the members worked in higher education, they could not claim any real K-12 teaching experience, nor did they have any specialized knowledge about child development (Owens, 2015). Instead of directly involving teachers who do have K-12 classroom experience in the development of the standards, the standards were developed "under the aegis" of the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State Schools Officers, and Achieve (Ravich, 2014b)[7]. Though the core standards website allege that teachers were involved in fact included in the development of the standards, the evidence of this provided on the standards website

---

[6] This did raise some FERPA concerns; however, FERPA regulations were "reinterpreted" by the Department of Education in 2011 so that third parties could access students' personal data. (Owens, 2015)

[7] Of the 27 members (this number would later be 24) that comprised the original group who drafted the general college and career readiness standards in 2009, 16 of them had ties to Achieve, ACT, Inc., or the College Board (Owens, 2015; Ravich, 2014).

illustrates that teachers were not involved in the writing of the standards themselves, rather, they were consulted for feedback:

Teachers were involved in the development process in four ways:

1. They served on the Work Groups and Feedback Groups for the ELA and math standards
2. The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM), and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), among other organizations were instrumental in bringing together teachers to provide specific, constructive feedback on the standards.
3. Teachers were members of teams states convened to provide regular feedback on drafts of the standards.
4. Teachers provided input on the Common Core State Standards during the two public comment periods.

(NGA Center, *Development Process)*

All of these points listed imply, if not explicitly state, the inclusion of teacher *feedback* as opposed to actual involvement in the initial creation process. Further, just as with the expert and public feedback solicited, it is unclear if any of the teacher feedback was taken into consideration. Instead, this the lack of consultation with teachers in the creation of the standards, as well as the pressure that the standards created for teachers vis-à-vis standardized testing and teacher evaluations, had several effects. For one, it can be argued that the standards are not as effective as they could be, because those who are presumably the experts when it comes to education - the teachers - did not play a central part in their development. What tremendous value could those who are in the classroom every day, those who actually develop lesson plans and curricula, have brought the development of the standards so that they were a better reflection of classroom realities rather than ideals? It is perhaps because of their lack of participation that some educators

have in turn meet the standards with resistance. In explaining this resistance, Ravich (2011) points to the context in which these standards emerge: "they arrive at a time when American public education and its teachers are under attack" (n.p). Part of this has to do with using standardized testing as a measure of teacher success, which is part of the criteria to receive RTTT funds, as pointed out above. Ravich also points that no other nation tests students every year, nor has any other nation made so many changes in education policies in such a short time. Furthermore, no other nation relies on student test score to assess teacher performance, or for that matter, relies on corporations for "rating, ranking, and labeling our students, our teachers, and our schools" (n.p.). So not only were teachers on the whole left out of the process of creating core standards, but the RTTT initiative, and in turn the CCSS, put tremendous pressure on teachers, because now their career mobility was directly linked to the standardized testing scores of their students'. [8] As is evident, there are plenty of legitimate reasons for resistance. Why were some of the most important figures in education, the teachers themselves, largely left out of the drafting process of what would become the guiding framework for public education moving forward? This dissertation attempts to address this problem of overlooking those voices most central in the education enterprise - the voices of teachers – by using in depth interviews as the primary method of inquiry in order to seek a deeper understanding of the research questions I have listed above.

---

[8] For a more complete history of standardized testing in U.S. Education and the ways in which it is problematic, see Owens, 2015.

On March 10, 2010, a draft of the standards was made available online for public comment and over 10,000 comments were received (Owens, 2015). What is not clear, however, is if any of this public feedback or suggestions from the Feedback and Work Groups that the writers of the standards had consulted was ever actually taken into consideration. Indeed, the summary of the feedback released was by and large dismissive of any concerns that were raised (Webber, 2012). It was not just feedback from the public that was ignored, but feedback from education experts, as well. Education historian Diane Ravich (2014b) was invited to the White House during the early stages of development of the standards where she met with senior administration officials. During this meeting, she urged them to field test the standards, fearing the standards could potentially widen the achievement gap. However, she notes that her advice would fall on deaf ears: the field tests never happened. Sarah Reckhow, a scholar in education policy at Michigan State University, affirms the lack of testing, stating that "Usually, there's a pilot test — something is tried on a small scale, outside researchers see if it works, and then it's promoted on a broader scale...that didn't happen with the Common Core", adding that some states, eager for money, adopted the standards before the final version of them had even been written (Layton, 2014).

The standards also insist that literacy education be a shared responsibility within the school (NGA Center, *Key Design Considerations*). This suggests that all teachers are responsible for important elements of a student's literacy education, including writing. While this insistence is absolutely a good idea, implementing it in practice introduces some complications. For one, not all teachers are trained in writing, and thus they are not

confident in preparing or grading writing-based assignments. When I say writing-based

assignments, I am referring to writing that goes beyond "fill in the blank" or short

response styles of assignments. These types of assignments are what Michael Carter

(2013) might refer to as *scribing* as opposed to *writing* or *composing*. Furthermore, not

all teachers agree that they too should be responsible for areas of a student's education,

such as reading or writing, and that this is the responsibility of the English teacher alone.

As I will discuss in the later chapters of this dissertation, even when teachers are on-

board to sharing this responsibility, finding the time to collaborate with colleagues on

assignments, rubrics, or cross-class projects centered in writing. Further, teachers in the

United States receive comparably much less professional development time annually than

those in other developed countries – and indeed, much less training in general including

the training they receive at the university level (Darling-Hammond et. al., 2010). To be

sure, there are many issues that stand in the way of literacy being a shared responsibility

among teachers. While this dissertation will focus on the shared responsibly of writing, I

think some of the issues I've outlined above and will discuss in more depth in the next

chapter can certainly be applied to other literacies, such as reading and speaking, as well.

1.3 Writing in the U.S.A.

It may come as a surprise that this shared responsibility of writing hasn't been

easier to implement. After all, movements such as Writing Across the Curriculum have

been around for nearly 50 years, so why do the same complaints about students not being

able to write still plague us? Just as with the lack of quality professional development in

the U.S., I believe one reason why students "can't write" is in a fact systemic issue of the

American education system that can be traced back to how we value teachers as a culture and view teaching as a profession, and how this is perception is reflected in different aspects of education, such as teacher training in colleges and universities. There also seems to be a perception of writing to be at once both something easy ("*Of course* I can write! I'm not an idiot!") yet something totally elusive ("These students don't know how to write!"). Simply being *able* to write is much different from being able to write well. If writing is to be a shared responsibility, then all teachers need extensive training on the teaching of writing during their teacher training programs. In addition, if this is indeed a standard schools would like to continue to uphold, then an annual professional development centered in writing would be beneficial in maintaining "best practice" approaches to writing, as well as ensure consistent expectations among faculty.

As I suggested above, writing seems to be viewed as both a simple and rudimentary skill that everyone knows how to do, and at the same time this elusive talent that we are continuously told seems to be absent in the next generation. One thing to consider when we discuss how we teach writing is that very rarely is a high school English class only about teaching writing (Pender, 2011). More often, English classes combine topics in both reading and writing. In a semester, one class can cover units in a variety of genres, from literature and poetry to research and resume/cover letter writing. A typical high school English class covers a great many skills, *including* writing; it also involves reading, analysis, critique, and methods of research.

For the past several decades, it seems like United States has been in a constant state of education crisis. A 1975 cover of *Newsweek*, showing a young man hunched over a desk, pencil in hand. The title on the cover announces: *Why Johnny Can't Write*. The

corresponding article inside the issue alleges that neither high school nor college graduates are able to write - college graduates "will be unable to write ordinary, expository English with any real degree of structure and lucidity." Likewise, it suggests "the chances are less than ever" that high schools students interested in entering college "will be able to write English at the minimum college level when they get there". The prediction put forth for those students not planning to attend college after high school is equally as grim: "their skills in writing English many not even qualify them for secretarial or clerical work". The article warns that "the U.S. educational system is spawning a generation of semi-literates" (p.58). I would argue that now, over 40 years later, we can objectively say this was not true.

While there is a considerable amount of research done on education in the United States, little of it ever looks to teachers for their viewpoints or perspectives, despite the fact it is their "individual and collective experience [that] constitutes schooling." (Seidman, 1998, p. 4). When histories of composition are written, they are typically histories that have been comprised of information found in previously published histories (Miller, 1979; North 1987) – few histories have been written based on actual classroom happenings, on interviews with teachers, or on archival research. Further, many histories of writing are often situated in or taken from elite institutions of instruction, while rural histories have been largely ignored (Miller, 1990; Moon, 2007; Ostergaard and Ludwig, 2014). In addition, while previous scholars, particularly those in the field of technical communication, have emphasized the importance of fostering strong industry-academia relationships, the relationship between high school and college writing instructors seems to be lacking if not nearly non-existent. This research seeks to address this discrepancy in

15

method (exclusion of teachers in research) and in communication (between high school and college instructors) by asking teachers themselves how they conceptualize and teach writing in the classroom, and to lay a foundation for further research in the teaching of writing in secondary education. The results of my research showed cohesiveness in how English teachers were defining informational texts; however, it also revealed that writing was not a shared responsibility among teachers. With this information in mind, it should not be too shocking then that repeatedly during the interviews, teachers would mention how students sometimes "forget" how to write.

Grounded theory research does not begin with a hypothesis, but rather ends with one. The theory which emerged from this research indicates that there is a theory/practice binary in how educational standards are being implemented. We (high school and college writing instructors alike) are teaching students how to write, but are we also teaching them to think about *why* they are writing in a certain way, at a certain time? I began thinking more deeply about this question while interviewing teachers, and many (almost all, in fact) of them noted a difference in the quality of student writing in the English classroom and what they produced in other classes. Once they left the English classroom, the skills they had learned and used seemed to "go out the window", as one teacher put it. So, when other teachers told them that a certain student "couldn't" write, that really wasn't an accurate representation of what was happening: the student *could* do it, they just *weren't* doing it. So will placing an emphasis on reflection, of considering the "why" of a writing task, along with the "how," improve students' writing abilities? My experience teaching, and my conversations with high school teachers during this

16

dissertation research, tell me yes it could. But, to answer this question is another research project altogether. Instead, I turn to some of the oldest teachers in Western culture – Aristotle and Plato --for guidance on how to think differently about a problem that has followed us into the 21st century -- *why can't these students write*? – and what can we, as teachers, do about it? I do not attempt to present a definitive solution, but instead use the concept of technē (commonly defined at "art or craft") as a way to think about this division between theory and practice in education standards, and in how we teaching writing.

1.4 Outline of Chapters

The next chapter will present previous scholarship that has been conducted in the field of writing studies (of which I'm including the fields of rhetoric, composition, and technical communication) that is related to my own research concerns in this dissertation. While I look at studies conducted in the context of high schools, I will also include research that has been done regarding college-level writing – in particular, first year composition and writing across the curriculum initiatives. Though this scholarship may focus on a slightly different writing scenes (college writing v. high school writing), much of the research on college level writing can help inform high school writing as well.

Chapter 3 will expound upon the methods and methodology used for this research. This research is qualitative in nature and was guided by feminist research practices. In particular, this research was guided by feminist standpoint theory (Collins, 1997; Harding, 2003; Hartstock, 1983; Smith, 1990) which values the knowledge and

perspectives of marginalized groups of people. Along with the methodology, I will also present my methods for collecting and analyzing data. For this research, I conducted qualitative interviews with high school English teachers. By conducting interviews, I was able to hear the perspectives of teachers on elements central to the Common Core, their experiences specifically with teaching writing, and their challenges teaching in general. I felt this was important, because though teachers are the face of education, they are in fact often ignored when it comes to conducting research in education, as well as forming education policy (such as the CCSS). Because I wanted the results of this research to emerge from the data and not my assumptions about that data, I used a grounded theory approach to coding the interview data. A grounded theory approach ideally produces results that are then grounded in the data itself.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. Though teachers were unified in their conceptualizations of what informational texts were, they however spoke of disparities in student writing across subject areas. Despite the standard's commitment to literacy development – including writing -- being a shared responsibility among teachers, and in many cases something that the teachers interviewed acknowledged their schools focused on, it was not the reality.

Lastly, Chapter 5 considers a major discrepancy that was revealed between what the Common Core says, and what was being practiced in the classroom with concern to writing: that writing be a shared responsibility among teachers. I use the concept of technê as a lens for looking at this issue, and examining the ways in which divisions in theory and practice not only affect writing specifically, but also how these division are present in the structure of the educational system as a whole. While I argue that

something must be done to bridge these gaps, rather than make recommendations that require action on the part of government and administrative entities, I instead purpose ways that teachers of writing at the secondary and collegiate level can advocate for important systemic changes to be made, and in the meantime, what can be done locally to foster better communication between teachers in different subject areas, and how university teachers of writing can better support their counterparts who are teaching writing in high schools.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

One of the research questions this dissertation addressed is how teachers conceptualize informational texts. The genre of informational texts was focused on in particular as the Common Core suggests 70% of all texts students interact with by 12th grade should be informational texts. Why are informational texts so important, and how do teachers define what they are? This research also looked at the notion of writing being a shared responsibility among teachers across subject areas. Writing being a shared responsibility is something that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) "insists" upon, but does it actually happen in practice?

While quantitative studies in education can provide valuable information, they can also risk reducing complicated issues to numbers and percentages. Further, qualitative research often focuses on assessment and phenomena that have occurred as an end result of something - teaching methods employed, certain assignments given, ratios of how content is distributed. Rather than focusing on the end results of student learning, this dissertation instead focuses on the voices, opinions, and rationalizations of teachers who are responsible for teaching writing in high schools. The CCSS provide a guide for what to teach, but not how to teach it. This is not a critique of the standards; rather, it illustrates how questions regarding the standards organically emerge, such as: how do teachers define genres such as informational texts that are part of the core standards? How do state standards affect what or how they teach? To explore these questions further, I engaged in interviews with eight teachers in rural areas of Michigan's Upper

Peninsula. Not only was this geographical area of interest to me because it is my own community, but also because by focusing on rural areas I attempt to subvert the dominant histories of writing that root themselves within elite institutions of education (Miller, 1990; Moon, 2007; Ostergaard and Ludwig, 2014). Alternate approaches in education research, such as looking at regional and colloquial accounts of education, can provide relevant and fresh perspectives on current issues. For example, in their historical research on writing in high school, Ostergaard and Ludwig (2014) examine histories of high school writing that exist outside of the "composition archive" (p.69) and focus on local histories instead. Using archival research, they focus on the Oak Park and River Forest High School (OPRFHS) in Illinois during the early twentieth century, and look at writing requirements of the time and how the teaching staff developed curriculum.[9] In their research, they find that OPRFHS teachers were trying to grapple with what seems to be the continuous problem of figuring out what kinds of writing will best prepare students for life beyond high school, much as we still are today. This dissertation research uses a grounded theory approach to qualitative interviews, and is very much a localized portrait of how teachers in one area of the U.S. conceptualize different genres of writing and approach the teaching of writing. Further, the research in this dissertation is important

---

[9] Two interesting aspects of this research that are noteworthy: First, at Oak Park and River Forest High School, English class was required all four years of high school, as well as additional elective courses in English. As Ostergaard and Ludwig (2014) write, "writing was genuinely at the heart of the high school experience for OPRFHS students" (p.75). Students' writing was not regulated to the teacher's eyes; their work was often published in both the school and local newspapers, as well as featured at school assemblies. The school administration often sponsored writing competitions as well. A second point of interest is that Oak Park and River Forest High School happened to be the high school Ernest Hemingway attended, and the compositions of him and his sister Marcelline are used as examples of student writing through the article.

because it addresses two simple, yet central, questions that have been overlooked in histories written on education in the U.S.: How do teachers teach, and why do they teach the way they do? (Cuban, 1993; Fraser, 2007). In my case, I am interested specifically in how writing is taught in high schools under the CCSS.

This literature review will explore previous studies conducted on writing in high schools, and consider the history and impact of movements such as writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) that aimed to support teachers of all subjects in the common goal of teaching writing. I will also discuss the importance and value in seeking out the voices of teachers for this research, and provide a history of teaching as a profession that establishes teachers as a historically marginalized group. Establishing this history is important because the treatment and professional status of teachers reflects more broadly the value(s) of education in the U.S., both historically and currently, and speaks to a history that has tended to place the teaching of writing at a particularly low level of esteem. I will also outline some of the major studies that have looked into how writing is taught in high schools in the U.S., focusing on those studies that use, or at least incorporate, a qualitative approach in order to reflect the methods used in this dissertation. There has also been some very rich research that has been done regarding histories of composition and rhetoric within the university system and the college level composition course (Berlin 1987; Connors, 2003; Whitburn, 2000). Though I focus on writing in high schools in this dissertation, these histories of writing and composition in higher education are nevertheless both valuable and relevant, and are referred to at times throughout this chapter. For one, it is in colleges and universities that most teachers

currently receive their teacher training, so their own ideas about writing are influenced by their college education. Also, many of the issues and observations discussed in research on writing in higher education are universal themes that many teachers, not just college-level ones, can attest to.

Following a discussion of the marginalization of teachers are professionals, I discuss some of the pioneering research that has been done on writing in secondary education and in college writing courses; in particular, I address writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives and look at previous research that has grappled with what exactly teachers and researchers are referring to when they talk about informational texts.

2.2 Writing in Secondary Education: Prior Investigations

Fraser (2007) writes that "Education is far from being a science; indeed, it probably never will be, for there is too much richness in the strange human interaction in which one human being supports another in the process of learning and growth" (p.7). This quote emphasizes the importance of how using research methods such as interviews are able to tap into what Janet Emig refers to as "humanistic data" (1971). Emig's 1971 report *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders* is a foundational text in research that has examined how writing has been taught at the high school level, as well as how this kind of research regarding writing in high schools has been conducted concerning methods. In her research examining the composing process of 12th graders, Emig uses a case study approach and focuses on their writing behavior. As a result of her research, Emig argues that a change in how composition is taught in high schools needs to be

made, starting with "the training and retraining of teachers in composition" (p.4). She is very critical of the "five-paragraph essay", and contends that one reason teachers of composition have a difficult time teaching writing is because they themselves do not write. Because of this, "they underconceptualize and oversimplify the process of composing", and the result is the persistence of the "Fifty-Star Theme" (p.98). Like Emig's research, this dissertation also provides "humanistic data." Rather than observe students as case studies, however, I have generated humanistic data via teacher interviews in order to better understanding the kinds of writing that take place in high schools from the perspectives of teachers.

Arthur Applebee (1981; 1984) dedicated a considerable amount of his career to looking at how writing is taught in secondary schools in the U.S., and I spend a great deal of time in this chapter discussing his research because it is unparalleled in both the scale and depth at which he examines issues of writing and teaching writing in the context of the secondary education classroom. One of the major research projects he helmed was *The National Study of Writing in the Secondary School*, which used both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The first phrase of his research, which began in the fall of 1979, was conducted with funding from the National Institute of Education, resulted in the publication of the 1981 report *Writing in the Secondary School: English and the Content Areas*. For this research, Applebee conducted a wide-scale survey, observed classrooms, and conducted interviews with both students and teachers. Further, his research was not only concerned with the writing that happens in the English or

Language Arts classroom, but also looked at other subject area classrooms as well, including math, science, and social science classes.

Though somewhat of an aside, it is interesting to note given the focus on informational writing in this dissertation, that in the forward to the 1981 report mention above, Charles Cooper, a NCTE committee member, asks readers to imagine designing a writing program that was certain to fail. He goes on to list all of the "bad practices" one might normally avoid when teaching writing: have students only write 2 or 3 sentences at a time, assign lots of fill-in-the-blank exercises, set assignment due dates a mere 2 days ahead of time. He continues his vision of pedagogical horror: "Students would nearly always write transactional (to convey information) discourse. We might occasionally in English class ask for fictional or personal-experience writing, but even there we would most of the time ask for informational writing" (p.xi). In Cooper's envisioning of a bad writing program, informational writing is at center stage.

Applebee's study, however, does not focus solely on informational writing in high schools, though that is one of the categories of "writing activities" he establishes. In this study, Applebee uses linguist James Britton's (1975) system of categorizing different types of writing based on their function to create the categories of writing that he used for this large-scale research project. Applebee included 5 different categories, including *informational uses of writing* (and what Britton calls "transactional" uses of language), and is broadly defined as "the use of writing to record or share information" (Applebee, p.28). Applebee makes further distinctions regarding what informational uses of writing encompass, establishing three different activities that includes: note taking, traditional essay and report writing tasks, and "tasks in which the level of abstraction because less

25

important than achieving a particular effect on the reader" (p.28). This final activity, what

Britton et al. (1975) call *conative* writing, refers to writing "in which (1) the attempt to

convince override all other considerations (as in advertisements) or (2) rules are given in

a context in which compliance is assumed (as in a list of school rules)" (p.28). If

Applebee's definition of informational uses of writing is compared to the definition of

informational/explanatory writing provided in the Common Core, it is clear that what

constitutes informational writing has changed rather significantly over time. These

changes indicate the breadth of definitions and meanings informational writing has held

over the years, and these changes are not only bound by time. As this dissertation points

out, individual teachers also have their own definitions of what constitutes informational

writing, though they all view it as non-fictional in nature.

Applebee produced several additional scholarly works springing from the initial

report published in 1981. The second phrase of this research is presented in the book

Contexts for Learning to Write: Studies of Secondary School Instruction (Applebee,

1984). In this iteration of his research, Applebee and his co-researchers look at "the

development of individual students' writing skills" and at "the changes that occur when

teacher emphasize writing as a tool for exploring new ideas rather than as a way to test

previous learning" (p.4). The later was influenced by initial observations in the first

report, which noted that most of the writing students did was for the purpose of testing

knowledge on previously learned material. This second phase of research is relevant to

this dissertation, because it spends a considerable amount of time grappling with *how*

writing is taught. Applebee reports that many students, though they know what to

produce in terms of writing, "did not report receiving instruction of *how* to produce it" (p.105)[10]. In fact, Applebee notes "there was more evidence of instruction after students' writing had been completed - in the form of grades and comments - than there was before" (p.106). This is particularly interesting in the context of this dissertation research, as one of the interview questions I asked participants was if they could recall how they were taught to teach writing (for example, taking a methods class); most could not recall specifically being taught how to teach writing, though they could recall learning strategies for teaching reading.

Several years later - in fact decades later - Applebee's report was still the only large scale study conducted that had looked at writing and writing instruction in secondary education. Needless to say, much had changed since 1979- 1980, when the research for *Writing in the Secondary School: English and the Content Areas* had been conducted. So in 2005, Applebee, along with fellow professor and scholar Judith Langer, began conducting research for The National Study of Writing Instruction (NSWI) that addressed "a seemingly simple question: What and how are students in U.S. middle and high schools learning to write" (Applebee & Langer, 2013, p.1). In comparison to their 1979-1980 study, Applebee & Langer (2013) found that "students in our study were writing more in all subjects, but that writing tended to be short and often did not provide students with opportunities to use composing as a way to think through issues, to show

---

[10] This is also revealed in "phase one" of the 1981 report, but the student case studies are focused on in more detail in "phase two" (1984).

the depth and breadth of their knowledge, or to make new connections or raise new issues" (p.15). They concluded that, just as 30 years ago, the majority of writing that happens in the classroom is done with teachers while students are asked to merely "fill in blanks", regurgitating information to demonstrate comprehension of previous material covered, or following formulaic essay models that mirror what they will see on a high stakes test. This distinction between the act of simply writing something down in contrast to forming a written composition relates to the following section, which addresses movements in education pedagogy that champion the importance of students writing across disciplines, or as it is sometimes called, writing across the curriculum.

2.3 Writing-Across-the-Curriculum

What the studies done by Emig (1971), Applebee (1981; 1984), and Applebee & Langer (2013) ultimately point out is that there is a difference between writing and composing. As Michael Carter (2003) writes in his book *Where Writing Begins: A Postmodern Reconstruction*, "the problem is that we, as a culture, think of writing in terms of the physical existence of marks on a page and the physical act of making those marks" (p.102), whereas teachers of writing often define it in much more abstract terms: writing as inquiry (Lauer, 1982; Young, Becker, & Pike, 1970), writing as self-actualization (Rohman, 1965), or writing as beginnings (Spellmeyer, 1989), for example. Applebee (1984) notes that most of the "writing" that happened in schools he was observing was fill-in-the-blank type of writing, which tested students' previous learning. These types of writing practices Applebee observed are different from writing that can be

called composing, or "writing-as-thinking" (Welch, 1990). Kelly Pender (2011), for example, argues that writing should be taught as writing, which is to say that writing classes should be less focused on text analysis and critique, and more focused on the actual production of texts (i.e., writing). However, she notes that due to the history of the field many instructors of courses such as composition or technical writing have actually come from a literature background with no formal training in writing or writing pedagogy. This is a problem, because we've seemed to have accepted being literate as the basic qualification for teaching writing. In his book, Carter (2003) uses the terms "writing" and "scribing" to address how two fundamentally different things often get grouped together as the same activity. Scribing, he writes, "is the generation of text without questioning, challenging, without upsetting, without interpretation", and he refers to it as a "sort of copying" (p.115).

The idea of a separate composition course as we have today was an American idea that emerged in the late 19th century universities and "was an attempt to adapt rhetoric to dramatically changed conditions both inside and outside the academy, conditions produced by the industrial revolution and the new middle-class and professional mores" (Halloran, 1990, p.175; Horner, 1990). One of the most familiar composition assignments - the five-paragraph essay - is, as Emig writes, "so indigenously American that it might be called the Fifty-Star Theme" (p.96). It is perhaps because of the emergence of a separate composition course the belief that English teachers were the only ones responsible for the teaching of writing came from, despite research which suggests teachers agree that writing should be happening across content areas and not just in English or Language Arts classes (Applebee, 1984). Because it is stated in the CCSS

that the teaching of writing is a shared responsibility among teachers, students

hypothetically are engaging in writing across the curriculum. During my research, I asked

participants if they felt the teaching of writing was indeed a shared responsibility at their

schools, and if so how expectations and standards for what "good" writing was were

established and reinforced among classes. Generally speaking, though teachers are in

agreement that writing *should* be a shared responsibility, the logistics of this actually

taking place in schools has some obvious (and some not-so-obvious) complications.

One of the main complications was simply implementing this requirement – many

teachers are not trained or prepared to incorporate more writing assignments into their

classrooms. In their study on implementing WAC institution wide at Michigan Tech

Fulwiler & Young (1986) note that this type of initiative starts with the faculty. Not only

do that have to be "on-board" for incorporating more writing assignments and instruction,

they have to be prepared for it. In that case of Michigan Tech, Fulwiler and his research

partners hosted workshops for faculty members from various departments. What their

work illustrates is that preparing teachers for incorporating more writing into their classes

doesn't have to be a long, drawn out training process. Fulwiler & Young found that a

workshop was enough to remind some teachers that they in fact were good writers, and

give them the confidence to guide student writing as well. They also note that if a teacher

doesn't approach the concept of WAC (or writing be a shared responsibility) with an

open mind, then the idea is dead in the water from the beginning. One way to perhaps

erase the line between those teachers who teach writing and those who don't is to start

incorporating writing pedagogy into teacher training curricula for all teachers, not only

ELA teachers.

A 2009 article that was published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* presented the results of a national survey of 361 language arts, social studies, and science high school teachers. In this study, the researchers (Kluhara et al.) assume that writing as a shared responsibility among teachers for two reasons: for one, because "writing can facilitate the learning of content material" and two, because the researchers believe that "teachers in each discipline need to be involved in teaching writing, as its purposes and characteristic differ from one domain to the next" (n.p.). However, the results of this study were reflective of many of the concerns Applebee (1981) and Applebee & Langer (2013) highlighted in their research. In this case, the survey results indicated that students are doing very little writing that includes analysis or interpretation, and rarely write anything more than a paragraph long. Further, the study also revealed that most teachers who participated in the survey "were not positive about the equality of preparation they received to teach writing from the colleges or universities they attended" (n.p.). Of language arts teachers surveyed, 61% indicated they received minimal to no preparation" (n.p.) which is shocking and concerning, considering their content area. Again, the issue of teacher preparation, or lack thereof, makes its way to center stage when questions regarding writing are asked. Quality teacher training is essential when it comes to subjects such as writing, in part because assessment of composition cannot be assessed with a grading key or preset multiple choice answers. Responding to and grading students' written work takes more time of a teacher than assessment measures used for

other subjects because, short of a rubric, there is no grading key that can be used to mechanically grade student writing.[11]

2.4 What Are Informational Texts?

Few researchers have grappled with what informational writing under the Common Core really means. In their article I*nformational Texts and the Common Core Standards: What Are We Talking about, Anyway?,* Maloch & Bomer (2013a) acknowledge that the core standards emphasize that students should be reading *and* writing more informational texts at all levels of education, and also that "informational texts" are defined in a variety of ways by researchers, teachers, and the writers of the core standards. One of the findings they present is that, among researchers, "nonfiction" is used as an "umbrella terms to include all texts the present factual information" (p.207). However, they argue that lumping together of all nonfiction texts and treating them as the same is quite problematic, and that the genres of "fiction" and "non-fiction" are much more nuanced than just aligning one with the presence of factual information and the other one not. While recent research has attempted to narrow the definition of informational texts (Duke and Roberts, 2010; Duke, et al, 2012; Donovan and Smolkin, 2002; Kletzien and Dreher, 2004), the definition presented in the Common Core is actually quite broad. Ultimately, Maloch & Bomer (2013a) recommend teachers "to not

---

[11] "Auto-grading" can and is used in some instances to grade student writing, however machine and computer software scoring is wildly flawed. One example of the flaws of machine grading is illuminated by the Babel Generator created by former director of undergraduate writing at M.I.T. Les Perelman. Refer to Kolowich (2014) for more details.

get bogged down in the terms used inside of the CCSS...but to focus instead on the range of text types included inside the Standards" (p.209), and for researchers to use "greater precision when talking about the varied text types in use inside of classrooms" (p.210). In other words, make clear the boundaries of our definitions when we refer to informational texts or informational writing within research.

This call for teachers to use their own judgment when interpreting the language used in the standards is repeated in the article by Mary Frances Rice (2015) titled *Finding Space for Transfer of Writing in Common Core Curricular Standards*. In this article, Rice conducts a cluster analysis of the standards in order to "identify space for transfer as a learning goal in the standards" (p.64). One of the major issues Rice finds with the standards is one of audience, or the lack of one. She writes that "no well-developed theory of audience can be discerned from the standards", and that "the tension embodied in the standards is one of writing for the immediate audience of the teacher and the secondary audience of gatekeepers who will rate that writing, rather than authentic audiences of neighbors, community members, colleagues, and friends" (p.64). This absence of an audience also reflects the related issue that Rice discovered, which is that epistemic writing is focused on in the standards. This is in direct conflict to the goal of ensuring students are college-and-career ready, "since few writing tasks outside of schoolwork are epistemic in nature" (p. 63). Rice continues: "if college and career readiness are really the focus of the CCSS, then writing cannot remain an epistemic exercise where the students reproduce stipulated content information or repeat stipulated patterns or genres of writing; it has to transform into recurrent social action (Miller) that can meet a host of contextual exigencies" (p.67).

In their follow up article *Teaching about and with Informational Texts: What Does Research Teach Us?*, Maloch & Bomer (2013b) emphasize the four themes they have found in research conducted on informational texts, mainly in the context of primary education where the CCSS recommends that 50% the texts students engage with be informational: availability and accessibility, meaning and real-world purposes, interactive read-aloud and discussions, and explicit instruction. They write "it is clear that one important (perhaps the most important) step in growing young children's knowledge, understanding, and use of informational texts is making these texts available and accessible to them" (p.442). Second, Maloch & Bomer (2013b) cite research done that suggests students' literacy skills improve when they are given real-world reasons for engaging with a text (see: Caswell & Duke, 1998; Dreher, 2003; Guthrie et al., 2009; Purcell-Gates et al. 2007). At the primary school level, this type of "real world" application can simply mean encouraging children to read about something they are interested in, or creating documents such as flyers that will be displayed in the community as opposed to being restricted to a school-only audience. The third theme emphasizes the value of interactive learning through real-aloud and discussions. These discussions are led by the teacher who asks the students questions "as they work to construct meaning with a shared text" (p.444). The final theme focuses on explicit instruction, in which direct instruction about a feature or structure of a text is provided to students. Research regarding the value of explicit instruction when it comes to the comprehension of informational texts is ongoing, however, and Maloch & Bomer note, have produced mixed results. Further, as I have mentioned, Maloch & Bomer write specifically of informational texts in the context of primary education, while this

dissertation is interested in how it is present in secondary education. Nevertheless, the themes which they have isolated in their research are general enough that they can also be applied to the high school classroom. After all, whether a primary or secondary student, something like access to materials is a fundamental issue.

Applebee and Langer (2013) write that recent research in writing emphasizes:

> the extent to which writing genres are socially situated and context specific...these perspectives pose a challenge to the earlier emphasis on writing as a generic skill, taught primarily in English language arts or composition classes, and transferable directly to other disciplinary or socially constructed contexts. They suggest that what counts as effective argument and persuasive evidence varies greatly in moving from one context (or discipline) to another, so that was counts as "good writing" is itself socially constructed and context specific. (p.6)

Though it refers to college-level writing, Carolyn Miller's (1984) article *Genre as Social Action* is an important work that can be applied to writing across content areas, and suggests the same thing Applebee & Langer have done above: context matters. I've noted that the definition of what informational writing constitutes has not only changed significantly over time, but even currently has been defined in different ways. Further, Applebee & Langer (2013) contend that "good writing" is social constructed and content specific - that it is dependent on audience, purpose, and context. Miller addresses this issue head on, arguing that a "rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (p.

151). Instead of defining informational texts, whether as things students read or things that they themselves produce, considering informational writing not as a genre bound to specific a form or structure. This is an interesting way to think about genre, because it asks not "what elements (form, structure) of this type of writing define it?" but "how will this writing be used in the world?"

2.5 Approaching Writing as a Shared Responsibility

One of the continuous findings and recommendations that many of the studies outlined in this chapter have emphasized is the need for improved teacher training, in both quality and quantity. This is also reflected in the many teachers who were interviewed for this dissertation who didn't believe they were ever taught - or didn't remember being taught - how to teach writing during their teaching training programs, and whose professional development consisted of independently sought out development opportunities, such as conferences, rather than opportunities offered by the district. While international benchmarks were researched while forming the CCSS, it is not clear whether they were looked at in a broader context that accounts for large social and structural differences between the United States and other countries. For instance, Finland, one of the countries looked at during the benchmarking process, has a two-tier system that includes a Matriculation Examination or a Vocational Track once students are 16 years of age (ncee.org). In addition, teacher training in Finland is considerably more competitive and rigorous than in the U.S., with only 25% of applicants into teacher education programs at the university level being accepted annually (Sahlberg, 2011).

Because of the rigorous preparation their teaching training programs provide, Finnish teachers are also trusted in their pedagogical and subject matter expertise to handle classroom curricula as they see fit much more than American teachers are. Teachers in Finland also earn competitive pay, which is not now nor ever has been the case in the U.S.[12] In comparison to most European and Asian countries, the U.S. both underpays, under-prepares, and under-supports their teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

Teacher training in the U.S. is in its relative infancy. James Fraser (2007) points out that it wasn't until post World War II that a college education was a prerequisite for a teaching position. Like the both the status of writing and the status of teachers as professionals, the status of education departments within universities is equally as dismal. Fraser (2007) writes "in a hierarchy that places theory above practice and content knowledge above pedagogical knowledge, and, indeed, that adopts a condescending attitude toward students preparing for practical fields and the specialized faculty who attend to them, education departments…are almost universally considered the bottom of the university pecking order" (p.4). He continues:

Until universities can honor practice on an equal plane with theory, until they can
honor professions that focus on children as much as professions that focus on
adults, and, perhaps must fundamental, until they can honor professions where the

---

[12] In fact, one of the recommendations from the infamous *A Nation at Risk* report in 1983 was that "salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based".

majority of practitioners are women as much as they honor professions that have

traditionally been dominated by men, we will not have the teacher preparation we

need and that our children deserve. (p.6)

Again, though the absolute importance of quality education "for our children" is

constantly proclaimed by politicians, administrators, schools, and the public alike, every

single aspect regarding education – the low professional status of teachers, the continuous

cutting of funds earmarked for public schools, and the treatment of educators (and future

educators) within higher education – all point to a different reality; one where education

or educators aren't important at all.

Cochran-Smith & Fries (2009) give a contextualized history of teacher

preparation that takes into consideration "the larger political, professional, and policy

contexts that influence the development of teacher education research" (p.72),

emphasizing that when studying teacher education, the context and the research question

must be taken into consideration. They argue that for the last 50+ years, there has been "a

confluence of events and blue ribbon reports" that feverishly proclaim education in the

U.S. is in some kind of trouble - including the sentiment that teachers are failing students

in some way (p.71). Since the 1957 launch of Sputnik, the standard for educational

quality in the U.S. has largely been set in comparison to other countries. The public

hysteria initiated by Sputnik centered on a grave concern that the education system in the

U.S. wasn't adequately preparing youth in the sciences. The publication of *A Nation at

Risk* in 1983 "asserted that if the current state of American education has been imposed

on the nation by a foreign power, it would have been considered an act of war" (p.81).

While the language throughout the report is what Cochran-Smith & Fries refer to as

"blustery", it is an interesting rhetorical trick to use in order to highlight the seriousness of an issue, by asking the reader to envision *another country* "doing this" to *us*.

To highlight just how dismal teacher training and development in the U.S. is, Linda Darling-Hammond (1996) compares the U.S. to several European and Asian countries. Five-year teacher training and classroom internships have become the standard for many European and Asian countries, with some countries even requiring 2 years of graduate or professional training beyond the baccalaureate degree. In addition, teaching in-service and professional development courses are significantly more advanced in both quality and quantity - in Japan, for example, first-year teachers receive 20 days of in-service training, plus 60 days of professional development. In contrast, districts in the U.S. between >1 - 3 % on professional development (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Dudley-Marling et al, 2006; Killeen et al, 2002). Because their training is so rigorous, teachers in other countries are trusted to make "virtually all decisions about curriculum, teaching, and assessment" (p.3).

Dudley-Marling et al. (2006) point out that while essentially everyone agrees teacher quality is a very important - if not the most important - aspect of education, there is no consensus on what it means to be a good teacher, the best way to prepare good teachers, or how to access teacher performance. Further, Dudley-Marling et al. emphasize that teachers' opinions on these issues, when solicited, is usually dismissed as anecdotal. With this in mind, the authors conducted a pilot study which asked National Council of Teaching English (NCTE) members via survey: "(1) what distinguishes a highly qualified teacher; (2) what conditions are necessary for highly-qualified teachers to be successful over time; and, (3) how best to assess the qualifications of English language arts

39

teachers" (p.170). What is important about the research is that it illustrates the gaps that can be found between the opinions of education policy makers, administrators, and the general public and the opinions of teachers. In the case of Dudley-Marling et al, they point out entities such as the US Department of Education value content knowledge over pedagogical knowledge as an indicator of teacher quality. Dudley-Marling et al. found the teachers who responded to their survey valued both content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge when it comes to teacher quality, yet when asked "which would be the single most valuable to you in becoming or remaining a highly-qualified teacher of English language arts?" an overwhelming percentage of teachers who respondent to the survey indicated that they valued pedagogical knowledge over content knowledge. This indicates that teachers "value a type of knowledge base that is currently overlooked in policy debates on defining 'highly qualified' teachers" (p.183).

Despite the fact that "[t]he American public, the education profession, researchers, legal advocates, and policymakers all seem to agree that quality of teacher makes an important difference in students' learning, their achievements, and the life chances" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p.95), the U.S. nonetheless continues to lag in teacher training and development. Rather than invest in teachers, the U.S. model of education has invested in "an administrative bureaucracy to design, monitor, and inspect teaching, rather than in the knowledge of the people doing the work" (p.3). If education is indeed important (and political figureheads and citizens alike seem to consistently agree that it is), then it should be treated as such. An investment in teacher training and education at the baccalaureate *in addition to* more (and higher quality) resources and support for

continuous professional development would be a major step in improving education in the U.S.[13]

2.6 The Gap

The research for this dissertation is inspired by the seemingly simple questions that Applebee asked in regard to how students are writing in high schools, and it seeks to build on the valuable insights his research has provided and questions how his insights are visible in writing curricula today, if they are at all. This dissertation takes a careful and in-depth look at the writing that happens in high school through the eyes of 8 teachers in one part of the U.S. It is a humble step in seeking to update important research regarding how writing is taught and practiced in high schools in 2016. While there has been some rigorous research conducted regarding the kind of writing that is happening in high schools as well as research into how different academic institutions have implemented writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives, there has been no recently research that examines what the CCSS say, and what is actually happening in the classroom with regard to how teacher conceptualize different genres of writing, nor how writing is a shared responsibility across subject areas.

2.7 Teachers as a Marginalized Group

---

[13] The results of a three-year succession of conferences held between 1958-1960 among educators and professors regarding the topic of teacher training included the conscious that "a fifth year in college for teachers was a 'must'" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2009).

Teachers are a group of people who have been marginalized in a variety of ways, including both economically and socially. These are two categories that often tend to appear together; if one is present then often times the other is inevitably present as well. In the infamous 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report, one of the final recommendations was that "salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based" (The National Commission on Excellence in Education). Yet today, in 2017, the issue of low teacher salaries still persists. The national average starting salary for a teacher is $30,377. This is comparatively and significantly much lower to other professions which require a 4 year degree: computer programming has an average starting salary of $43,635 and registered nurses start at $45,570 on average (National Education Association). Part of this may be due to the idea of teaching being a "noble" calling or vocation (Gill, 2010) and the illusion that the integrity of the work somehow substitutes the need for adequate compensation. Other recent labor-related issues, such as Act 10 in Wisconsin and right-to-work laws in both Michigan and Indiana, have placed severe limitations and restrictions on collective bargaining rights for union workers - including teachers. A recent article in *The Atlantic* cites one Wisconsin teacher whose annual salary of $35,770 was reduced to $30,650 after Act 10 was passed in 2010 (Semuels, 2016). Further, under Act 10 the schools in this teacher's district can no longer bargain for benefits - including health insurance and pension - or working conditions. Issues such as poor wages for teachers persist into the 21st century because have not yet been seriously addressed, and certainly have not been resolved. However, it isn't just economic oppression that teachers face. While it is clear the low salary teachers receive has been a continuous point of

discussion throughout history, this economic discrepancy is reflective of a much larger

and deep-seated issue: the historical devaluing of teachers and the profession of teaching.

Teachers in Colonial America were at times hard to come by for a variety of

reasons[14], and so indentured servants were sometimes purchased by colonists to serve as

teachers for a particular community. Further, teaching during colonial times wasn't seen

as a "real" job. Ministers and other men would teach on the side for extra money, or as a

last resort until something better came along (Fraser 2007; Spencer, 1997). Upon

graduating from Harvard in 1755, a young John Adam's taught Latin for 3 years at a

grammar school in Worchester, MA while he decided on what "real" career he should

pursue (Fraser, 2007). During colonial times most teachers were also men, as they were

typically the most educated. However, this began to shift during the industrial period in

the U.S., when increased enrollments in schools resulted in a demand for more teachers.

Women were hired to remedy the teacher shortage during this period, and it is during this

time that teaching shifted into a "feminized" profession (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2009;

Lagemann, 2000; Spencer, 1997).

While teaching had never been viewed as a legitimate career for men, it would

become one of the first occupations that women were "allowed" to pursue. However,

most women taught elementary grades, not high school, as those the elementary grades

---

[14] For example, lack of training. Early ministers had been well educated in England, but after several
generations, education and training became local and less rigorous.

required less training - and not to mention were paid less, as well[15]. Although women

began entering schools as teachers, their role was not seen as a professional one and the

social (and economic) status of teacher remained a diminished. Even up to the 1950's, the

acceptance of teaching as a legitimate professional line of work was heavily contested

(Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2009). And so for the last century, teaching has both been

historically regarded as "women's work", temporary work, or the work of those who lack

the talent and intelligence for other ("better") lines of work (Fraser, 2007; Spencer,

1997). In 2011-12, approximately 76% of public school teachers were women (NCES)[16].

This data corresponds with data presented in Motoko Rich's (2014) *New York Times*

article titled "Why don't more men go into teaching?" that notes ¾ of all teachers,

kindergarten to high school, are women. This is an increase from several decades ago,

when women represented ⅔ of K-12 teachers[17]. The low salaries teachers have received,

both historically and presently, are evidence of the low esteem in which teachers are held.

Any economic disparity is ultimately the result of greater oppressing forces that do not

value the knowledge and experiences of teachers.

     While teachers themselves are a marginalized group, writing has also found itself

to be a somewhat marginalized subject within academia. When it comes to writing

---

[15] In 1905, 97.9% of elementary teachers were women, compared to 64.2% of secondary teachers. In 1987-88, 87.6% of elementary teachers were women, and 53% of secondary teachers. (Spencer, 1997)

[16] As a point of contrast, administrative roles seem more equally occupied in terms of gender: nearly half of all school principals are men (Rich, 2014).

[17] This ratio is also reflected in the participants who volunteered to be interviewed for this research, who with the exception of 2 male participants, were women.

courses in higher education, those who teach writing intensive courses such as composition have found themselves on the receiving end of an attitude ranging from active avoidance to contemptuous dismissal from colleagues in other departments and disciplines. Aside from composition, another example of a writing intensive course that has historically been treated as a "practical" (and thus, subordinate) subject is technical communication courses. Several of the subcategories listed in the CCSS description of informational writing include what they refer to as "functional writing", and some of the examples they give of this type of writing include instructions, manuals, memos, reports. At the collegiate level, these are writing assignments that might be found in a technical communication or technical writing course. As a writing-intensive course, technical communication courses have typically been regarded as "service courses", mostly taught by members of English departments and intended for the general student population. This label was also given to composition courses, as well (Berlin, 1987). Whitburn (2000) writes that "as recently as the 1970s and 1980s...most English departments (where technical communication was most likely to be taught) either ignored or actively opposed technical communication" (p.170), and members of English departments "were mostly literature professors who tended to regard first-year composition and technical communication with condescension and hostility" (p.171). Whitburn quotes Norman Grabo, an American literature professor who published an essay in a 1979 issue of the *ADE Bulletin*, referring to technical communication as "work for turkeys". In the article, Grabo harkens back to Socrates views that

writing is a low, trivial, and rather sneaky art, a knack, a technology essentially

irrelevant to truth…that if technique is taught apart from truth, if writing and

rhetoric are taught apart from literature and philosophy, we create modern

demagogues that Socrates feared - advertising men and women, corporate and

government lackeys, the writers of press releases on the beauties of the DC-10,

the safety of nuclear power plants. (Grabo qtd. in Whitburn, p. 171)

Because, as Whitburn points out, literature folks were in charge of departments, tenure

positions were reserved for literature professors, while adjuncts, TAs, junior faculty, and

other instructors low on the departmental totem pole taught technical communication

courses. Further, because most PhD programs in rhetoric, technical communication and

composition had yet to exist until 1975, most instructors of both composition and

technical communication in fact specialized in Literature and didn't have the training or

the desire to be teaching such writing intensive and "low-brow" courses (Berlin, 1987).

As Robert Connors (2003) succinctly puts it in his article *Overwork/Underpay: Labor*

and Status of Composition Teachers since 1880:

Instead of being an esteemed intellectual figure in community and campus, the

rhetoric teacher of 1900 is increasingly marginalized, overworked, and ill-paid.

Instead of being a senior professor, he, or she, is an instructor or a graduate

student. Instead of being sought by students, rhetoric courses are despised and

sneered at, and their teachers have fallen from the empyrean of named chairs to

the status of permanent underclass 'composition teachers': oppressed, badly paid, ill-used, and secretly despised. (182)

Just as women comprise the majority of teachers in primary and secondary education, Connors points out that "a disproportionate percentage of the instructor corps in composition has been women" (p.193). A 2008 essay that appeared on the *Inside Higher Ed* website cited survey results that reflect this as well: it was primarily women teaching courses in rhetoric and composition (Jaschik). Given the way composition and technical communication instructors have been, and are, treated by their colleagues, Connors wonders why were women historically willing to accept both terrible pay and these terrible working conditions, and why do they continue to do so?[18]

Though collegiate writing teachers may like to think of themselves as allies to their high school counterparts, the truth is there has been tension between these two entities as well. Berlin (1987) notes that the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) - an organization created to support teachers of English – was formed in protest as a response to the influence colleges had over high school English curriculum. In the case of the NCTE, the issue centered on the control colleges ultimately had over the books high school students read -- high school teachers wanted to prepare students by teaching books that would appear on college admission tests. This focus on "teaching to the test" is reminiscent of the current pressures on teachers to prepare students for

---

[18] As Connors notes, the answer to this is surely complex - too complex to fully address it in this dissertation while giving it the attention it deserves

standardized tests, as well as prepare them for college entrance exams such as the ACT or
SAT.

2.8 A Feminist Approach to Qualitative Research

This research is qualitative in nature, and was approached using techniques of
feminist research. It has relied on a feminist framework in order to best represent a
research process that was socially and materially situated in its focus on teachers - both
male and female - as a marginalized group, of which gender is one factor. A feminist
approach to this research represents its participants, while not all women, as a group that
has been marginalized throughout history. Feminist theory, as I define it, acknowledges
the intersectionality of different marginalized groups and the ways in which dominant
knowledge and social practices can oppress these groups in similar, but also unique and
different ways (Collins, 1998; Harding & Norberg, 2005; Reinharz, 1992). While I argue
that teachers represent a marginalized group - a position that has been explained in
greater detail in Chapter 2 and briefly revisited in this chapter - differentiating individual
factors such as gender, race, and other individual and social factors all make for unique
knowledge and lived experiences.

Education is often spoke about as one of the most important parts of our society;
however, our money is not where our mouth is, so to speak. Teachers across the nation
are barely paid a living wage, and public education funds are continentally being cut, not
increased. Not valuing teachers, and in this case in particular, teachers of writing seems

to illustrate a lack of understanding the power of skillful writing can mean in the creation of a strong civic population. I used a quote from bell hooks (2000) earlier in this chapter, and I will use it again: "to be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body" (*Preface,* n.p.). This quote is helpful in visualizing the place and space that teachers occupy; as classroom teachers, they are literally on the inside of what is happening inside education, yet they are "outside" of the larger educational apparatus that accounts for policy and decision-making. They interact inside the schools with both students and administrators. They have a deep understanding of the different learning and educational goals their individual school, the district, the state, or the federal government may have and are familiar with special programs that have been implemented to reach particular goals, and are often times more familiar with federal or state standards and goals than administrators are[19]. Yet while teachers are in the center of the day-to-day happenings in education, they are often pushed to the margins, or pushed "outside the main body", when it comes to the governing rules of education: what is taught and why, how students are tested, how student progress is tracked. Hesse-Biber (2011) writes, "To engage in feminist theory and praxis means to challenge knowledge that excludes, while seeming to include" (p.3). While teachers are "included" in that they serve as the foundation of the educational system, they are often excluded from administrative decisions or changes that take place within the school. The ways in which teachers are

---

[19] An example of one of these programs is the Michigan Reads! Program

pushed to the margins is reflected, for one, in the claim that teachers were involved in the writing of the core standards. Teachers were not a part of the writing process -- they were invited to give feedback, and it is unclear if any feedback was taken into any serious consideration. Given the testimony from education historian Diane Ravich (2014b) regarding her recommendations being ignored by the writers of the standards and White House officials, which was mentioned in an earlier chapter, it seems quite plausible that any teacher recommendation were also dismissed in a similar fashion. So, while it may appear that teachers were "included," their inclusion was treated in a superficial way that ultimately didn't utilize their content knowledge expertise or experiences in the classroom that could have proved beneficial to the formation of the standards. In this way, feminist standpoint confronts the question of what counts as knowledge, and makes the claim that "knowledge is always socially situated" (Harding, 2004b, p7). Standpoint theory also "articulates the importance of a group's experience, of a distinctive kind of collective consciousness" (Harding, 2004b, p.32). As Harding points out, what individuals of an oppressed group all have in common is their membership in that group. In Chapter 2, I established teachers as a historically marginalized group. Though not all participants in this research were women, I still find feminist standpoint theory to be valuable in the case of this research. Feminism, as I define it, is concerned with equality – between genders, ethnicities, social class, etc. – and I do not believe one has to focus only on women in order to conduct feminist research. Feminist standpoint theory in particular is ideal for this research, because it is more inclusive than the standpoint theories Hegel (the master-slave dialectic) and Marx (the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat) developed, neither which explicitly included women. Feminist standpoint

theory is an updated version of standpoint theory, and offers the framework to discuss marginalization and oppression more widely and inclusively by not just focusing on the struggles of one group.

Since its emergence in the 1970's and 80's feminist movements, standpoint theory has been influenced by the Marxist and Hegelian idea "that individuals' daily activities or material and lived experiences structure their understanding of the social world" (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p.11). Hegel's conception of a standpoint rose from his observations of the master-slave relationship, while Marx focused on the proletariat. Feminist standpoint theory draws upon Marx's notion of the proletarian standpoint, which situates the proletariat as an oppressed class that could offer a unique vantage point into understanding capitalist society, and argues that women offer a similar vantage point when it comes to understanding patriarchal institutions (Hartsock, 1983). The issue is labor "is the basic building block" of feminist standpoint theory (Weeks, 2004, p.185), and the Marxist roots of standpoint theory are pertinent because this research is also connected to issues of labor. Further, for the last century at least, teaching been seen as the work of women.

In her seminal work regarding the development of a feminist standpoint, Nancy Hartsock (1983) begins building a feminist standpoint theory that distinguishes itself from a traditional Marxist standpoint. Hartsock advocates for a feminist historical materialism, which "would enable us to expand the Marxian account to include all human activity rather than focusing on activity more characteristic of males in capitalism" (p.283). Using Marxist theory as a methodological base, Hartsock explores the possibility of a feminist standpoint theory as "an important epistemological tool for understanding

51

and opposing all forms of domination" (p.283) and as a place from which to ground a feminist historical materialism. Standpoint theory, as it has been advanced by Hartsock as well as other feminist scholars such as Smith (1990) and Collins (1998), is more inclusive than Hegel or Marx's conception of standpoint as it looks beyond the social class of the white proletariat to consider the standpoint of other races, ethnicities, and identities - and, of course, women. This aspect of inclusion also aligns with the characteristics of intersectional feminism. Intersectional feminism (Crenshaw, 1989; Harding, 1991; Sumi Cho et al., 2013) acknowledges the multiple identities a woman has and how these layers of identity impact the oppression or discrimination she faces. Though the origins of feminist standpoint theory emerged as a way to acknowledge the unique positions from which women lived and the recent theoretically developments of intersectional feminism offer a new way to frame the feminist standpoint: as an inclusive framework from which to understand a marginalized group from their particular position in society while still acknowledging individual differences, and one that recognizes there can be intersecting systems of inequality (Chafetz, 1997).

Paying particular attention to marginalized groups whose experiences have historically been excluded from research and how they view the world from their standpoint "enables the production of distinctive kinds of knowledge" (Harding, 2004a, pg.7). I noted in earlier chapters that the majority of research in education is focused on the qualitative results of a research problem, and also tends to focus solely on the student or the work a student produces. Education, however, is a multi-faceted institution. Rarely are teachers asked to participate in education research, despite their position as educators.

Seeking out different perspectives, such as those of teachers, is critical because it can provide new and fresh insights to problems.

Feminist standpoint theory argues that no research is culture-free nor value-free (Harding and Norberg, 2005), and also acknowledges that recognizing a participant's subjectivity "is essential for producing less distorted knowledge" (O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2012, p. 498). Because of differing social and material conditions of individuals, "value-free research", as Harding & Norbert bluntly state, "is an unachievable ideal" (p.2010). Standpoint theorists reject the notion that any research is neutral, including scientific methods which claim totally objectivity. Notions of superior research methods via total objectivity or neutrality in fact ignore the historical and systematic nature of the institutions under which most research is conducted. As Harding (2004a) asks, "Who benefits when standards for rationality are restricted to the instrumental rationality of those sciences and public institutions from the design and management of which women, the poor, and people of non-Western descent are barred?" (p.5), and argues that traditional "good" methods of research have enabled the already dominant institution to retain their positions of power (Harding and Norberg, 2005). Qualitative methods, such as the interviews used in this research, are important despite going against academic traditions which value "scientific" (i.e. "objective") methods; in fact, part of the incredible value of interviews is their conversant nature. If the specific contexts of participants' lives are ignored, research will only continue to reinforce and "advance the hegemonous interests of the dominant groups" (Harding, 2004a, p.6-7). As such, standpoint theory not only seeks to include the perspectives of marginalized people and groups, but also acknowledges the political and social aspects that surround all

research - including that of the researcher and the dominant institutions (such as universities, in the western scientific tradition) under which they operate.

Group consciousness, Harding (2004b) argues, emerges from political struggles. One of standpoint theory's defining characteristics is its commitment to the progression of social movements (Collins, 1998; Harding, 2004b; Jameson, 1988). Feminist standpoint theory is concerned with socio-political themes, and has allowed standpoint theory to materialize organically in social justice movements throughout history. This connection to social movements gives standpoint theory both an explicit and implicit history (Harding, 2004b). Aside from its explicit history within academia, the implicit history lies in what Harding calls "folk history" which emerges from the different social justice movements which include the voices of different marginalized groups. This implicit history also makes standpoint theory more accessible to those outside of privileged groups, such as academia, because it is in fact already being practiced by many.

2.9 Summary

This chapter has given an overview of some of the important elements of the Common Core State Standards in relation to writing, and also outlined some of the major research that has been done relating to secondary writing instruction both historically, and in its current state. It also discussed the methodology of this research, feminist standpoint theory, which places value on the voices and perspectives from those often not hear. In this case, I have established teachers as a discourse group whose voices have not been traditionally valued when it comes to the development of educational policies. The

following chapter will present the methods used to conduct this research, including

qualitative interviews which were analyzed using a grounded theory approach.

3 Methods

3.1 Introduction

This research started with questions that explored how teachers conceptualized informational texts, and investigated how the shared responsibility of writing is taking place in public high schools in one area of Michigan. The participant interviews led to additional questions, such as how approaches to teaching are shaped by governing standards, such as the Common Core, as well as the other factors that influence curriculum and teaching decisions on the part of a teacher. Because a student's interaction with informational texts increases significantly during their high school years, secondary teachers (grades 9 -12) were the focus of this research. This research relied on qualitative interviews with high school teachers. Qualitative interviews are typically defined as "in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing" (Mason, 2002, p. 62). This research uses feminist standpoint theory as a methodological framework for the study. Standpoint theory acknowledges that an individual's lived experience affects how they view the world, and pays particular attention to relationships of knowledge and power (Hesse-Biber, 2011). Feminist standpoint theory builds upon standpoint theories discussed by Hegel and Marx in that it acknowledges the multitude of intersecting identities that define a person's lived experience and thus their "standpoint", rather than focus on just one characteristic or relationship to the world (master/slave; bourgeois/proletariat). This chapter outlines the methods used to approach this research, including qualitative interviews with teacher participants which were analyzed using a grounded theory approach.

3.2 Interviewing as a Feminist Method of Research and Inquiry

In trying to understand what kind of writing takes place in high school classroom, the core standards as they have been written give us one picture. However neither the authors of the core standards, nor principals or other administrators (regardless of any assessment or data they might have), can speak from the standpoint of a classroom teacher. Qualitative interviews provide what Janet Emig (1971) refers to as "humanistic data". While most research in education focuses on quantitative results, a qualitative approach was of particular value when researching writing in high schools because it acknowledges "that persons, rather than mechanisms, compose" (Emig, 1971, p.5), and so the opinions and experiences of teachers can provide a depth of information that numbers alone cannot. Hartsock emphasizes that a standpoint "carries with it the contention that there are some perspectives on society from which, however well-intentioned one may be, the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible" (p.285). Interviewing teachers allows a glimpse into a world that is otherwise invisible: they are able to give information as to what kind of writing *actually* happens in the classroom, and can provide a much deeper understanding of this than quantifiable test or assessment scores can. Teacher's voices give insight to what is actually happening in the classroom when it comes to writing, as opposed to what should hypothetically be happening according to the core standards. In essence, a feminist approach to interviewing seeks to *include*. Interviews were most appropriate for this type of research, as "social abstractions like 'education' are best understood through the experiences of the individuals whose work and lives are the stuff upon which the

57

abstractions are built" (Ferrarotti 1981 in Seidman, p.4). It is an "individual's' consciousness" that "gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues, because social and educational issues are abstractions based on the concrete experiences of people" (Seidman p. 1). This explanation complements, and in fact echoes, the objectives of feminist standpoint theory: that by seeking to understand someone else's standpoint, we can gain new perspectives and paint a fuller picture of an issue.

Feminist methods of research acknowledge that research is political and, as indicated earlier, feminist researchers are particularly concerned with relationship between knowledge and power (Harding, 2004a; O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, 2012). Acknowledging this relationship between knowledge and power is crucial, as research produces knowledge. This means that any kind of research, including academic, can actually be responsible for marginalizing certain groups of people while reinforcing the power of others, just the same as institutions can be responsible for this. Thus, questions regarding relationships of power are never absent from research; they are present in the relationship between participants and societies in which they live, and also present in the relationship between the participant and the researcher. Rather than accept the "hygienic" and "scientific" approach to interviewing, which recommends researchers maintain an interviewer/interviewee hierarchy and ultimately treating interviewees as subjects rather people through strategies such as ignoring and deflecting questions the interviewee might ask the interviewers, Ann Oakley (1981) advocates for a feminist approach that denies this hierarchy and instead argues that a degree of personal involvement can in fact result in participants opening up more, because there is a reciprocity of information being shared. Because I wanted to encourage the sense of collaboration among the teachers in

58

interviewed, I found using member checks to be important. Further, member checks are important when conducting interviews given the aspect of interpretation that must take place. There is always the risk that points or phrases stated during the interview might be interpreted inaccurately by researcher, and so conducting member checks (Creswell, 2003) can help eliminate misunderstandings. Member checks happened during the interviews themselves, when I would paraphrase or summarize the main point I believed the participant had made at which time they would agree, disagree, and/or expound further on the matter. Member checks were also conducted by sending participants (via email) drafts of the vignette profiles created for them, which are included in this chapter.

In her well-known work *Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms*, Oakley (1981) also points out most of the conventions and methods of interviewing presented in books on the subject adhere to the "scientific" model of what research is supposed to be. She writes "the paradigm of the 'proper' interview appeals to such values as objectivity, detachment, hierarchy, and 'science' as an important cultural activity which takes priority over people's more individualised concerns" (p.38). However, "scientific" (or as Oakley puts it, "hygienic") approaches to interviewing are in direct conflict with the purpose of conducting interviews in the first place: to avoid any personal involvement is to deny "the condition under which people come to know each other and admit others into their lives" (p.58). In other words, if the interviewer positions themselves in the hierarchy of information gather v. information giver and thus declines to provide the same transparency that is expected of the interviewee, information will undoubtedly be withheld. The method of personal involvement, to a degree, can actually result in a more

useful interview because they interviewee feels they are in a reciprocal relationship with the interviewer, rather than simply an entity being studied.

This personal approach to research has raised ethical concerns, and with good reason. The total elimination of power relations in research is impossible. The relationship between interviewer/interviewee or researcher/researched is already hierarchical in its very nature, due to social powers each are bringing to the research situation in general - who gets to decide the focus of the research and write up the results (Harding and Norberg, 2005)? Further, consciously trying to build a rapport with participants in an effort to make them comfortable can also be seen as a manipulation tactic to try and get a participant to reveal more information than they may otherwise feel comfortable with. The illusion of an equally reciprocal relationship may also give participants the false notion that they are a collaborator in the research "when in fact the researcher maintains the inevitable authoritative stance of interpreting and critiquing the knowledge of others" (O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, 2012, p.496). Any friendship that has been built can also pose problems for the researcher, who might feel as though they need to maintain a degree of loyalty to the participants which can affect data analysis and results, whether consciously or unconsciously (O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, 2012). However, any friendliness or fellowship between researcher and participant isn't a methodological requirement, nor does the organic presence of one automatically impose the limitations that are sometimes argued. During my research, I developed cordial relationships with the participants via email and during interviews. I opened the interviews by going over IRB protocol, and then explained my own interest in the subject of writing and how it occurs in high schools. I did this because I wanted to make clear to

the participants I wasn't looking to see if they used "good" or "bad" methods or if they were "good" or "bad" writing teachers; rather, I was interested in knowing what happens in high school in regard to writing because I truthfully had no idea. Outside of the interviews, or emails sent to member check or request additional information, I wasn't in communication with any of the interview participants.

3.2.1 Research Questions

I will revisit my five central research questions briefly, and then outline the approach to this research:

- How do teachers conceptualize informational writing?
- How do their own definitions line up with the definition of informational writing as it is outlined in the standards?
- If the standards include teachers of science and history, not solely English, responsible for teaching the writing of informational texts, how do these different teachers view and define informational writing?
- How are informational texts incorporated into their classrooms?
- Is writing a shared responsibility among teachers?

3.2.2 Research Design

Qualitative research is interested in understanding "the meaning people have constructed" (Merriam, 1997, p. 6), and its focus on lived experience offers a researcher detailed information about the context surrounding people's lives and decisions that quantitative research cannot. Considering this research is interested in the individual experiences of those who are in the "front lines" of the core standards, the primary source of data this research relied on were interviews in order to explore the survey responses in

more depth. Broadly speaking, interviews are useful because they can help a researcher

understand how the participant understands the world around them, something

observation cannot accomplish (Merriam, 1998). Interviews are "a powerful way to gain

insight into educational issues through understanding the experience of the individuals

whose lives constitute education" (Seidman, 1998). A set of the same six questions were

asked of each participant, with additional questions being asked as they arose. Using a

semi-structured approached to the interviews also allowed for the researcher "to respond

to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas

on the topic" (Merriam, 1998, p.74). This balance encouraged responses that were

ultimately richer in depth (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010; Weiss, 1994).

3.2.3 IRB & Protection of Human Subjects

This research was approved by the IRB at Michigan Technological University. A

consent form (Appendix A) was given to all interview participants prior to the start of

each interview. As the PI, I went over the consent form with the participant, highlight

important information such as the participant's right to stop the interview or withdraw

their participation from the study at any time. A signed copy of the consent form was

kept by me, and a copy of the form was given to the participant for their files.

Participants were all assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities. Participants were

asked for their permission to digitally record the interview, and with their permission all

interviews were recorded.

3.2.4 Population and Sample

Participants in this research were 8 high school (9-12th grade English teachers from 8 different public high schools in one area of Michigan. Public schools are institutions most affected by the core standards and particular attention is being paid to high schools, as that is the final location for students before they make the transition from high school to "college, career, and life".

The criterion for teacher participants was that their teaching position must require them to comply to the ELA core standards. In order to obtain a holistic perspective of how teachers conceptualize informational writing, ELA, history, science, and technology teachers were invited to participate. All of these teachers are responsible for informational writing in some capacity, and thus teachers of a variety of subjects we invited in order to gather perspectives from ELA and LS educators who "share responsibility" for the standards.

Participants were recruited through a survey about informational writing that was sent out to teachers of all subjects at 17 different high schools in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The final question of the survey invited them to participate in a longer interview. If they responded in the affirmative, an email was sent to set up a time for an interview.

Table 1 highlights the demographic information all survey respondents, including the years each respondent has/had been teaching, the grade levels (9-12) the have taught, and the classes they teach/taught. All respondents were assigned pseudonyms. Table 2

represents the interview participants, and serves as a biographical vignette related to their

lives as teachers. Pseudonyms were assigned to interview participants.

Table 1: Demographic Information for Survey Participants

Survey Participant	Years Teaching at Current School	Grades Taught	Classes Taught
P1	20+	-	World Lit., American Lit., British Lit.
P2	2	-	US History, World History, Middle School Science, Chemistry, Biology, Technology
P3*	7-10	9,10,11,12	Spanish
P4	1	9,10,11,12	Library information research
P5	20+	9	English
P6	1	9,10,11	English 9, English 10, English 11
P7	1	9,10,11	English 9, English 10, English 11
P8	2	9,10,11,12	English, Drama, and German
P9	7-10	10,11	English 10, AP Language and Composition
P10	7-10	12	English
P11	20+	9,10,11,12	SE Teacher all GE subjects
P12	2	9,10,11,12	English and French
P13	6	10	English
P14	5	9,10,11,12	Biology, chemistry, physics, anatomy/physiology, advanced physics, advanced chemistry
P15*	11-14	9,10,11,12	Spanish, French, Study Skills
P16	7-10	9,10,11,12	History, Government, Economics

			English, Law, Geography
P17	20+	9,10,11,12	English, American and World History, Creative Writing, College Writing and Revision, Death and ~~Dying~~, Junior High Science, Geography
P18	7-10	9,10	English
P19	7-10	11	US History, AP US History
P20	15-19	9.10.11.12	American History 8 and 9, English 9, Govt./Econ
P21	4	9,10,11	Spanish and English
P22	7-10	9,10	Co-teach all subjects/Peer2Peer/ Directed Study & English with students with Learning Disabilities
P23	7-10	10,11,12	Psychology, Civics, Economics, U.S. History
P24	4	9,10,11,12	6-12 Social Studies
P25*	20+	9,10,11,12	Mathematics

* respondent indicated they are not required to comply with ELA Standards

Table 2: Biographical Vignettes for Interview Participants

Ms. P

Ms. Petersen has her bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education, with minors in German and Math. She has been teaching at her school for 2 years, and the classes she

teaches currently are: English, Drama, and German. She has taught all grades, 9-12, as well as middle school.

Ms. J

Ms. Johnson has a bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education with a minor in journalism. She teaches English classes to grades 8, 10, 11, and 12 and has been teaching English at her school for 2 years. She is also the yearbook advisor.

Ms. S

Ms. Samuelson has her bachelor's degree in English, with a certification in English Education & Health Education. She also has her Master's in Administration and School Leadership. She has been teaching at her current school for 11 years. She previously taught at another school in the same state for 3 years. She teaches 9th and 10th grade English classes.

Ms. C

Ms. Carrier has her bachelor's degree in both Secondary English Education and French. She has been teaching at her current school for 3 years. Prior to joining her current school, she was a teacher in a different state in a different part of the country for 13 years. She teaches 11th and 12th grade English, as well as French 1 & 2.

Ms. G

Ms. Glover has her bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education, with a certification in Library Science. She has been at the same school for 24 years, primarily as the librarian. During this time, she has also taught writing and research based classes to grades 6 - 12. Most recently she has taught 6th and 9th grade classes. Prior to joining the school, she had worked at a children's library and was also the librarian and was a teacher at a different school nearby for 3 years.

Mr. E

Mr. Erickson has a bachelor's degree in English, and his teaching certificate in English Education. He has been teaching for 23 years at the same school, and has taught World, American, and British Literature. For the past several years he has taught 10th and 11th grade English classes.

Ms. R

Ms. Ryan has her bachelor's in Secondary English Education with a minor in Math. She has been teaching at her current school for 4 years. She had previously taught for 3 years in another state, where she taught both English and Math. She now only teaches 9th, 10th, and 11th grade English.

Mr. K

Mr. Keating has his bachelor's in English Education, with a minor in Social Studies. He has his masters in Scientific and Technical Communication, and has also taught writing

classes as a college adjunct. As a high school teacher, he taught a variety of writing

classes, including composition and creative writing, as well as U.S. and World History.

He taught at the same high school for 33 years before retiring in 2010.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Data Set 1: Surveys

The first stage of data collection was to survey participants. Surveys can be an

efficient way to collect information from a large number of participants in order to

produce a quantitative data. However, for this research, surveys were used for participant

recruitment (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010), with the final question of the survey inviting

participants to partake in a longer 45-minute interview on informational writing. If survey

participants were interested, they had the option of providing their emails address in the

comments section of the final survey question. I would then send a follow-up email to set

up the logistics of when and where the interview would take place. The survey was

created using Google forms, and sent out via email.

3.3.2 Data Set 2: Interviews

Interviews require the researcher to find out the opinions, thoughts, and

experiences of their participants. In short, participants tell researchers their stories - and

"stories are a way of knowing" (Seidman, 1998, p.1). Participants who agreed to be

interviewed participated in a semi-structured, in-depth respondent interview that typically

lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. During the interviews, teacher participants were asked

questions that asked them to draw on their knowledge and experiences as secondary educators. Taking a semi-structured approach gives flexibility to the interview, and operates under the assumption that "permitting the respondent to talk about what the respondent wants to talk about, so long as it is anywhere near the topic of study, will always produce better data that plodding adherence to the guide" (Weiss, 1994, p.49). Using a semi-structured approach allowed for me to ask all participants the same questions while also leaving room for asking specific follow up questions to something mentioned, and letting participants bring up issues or topics that they felt it was important to discuss. Though a list of the same prepared questions was asked to each participant, I attempted to make the interviews conversational in nature, in order to ease the participant by appearing non-judgmental (Weiss, 1994). I tried to make the participant feel at ease by beginning each interview with small talk, and began the interviews with a general question (Question 1) that asked participants about their lives, up until they became a teacher. This this type of narrative inquiry asked the participant to reflect on "their history of the phenomenon in question" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 16) and allowed participants to be as personal (or impersonal) as they wanted, while still allowing me to collect biographical information.

The interviews consisted of a set of six interview questions that were asked of all interview participants. The first question inquired on the background of the participant, when subsequent questions were crafted to reflect the research questions of this project. Because the nature of the interviews were open-ended, additional questions were also asked based on the specific information the participant was sharing (for example, question of clarification or questions to encourage elaboration were often asked).

Respondent triangulation (Cohen & Manion, 2000) was also used, where the same question was asked of multiple respondents in order to account for shared viewpoints on particular phenomena. For example, during my first interview, which happened to be with Ms. P, she brought up the situation on students "forgetting" how to write. I found this particularly interesting, and thus asked participants in subsequent interviews if they too had experienced this.

All interviews took place in a public, but quiet place. The interviews began by asking participants to describe their life up until they became a teacher. The remaining questions were directly related to their conceptions of informational writing and how they incorporated it into their own classrooms. I referred to the shorter answers participants gave to similar questions in the survey to order to gain clarification or more detail about an answer, but did not recall to the participant how they may have answered a survey question.

All interviews were digitally recorded. Though there are disadvantages to recording, such as a participant being conscious of the fact they are being recorded which may to some extent risk the potential for candid responses, the benefits in the case of this research ultimately outweigh any disadvantages. For one, no sensitive or confidential information is being asked of participants during these interviews that may make respondents hesitant to give honest responses. Recording, as opposed to only note-taking, was also helpful in that I was able to be more attentive to the participant during the interview, as well as able capture participant's words exactly so no information was lost (Weiss, 1994; Merriam 1998).

3.4 Data Analysis

The research used a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss 1990) to analyze and code data. Grounded theory methods are "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p.2). Rather than approaching it in order to test or prove a theory, a researcher approaches the data with an open mind and a hypothesis emerges (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

One procedure central to grounded theory is that analysis of data begins right away, in order to "ask analytic questions of the data we have gathered" (Charmaz, 2006, p.42). By doing this, I was able to pick up cues, and incorporate any relevant issues into the next set of interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006). The questions an interviewer asks, how they ask the questions, and they variety of data they collect are all elements of the research which constantly in flux and in states of revision throughout the research process. Though I had a set of static interview questions I asked each participant, I was constantly adding new questions or revising the way in which I asked certain questions. As Charmaz advises, grounded theory researchers should "aim to create or adopt methods that hold a promise of advancing your emerging ideas" (p.16). One advantage of using grounded theory when looking at several individual interviews is that the expectation that the researcher or researchers "engage in data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process that uses comparative models. They compare data with data, data with codes, codes with codes, codes with tentative categories, and categories with categories" (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011, p.292). Further, grounded theory

is a method of research and knowledge discovery that aligns itself with feminist research in that it is "consistent with the postmodern feminist epistemology in the recognition of multiple explanations of reality", and it "supports the feminist epistemological underpinnings that participants are the experts about their experience and the subjective experience is valid data" (Wuest, 1995, p.127-128).

The Common Core State Standards suggest that informational texts should comprise 70% of texts students interact with by the 12th grade. However, the definitions proved by the standards of what an informational text and informational writing are, are quite broad. In addition, the standards suggest the teaching of writing should be a shared responsibility among teachers of all disciplines. The data was approached using grounded theory and followed the coding process outlined by Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) which groups data into repeating *ideas*, *themes*, and eventually *theoretical constructs*. I have provided an outline in Table 3.3 which illustrates the different repeating ideas, themes, and theoretical constructs that emerged from the data and also sheds some light onto the coding process, which I will now explain in greater detail.

Generally speaking, out of repeating ideas emerge themes, and together these themes make up a theoretical construct. As an example, repeating idea 1 ("you need to read different things") + repeating idea 2 ("you have to go out and find that additional information to incorporate") + 3 ("support, support, you need support") together form theme A, *Informational Texts as Research Based*. Theme A together with Theme B (Informational Texts as Practical) together form theoretical construct I: INFORMATIONAL WRITING AS NONFICTION. In order to help manage the large amount of data procured from the interviews, Auerbach and Silverstein (2013)

recommend to begin the coding process by putting the chunks of texts which seem

relevant to the research concerns into a new document to work from, thereby condensing

the amount of text into only that which the researcher finds relevant. In order to assess

"relevant data", I first used an open coding process. Keeping the research concerns in

mind, each interview transcript in its entirely was open coded. During this stage, I

highlighted relevant passages and applied initial codes, such as "working together",

"student motivation", and "citing sources". Next, the highlighted relevant text from each

interview was put into its own new document. Each document of relevant text was then

read through, and sentences or phrases I found particularly important to my research

concerns were underlined, and a coding memo was jotted below chunks of relevant text.

Below is an example of simple coding notes that were taken from a piece of the relevant

text from Ms. P's interview. The excerpt begins by me, the interviewer, asking the

participant how she distinguishing informational writing from other types of writing:

Transcript Excerpt

I: So is that how you distinguish it from other types of writing?

Ms. P: Basically I mean, in my class <u>anything that they have to do some sort of research for</u>, I would say. Anytime they have to <u>read a book or...look at something on the internet or something like that, and then write something that is…non-fiction in nature, then I think it's informational writing</u>. So even sometimes, um...when we've read a novel or something and they've had to write a paper, that can be informational writing, if they you know, <u>use some sort of outside source and take the time to really develop a non-fiction sort of based... thing</u>, so.

Memo: Informational writing is: nonfiction, research based, use of outside sources.

Once the relevant text has been read through and underlined, I went back and read the data again. At this stage I began grouping relevant text selections from individual interviews that were similar into another new document titled Repeating Ideas. *Repeating ideas* (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003) were first established among individual interviews, but then later repeating ideas were identified across interviews - instances where different teachers had used similar language in their responses to the same questions (this step will be explained momentarily). To form a list of repeating ideas among individual interviews, excerpts from the interview were copied and the repeating idea of interest was underlined. Each repeating idea was numbered and added to a master list of repeating ideas. An example of the process of establishing repeating ideas among individual interviews, the following selections of relevant texts which have been grouped together into repeating ideas are from my interviews with Ms. J and Ms. P. In the example below of Repeating Idea #20, Ms. J is discussing the importance of student's being able to analyze source credibility. In Repeating Idea #1, I selected text where Ms. P was broadly discussing student motivation - or more specifically, their lack thereof.

Sample List of Relevant Text Selections Grouped into Repeating Ideas

Repeating Idea #20: Examining Credible Sources

(a)Yeah, I teach 8th, 10th, 11th, and 12th. But um, in the 8th grade, the informational text stuff that I did, my goal was… if those 8th graders- if they read something, they're going to believe it. (Ms. J, p.15)

(b) And then we found another article that was completely informational. And, I explained to them how important it is to not read when you're researching for something, not to read just one piece of information because it might have opinion in there that you don't know. And it might have facts that maybe aren't right and when you're researching something, or just if you want to learn about something, you don't google something and read the first thing that comes up and that's your answer, you know? You need to read different things. So that was my goal. (Ms. J, p.11)

(c) Um...but we didn't just read that one article, we also read an article on the fact of the building, why they were getting rid of it, You know, what the reasoning's were - not just "We're upset about this", and...so like I said, it can be persuasive, sometimes, but it's informing them of the issue and why people are upset, but you also have to read more into it. You have to get both sides of the story. (Ms. J.p.1)

(d)He kind of gives them every different perspective that there is. Like, look, this isn't just...you can't believe what just one person is saying or whatever. (Ms. J, p.5)

Repeating Idea #1: Concerning Student and Teacher Motivations

 (a) So they get the value of writing, and they really appreciate it. And they appreciate things like feedback and learning MLA style, because they know they're gonna have to use it (Ms. P, p.1)

(b) Once that they get to point where they can do basic grammar functions, basic spelling...get their point across, it feels like they don't care as much because to them when are they gonna write a 3 page paper? A 5 page paper? A 10 page paper? They don't see it as important....For the kid that plan on going to community college or going on to university, they see the value or importance.(Ms. P, p.1)

 (c) Unless it applies directly to what a kid wants to do, they still don't care. (Ms. P, p.4)

Once repeating ideas are established amongst individual interviews, they were then compared across interviews. This was done by creating numbered folders for each repeating idea, and depositing excerpts of that repeating idea from all interviews into that folder. These repeating idea labels were the initial codes that represented all of the excerpts within that repeating idea. So, for example, For example, Ms. C, Ms. G, Ms. J all indicated that it is important that students seek out multiple sources and are able to analyze source quality. Some of the things these three teachers said about it were:

"And then we look at sort of an evaluation, is this a good source? why? why not?"

"And it might have facts that maybe aren't right, and when you're researching something - or just if you want to learn about something - you don't google something and read the first thing that comes up and that's your answer, you know? You need to read different things. So that was my goal."

"…I think now with so little vetted information and informational text out there that they have to be more...you really...it's our responsibility to teach them to be more aware of where this is coming from and what it means and how to further investigate."

So, for example, the above interview excerpts were now all put into the same folder, and represented under repeating idea 1 ("You need to read different things") in Table 3.3.

Repeating ideas that share common traits were then grouped under a *theme*. A *theme*, according to Auerbach & Silverstein (2003), "is an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas" (p.38). It was at this point in the coding process that some repeating ideas were combined with other repeating ideas. For example, the repeating idea #1 listed above, "concerning student motivation*"* was combined with repeating idea

#4: "focus on practical application", because at the core of both of these categories was the issue of practicality when it came to how teachers saw students responding to writing and reading assignments in the classroom. Ultimately, these two repeating ideas (#1 & #4) were combined and represented under the repeating idea "there's a lot of workforce kids", which appears under the theme of *Informational Texts as Practical* and can see seen represent in Table 3.3.

Finally, the results of the themes are then organized into "larger, more abstract ideas" (p.39) which are referred to as *theoretical constructs.* It is at this stage the "theory" part of grounded theory is established. Auerbach & Silverstein (2003) give a straightforward description of theory, writing that "theory is a description of a pattern that you find in the data" (p.31). In the case of this research, there are two theoretical constructs. The theoretical construct of INFORMATIONAL TEXTS AS NON-FICTION suggested an overall agreement amongst teachers on the central characteristics of informational texts when it comes to both for reading and writing. At the same time, the theoretical construct of NEGOTIATING WRITING EXPECTATIONS highlighted a disconnect in the notion of writing being a shared responsibility among teaching faculty. Although teachers seem to conceptualize what constituted informational texts in a similar way, this agreement in ultimately a superficial one that was in conflict with the realities of how they saw student's performing across disciplines. Table 3.3 gives an outline of the final repeating ideas, themes, and theoretical constructs that emerged in this research.

Overarching Theory: A Theory/Practice Divide in Writing

I.   Informational Text as Non-Fiction
   A.   Informational Texts as Research Based
      1. You need to read different things
      2. You have to go out and find that additional information to incorporate.
      3. Support, support, you need support.
   B.   Informational Texts as Practical

      4. There's a lot of workforce kids

5. We do more informational text type readings because of the SAT

II.   Negotiating Writing Expectations
   A.   Colleague Collaboration
         6. You can't tell the social studies teachers and science teachers "This is what you have to do".

         7. We're all spread out, so it's hard to work together.
   B.   Students Forgetting How to Write

         8. Kids sort of play the game though, they learn something in English and they forget it in another class.

         9. What were the expectations?

3.5 Limitations

This study used a relatively small sample size of participants for both the survey and interviews. Further, the participants were all teachers at what can be considered small schools in terms of student population. Many of the participants are also responsible for teaching middle school classes as well as well as high school classes, which meant they taught more preps and had less time to develop curriculum. These characteristics are specific to smaller schools, and the distribution of classes and teaching responsibilities

might vary when teaching in a larger school. In fact, one teacher participant in this research had taught in a larger school, and during that time she only had 2 preps (she has six now at her current, smaller, school). However, in light of these limitations regarding size, this research was focused on gaining acute and personalized perspectives from participants via interviews, as opposed to generating a large sample size that would provide quantifiable information with less depth. As I have noted, there is an abundance of quantifiable research conducted in the field of education. This research, however, seeks to uncover the specific feelings one small but significant group of high school teachers have toward teaching writing, and the methods they use to do so.

In qualitative research, there is always the threat of researcher bias; however, the use of grounded theory was used specifically to counter any inherent biases as the use of grounded theory employs rigorous and systematic approaches to data. Grounded theory is "grounded" in the data in that the researcher approaches it not by looking through the data for specific answers that will "prove" the researcher's hypothesis, but rather looking at what the data itself is revealing and then developing a theory. Hypothesis come from the data, and are "systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

3.6 Summary

This chapter outlined the methods used in this research, primarily qualitative interviews which were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. It also discussed in

depth the feminist methodologies behind how the research was approached and executed.

The following chapter will discuss the results of this research.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction & Synopsis of Findings

The previous chapter gave an overview of the research design and methods that were used in approaching this research project. Chapters 2 and 3 also expounded upon the historical marginalization of teachers as professionals. Most participants in this research were also women, which add an additional layer of gendered marginalization - a layer that has indeed impacted the profession of teaching, both historically and presently. Because the data for this research was collected from participants who volunteered, it can be construed as biased. Often times, voluntary sampling is viewed as biased because those who volunteer to be participants may have very strong views about the research topic. However, this type of bias is a greater concern when the research is trying to prove statistical or empirical evidence of a hypothesis. This research was an exploratory study that sought to understand how writing was happening in one particular geographical area; the purpose was not to prove a hypothesis. If this study were to be expanded and carried out on a larger scale with the hopes of producing quantitative results, equal gender representation among teachers should be taken into consideration. However, a point that should also be considered is the fact that ¾ of K-12 teachers are women (Rich, 2014). This number also reflects the participant numbers for this research: 6 participants were women (75%) and 2 male (25%). So, in this case, the participants reflect the actual ratio of male/female teachers nationwide and thus is fairly representative of the population.

Feminist standpoint theory is concerned with the relationship between knowledge and power - specifically between social and political powers - and it argues that research involving power relations should use the lives of marginalized people as the point of departure. The educational system is undoubtedly complex, and one that by very definition embodies concerns of knowledge and, in turn, power (Foucault, 1977). Complimenting feminist standpoint theory as a framework for this research was the use of grounded theory to analyze the data. Grounded theory also supports the notion that the subjective experience can also be considered valid data, and thus was used to analyze the interview data from eight high school teachers in rural Michigan. The term grounded theory originates from the core of what the method represents: it "allows you to ground your hypotheses in what your research participants say" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p.7). Rather than begin with a hypothesis, grounded theory allows a researcher to question participants about their perspectives, and then develops hypotheses based on the analysis of these answers. This study explored how high school English teachers conceptualize informational texts and informational writing, and inquired about the "shared responsibility" of teaching writing among high school teachers across disciplines, and subsequently developed two theoretical constructs from the results of the data that can provide an additional layer of understanding into teachers' conceptions of informational texts and how writing is taught in public high schools in the U.S. This chapter will present the findings of this study. Though it was shown in the previous chapter as Table 3.3, I am again presenting an outline of the results here, labeled Table 4.1, for easier reference.

Table 3

Overarching Theory: Theory/Practice in Writing

    I. Informational Text as Non-Fiction
        A.   Informational Texts as Research Based
              1. You need to read different things
              2. You have to go out and find that additional information to incorporate.
              3. Support, support, you need support.
        B.   Informational Texts as Practical

              4. There's a lot of workforce kids

              5. We do more informational text type readings because of the SAT
  II. Negotiating Writing Expectations
        C.   Colleague Collaboration

              6. You can't tell the social studies teachers and science teachers "*This is what you have to do*".

              7. We're all spread out, so it's hard to work together.
        D.   Students Forgetting How to Write

              8. Kids sort of play the game though, they learn something in English and they

              forget it in another class.

              9. What were the expectations?

4.2 Results

      The presentation of the results of this research will follow the order of the outline

in Table 4.1, beginning with a discussion of the theoretical construct of

INFORMATIONAL TEXTS AS NON-FICTION, followed by a discussion of the themes

and repeating ideas that resulted in this construct. I will then present the theoretical

construct of NEGOTIATING WRITING EXPECTATIONS, and follow with the themes

and repeating ideas that emerged underneath this construct. Chapter 5 is then devoted to a

discussion of the overarching theory which emerged from this research of A

Theory/Practice Divide in Writing.

4.2.1 Theoretical Construct 1: Informational Texts as Non-Fiction

If 70% of texts students interact with by 12th grade should be informational texts,

what does that mean to English teachers? What kinds of texts do teachers consider

informational? What kinds of informational writing do students do? The common factor

in all of the teachers' responses indicated their belief that a distinguishing characteristic

of informational texts in the context of both reading and writing was that it was non-

fiction in nature. This reflects what Maloch & Bomer (2013) found in their research on

defining informational text: that most researchers use non-fiction "as an umbrella term to

include all texts that present factual information" (p.207). In this study, all of the

teachers interviewed indicated they considered informational texts to be non-fiction in

nature. Five of them explicitly stated this, while the three that didn't state this directly

implied that they saw informational texts as non-fiction based on the assignment

examples they discussed during the interviews. For example, Ms. S doesn't explicitly

state she sees informational texts as nonfiction, but she does give examples of texts that

she considers to be informational texts, such as the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective*

Teens, a book that her 9th grade class reads and which can be categorized as non-fiction.

In articulating how they defined informational texts, this type of response was

common. Teachers' provided examples of what they would read or what kind of

assignment they would give that they believed constituted informational reading or

writing. Though there was a tendency to create a divide between literary and informational texts (as the Common Core itself does), several of the teachers spoke of informational texts within the context of literature. As Mr. E explained, "you partner it with your literature rather than, you know...it's not really a separate thing, but you partner it." When Ms. S's class reads *To Kill a Mockingbird*, for example, she incorporates informational text by bringing in the Jim Crow Laws to use as supplementary reading. Ms. S also pointed out that the literature textbooks she uses "always had little informational blimps", such as the information on the literary period or an author's bio that preludes a short story in a literature anthology, which she saw as examples of informational texts as well. Ms. C echoed this, noting that in her American Lit class, many of the texts they read are actually non-fiction in nature: "lots of narratives from the explorers, and you know, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*...speeches…a lot of that is already informational." Ms. G, who is also a librarian and has taught middle school as well as high school, uses the *Harry Potter* series to first introduce the concept of source citation to her 6th grade classes. She stated that, aside from being nonfiction, informational texts are texts where students are "looking for the facts and the evidence in that kind of reading that they do." When she first introduces textual evidence, she asks students the simple question: "How does Harry's uncle feel about Harry?" In the book, Harry's uncle (named Vernon in the book) clearly dislikes Harry, and that is shown through the terrible way he treats Harry. Specific instances of the terrible way Uncle Vernon treats Harry is the kind of evidence Ms. G asks students to look for and provide. As Ms. G articulates:

They say, "Well, he hates Harry". Okay - how do you know that? And I make

them go and find that information and they have to tell me what page it's on…

you know, I'm telling them "Yeah, you have an opinion - Harry's uncle hates

Harry. But how did you get to that opinion? How do you *know* that?

To summarize, all teachers believe that informational texts are non-fictional in

nature. However, though the Common Core divides literary and informational texts, most

teachers in fact use literature as sources for informational texts. This is perhaps in part out

of necessity. Of the three teachers I asked about getting new materials to accommodate

an increased emphasis on informational texts, none of them had received any new

materials or funds for new texts. While all teachers agreed that informational writing was

non-fiction, there were other defining characteristics that many teachers associated with

informational writing as well. This is in line with how the standards also conceptualize

informational texts, which they define as "literary nonfiction" (NGA, *Introduction).*

However, in the case of this research teachers also described more specific characteristics

they associate with informational texts: that they are research based and they are

practical. Though the overarching category of how teachers view informational texts is a

nonfiction, I will now discuss first theme that emerged from this this theoretical construct

which is *Informational Texts as Research Based*.

4.2.1.1 Theme A (Informational Texts as Research Based) and Repeating Ideas 1, 2, & 3

The following section details the three repeating ideas that emerged and which

reside under the theme of *Informational Texts as Research Based*. The data revealed that

teachers emphasized the importance of three different aspects of research: (1) accessing multiple sources when analyzing source credibility *("you need to read different things")*, (2) being able to conduct independent research to find credible sources ("You have to go out and find that additional information to incorporate"), and (3) students being able to utilize the evidence in their own writing to back up claims *("support, support, you need support")*. These repeating ideas are represented using a single quote taken from a participant interview, which are also presented in the parentheses above. These repeating ideas are expounded upon below, and provide additional participant quotes to help paint the fullest picture possible of each idea.

1. "You need to read different things"

This repeating idea represents the skill of being able to find and analyze multiple sources. In other words, to verify information before they accept it as fact. This is an important characteristic for teachers, because in the words of Ms. J, "if [students] read something, they're going to believe it." In her classroom, she focuses on analyzing texts for credibility but also for any biases, and stresses to students the importance of reading several different sources on a topic. She gives the example of an assignment she created, inspired by an op-ed article written in a newspaper regarding the demolition of one of the last buildings in New York City that served as part of the underground railroad. She explains:

> And so, it was written, you know, in a biased way because they were upset because they wanted to preserve that piece of history. But we didn't just read that one article, we also read an article on the fact of the building - why they were

getting rid of it, what the reasonings were - not just "we're upset about this"…You have to get both sides of the story.

After reading both articles about the same issue, Ms. J then had students select a topic of their own, find three sources about that topic, and analyze the information presented in each article looking for information such as implicit or explicit biases of the author.

As I've previously noted, Ms. G is a librarian as well as an English teacher, and she too heavily emphasizes the importance of analyzing and verifying the credibility of sources. One of her goals for the students, she states, is "just get them to read information. Critically." She notes how this is a continuous struggle in the 21st century, with access to so many different sources on so many different platforms, chiefly those that appear on social media, "...but I think now with so little vetted information and informational text out there that they have to be more...you really...it's our responsibility to teach them to be more aware of where this is coming from and what it means and how to further investigate." When discussing the possible impetus for the focus on informational texts, Ms. S also brought up the factor of technology, and contemplated if it might have something to do with the importance of being able to critically analyze informational in a digital age: "...I think too with students, with the internet at their fingertips, *discerning* what is *valid* and *biased* has become something that is a - is something that we need to focus on as well." This emphasis on doing background research and the importance of source credibility is important not just when it comes to reading informational texts, but also when it comes to students supporting their own ideas and "making sure they're actually using credible, valid sources and not just whatever they find on the internet" (Ms. P).

88

2. "You have to do out and find that additional information to incorporate"

This repeating idea represented the aspect of students conducting independent research as a characteristic for informational writing. In fact, 6 of the 8 teachers described research as a central characteristic of informational writing. In terms of student production of informational texts, this research could present itself in a multitude of genres or final forms, including essays, multimodal projects, and opinion pieces that were written in response to the student's research findings. But what characterizes the definition of "research" in this case is the incorporation of outside sources into a student's' writing; a student must do some independent research. For example, Ms. P states that even if the purpose is to inform, but there is no "outside information coming in", then she does not necessarily consider it to be informational writing:

> I mean if it's like, let's say, you're in a shop class and you're technical writing piece is just explaining how you built something? I don't necessarily think that's informational writing. Cause you're just going through the processes that you've physically did. So you're informing, someone about something, but there's not like outside information coming in. Whereas if a kid in a shop class, you know, researched the best way to build a table, then built that table according to the specifications, and then had to write a paper about it, I could definitely see that as informational writing, because they're going to have to cite that source.

So, while informational writing can manifest itself in multiple forms and genres, most teachers (7 out of 8) expressed that informational writing does includes a research component. For Ms. P, as noted above, when considering if something is informational writing, the presence of outside sources is indeed absolutely critical: "So I think that's the big thing - is there outside information or not?" She elaborates on this, stating that:

I think informational writing is anything that I would consider nonfiction that has some sort of research involved. So, I wouldn't necessarily decide that a memoir is informational writing, because it's nonfiction and it's from the student's point of view, but there's really no research involved; there's nothing extra they're doing for it. Um, whereas I think of informational writing, is you have to go out and find that additional information to incorporate. So if they did something, you know, personal writing that did include a research component of some sort, I could see it as informational writing but I think you have to do some sort of research.

One of the characteristics Ms. C describes of informational writing is that it is writing "where you're relying on primary and secondary sources", and emphasized "using outside sources with integrity". This type of writing can manifest itself in different ways in Ms. C's class. For example, she might ask students to "research music, from a certain period where there was big historical event happening. So you know, like Vietnam. Okay, so research music, and comment on it. Like, give me your opinion. Tell me about it first, but then give me your opinion on something." Ms. C also has assignments that incorporate both research and informational writing, but the final products are not essays or a textual document; rather, they can be a speech or project. Ms. C gives an example of this project-based research assignment: "we watch like a *Freedom Riders* documentary, and then I do give them an assignment where they have to use the information and, you know, create a map or do something that has text but it is also more visual, spacial, um...sometimes building something, so kind of project-based that way."

3. "support, support, you need support"

Finally, another repeating idea focused on student's using evidence to support their own ideas. When asked about her goals and expectations for students in her class, Ms. G responded that "They need to support what they're saying. That's really, really

what I push: that textual evidence, really, really push that." "I tell the kids all the time, I should have a tattoo up there", Ms. G says as she points to forehead, "that says '**Support**'. Support your answers with facts -- support, support, you need support!"

Another example Ms. C gives relates to how source citation matters in the context of testing, too. Her students can take the AP test, where "they will only be given sources for the synthesis essay. They [the sources] all have names, so you're expected to cite them as such. So you know, we will practice that." So, the importance of citing evidence is important not only for classroom assignments, but it is also is something that is important when it comes to taking certain tests.

To summarize, this sections outlined the repeating ideas that comprise the theme of *Informational Writing as Research Based*, with the repeating ideas that students should be able to critically analyze multiple sources, conduct research to produce their own sources, and utilize those sources in their own work. The next section moves on to discuss the repeating ideas that make up the theme of *Informational Texts as Practical*. The practical nature of this category has to do with the kinds of writing teachers believe has immediate relevance for students; this might mean writing that helps prepare them for a test, or it could be writing that looks ahead to situations a student living as an independent adult might find themselves in.

4.2.2   Theme B (Informational Texts as Practical) and Repeating Ideas 4 & 5

Many teachers spoke of the importance of practicality when it comes to planning student reading and writing assignments. The term "practical" in this case is multifaceted and is used to refer to different end goals for the students. The end goals, as outlined in

the CCSS, are that students will be prepared for college, career, and life. Informational

texts as practical writing responds to these different goals. Teachers demonstrated that

they continuously try to consider how students will be able to relate to a text, or how an

assignment will directly help them for their future - this can mean test prep for those

students who are college bound, or applied types of writing such as resumes or invoices

which can help prepare students planning to immediately enter the workforce. This

category speaks to the issue of trying to bridge - or at least balance - the gap between

college bound students and students immediately entering the workforce.

4. "there's a lot of workforce kids"

In Ms. J's school, "There's a lot of workforce kids." She continues:

> It's...that's one thing I do struggle with a little bit, because I only have one
> section of 12th grade English and one of 11th grade. It's hard to...you
> know....some of the seniors, they don't care about writing papers. They know that
> this isn't gonna help them. Some of them are going to North Dakota to work in the
> oil fields. And they're like...they don't understand why we're doing it, but I have to
> do it for those that are...I have half that are going off to college, and half that are
> not, so that's a hard balance.

One of ways she tried to strike a balance was by creating a career unit. This could be

considered practical for all students, as many college-students also work part-time jobs.

In the unit, "...I taught them basic interview skills, I taught them good traits of being a

good employee. So we looked at different resumes and said what's good with this resume,

what's bad with this resume? How can we make it better? And they made their own

resumes, and they critiqued one another's resumes." They also had practice interviewing,

where Ms. J served as a hiring manager. For this activity, "I had their resumes in front of

me and they had to pick a local job that was like on Michigan Talent, or whatever, and they had actually pretend like they were applying for a real job and...that was a big goal."

Ms. P also spoke of students in her class who planned to on an oil rig after high school, and how this affects their motivation in the classroom. Ms. P described her struggle by saying that "unless it applies directly to what a kid wants to do, they still don't care. So, unless a paper a kid is writing is about auto mechanics, they don't care. Or unless it's about...I know one kid who's going to Alaska to work on an oil rig. So unless it's about oil rigging, he doesn't care." Reflecting on the differences between the school where she did her student teaching and the school where she teaches now, Ms. P observed that at the school where she student-taught, most students went on to college and so "they get the value of writing, and they really appreciate it. And they appreciate things like feedback and learning MLA style, because they know they're gonna have to use it", whereas at her currently school most students go into trade schools or the workforce. For them, she says:

> Once they see writing -- once that they get to point where they can do basic grammar functions, basic spelling...get their point across, it feels like they don't care as much because to them when are they gonna write a 3 page paper? A 5 page paper? A 10 page paper? They don't see it as important. Because if they're working at their dad's auto shop, the most they're ever going to have to write is a quote or...an order. Or something like that. For the kid that plan on going to community college or going on to university, they see the value or importance.

At her school, the 12th grade students are required to write a 10-page research paper in order to graduate, which Ms. P spends two quarters during the school year working on with them. "So they do write a lot", she acknowledges, "but it's not the kind of writing I want to be doing with them. I would much rather have them do applied writing to things

93

that they want to do, and things that truly interest them", suggesting that a more individual-based approach would be her ideal assignment.

Ms. G spoke of the everyday tasks that involve being able to read and write, such as applying for a loan at a bank, or writing quotes and invoices for labor jobs such as construction or plumbing, emphasizing the importance of conveying information to customers. Further, "if you're going to start a small business and want to write a grant or something like that - my gosh! You have to be able to prove what you're saying you have to be able to show where you got this information from." While practical, this response again alludes to the importance of research and evidence. Even further, she suggests that being able to read and evaluate sources critically is a practical skill that can related to jobs, but is also part of being a good citizen: "Do you want to go and vote? Are you going to read all of the information? There's a lot in adult life, you know. There's a lot of reasons why you should be able to pick information out of text."

Mr. K also addressed this issue of practicality when it comes to decision making about what should even be included in the curricula of a school, and the stakeholders we have not yet discussed: parents. One of the popular electives at his school was science fiction, which he taught. "But, a lot of our parents said, 'well is that really going to help them become an engineer?'" Other classes, not just English classes, were also on the chopping block throughout the years he taught at his school, such as foreign language classes: "...we had many people that were looking at it and saying, 'Hey, they're never going to be living in Spain. They're never going to be living in France or whatever, not thinking that the world is changing. So they wanted something more practical." Ms. C has heard similar things, in regard to why students need to learn citations: "I've had

94

parents say, 'well, unless they're gonna be a Ph.D. why do they need that?" And I'm like 'Um, well now's the best time to learn it. Now is the best time to get them sort of familiar with it'....I mean, if you made something and you were so proud of it, and spent years and years of your life creating it and everyone else went out and copied it, wouldn't *you* be pissed?"

5. "We do more informational text type reading because of the SAT"

The theme of practicality also included test preparation. As Ms. C observed, "...we're preparing for college, we're preparing for life, but we're also preparing for this test." In 2015, Michigan began used the SAT as the standardized test for state assessment purposes. This meant all students had to take the SAT, even if they were not going on the college. However, many students are going on to college, so the pressure of teachers was twofold: to do their best to prepare all students for the SAT so that the school would score favorable for state assessment purposes, but also to make sure college-bound students were prepared for the test since their scores mattered on college applications as well. Thus, even though one teacher stated "I don't teach to the test, but I give them background so that are more comfortable taking the test", it was inarguably a large and present factor that went into deciding what to teach when it comes to reading and writing. One teacher noted that the switch from the ACT to the SAT actually caused a bigger curricular shift than the implementation of the Common Core did when it came to what they focused on in the classroom.

Ms. S explained that the change "is just basically a different way of, kind of, approaching it with the students so they kind of get a feel for what it's going to look like,

especially next year when they have to take it". Mr. E agrees that when preparing

students for what to expect on the test, "Giving them, showing them, information texts

and seeing what they have to do with them on the SAT or ACT test helps them. You

relieve the pressure of taking the tests, that's a lot of benefit for the kids." He also noted

that "we do more information text type readings because of the SAT, or, it used to be the

ACT. A lot of those things are based on informational writing, so you incorporate that

more in your curriculum at various times." Regarding the change in testing and how it

affected both students and teachers, Ms. S explained:

> I think the students, with the change, were kind of like "okay, we've been
> preparing in this way..." and we as the teachers were like "they're getting it!", as
> we get them year after year, and we have them looking at their progress. You
> know you have time to the point where they feel very confident, they know what
> to expect. So last year was a little bit of a shift with, you know, looking at that.
> And with the shift, the students were very apprehensive because it's a totally
> different animal. I think initially the teachers were as well. I was kind of like, took
> the stance, especially with the sophomores who were looking at this for the first
> time and knowing that this, you know, is going to be the expectation for them
> next year, I try to explain to them that we've been -- you're still writing, you're
> still organizing and that, but now you're *assessing* somebody's writing instead of
> writing just from a prompt.

As the above quoteations have illustrated, one of the concerns teachers had about the

SAT was making sure students knew what to expect. In other words, they wanted

students to know what kind of writing they would be asked to do. Ms. S suggests above

that a student's confidence in the taking the test directly relates to element of expectation.

At the beginning of this study, the central research question asked how teachers

conceptualize informational texts, which comprise an estimated 70% of texts high school

students interact with. Overall, the characteristic of informational texts as nonfiction was

the common ground found among the 8 teachers interviewed. As well as being nonfiction, teachers also viewed informational texts as researched based and practical. Though there seems to be some consistency with how teachers define what informational texts are (non-fiction, with a research based or practical component), another research question that guided this research was looking at how the teaching of writing being a shared responsibility among teachers actually unfolded in practice. This resulting categories which emerged indicate that there is a general consensus among English teachers regarding the characteristics of informational texts.

While the category of INFORMATIONAL TEXTS AS NONFICTION revealed that teachers more or less conceptualize informational texts in a similar way; one that involves research and that also has a practical aspect to it. These conception are also in line with how informational texts is defined in the Common Core standards themselves. However, the other part of this research was interested in looking at the idea of literacy - in particular writing - being a shared responsibility among teachers. Here, disconnect was revealed between English teachers and other teachers when it comes to the teaching of writing being a shared responsibility. The next section will address the results that point to this disconnect, beginning with discussing the category of NEGOTIATING WRITING EXPECTATIONS, which addresses the themes of *Colleague Collaboration* and of *Students Forgetting How to Write.*

4.3 Theoretical Construct 2: Negotiating Writing Expectations

The ELA CCSS suggest that writing is to be a shared responsibility among teachers. My second research question asked teachers if they thought writing was a

shared responsibility in their school, and how that materialized in practice. All teachers thought theoretically that it *should* be a shared responsibility, but that it was not happening. As Mr. E admitted, "Well, it's a shared responsibility across the curriculum. To get everybody to do it is a bit harder." The theoretical construct of *Negotiating Writing Expectations* and the two related themes of *Colleague Collaboration* and *Students Forgetting How to Write* revealed that both teachers and students face challenges when navigating different expectations. The data analysis highlights the role of expectations when it comes to writing. English teachers are influenced by the expectations of entities such as parents, students, other colleagues, and school administrators that in turn informs what they decide teach. For example, during his interview, Mr. K spoke of how a literature class he taught on the topic of death came under heavy scrutiny by parents when another class they assumed to be more valuable was being cut. He ended up changing the name of the class to eliminate any reference to death in the course title (the topic of the course remained the same). Ms. J was questioned by another teacher when they found out she would be teaching *Of Mice and Men*. They thought it might be inappropriate, due to the one brothel scene in the novel (though not the complex ethical and societal issues raised in the novel, included its jarring ending). Students also navigate changing expectations for writing between grades, between classes and teachers, and between tests. As I will discuss in the following sections, there is a lack of consistency in what different teachers expect from students' writing. While encouraging writing to be a shared responsibility among teachers is theoretically a good way to encourage the bridging of these gaps in student writing, it was relatively non-existent in practice according to the teachers interviewed during this research.

6. "You can't tell the social studies teachers and science teachers '*This is what you have to do*'"

"The constant goal when you have your school improvement goals", notes Mr. E, "is writing across the curriculum." However, the reality of this happening in practice is complicated. For one, "people buy in and people don't buy in...you're not going to get everybody on board doing it". The hesitation of other teachers to "get on board" is again for many different reasons. "First," observes Mr. E, "they might not be comfortable doing it." Aside from English teachers, few other teachers are trained in teaching writing, so "teachers will say, 'I'd give an essay, but I don't know really how to grade it. What should I grade on? And if I don't really feel comfortable grading it, then why am I giving it?'" These are indeed important questions and points to consider when addressing a successful approach to writing across the curriculum, and for considering how to make the shared responsibility of writing less of a hypothetical good-idea, and more of an actively realistic goal.

Having students simply write is one thing, but making sure they are writing *well* is something different altogether. Writing should be a shared responsibility, but the fact remains that not all teachers have been trained to teach writing. It's difficult to teach something when you don't know what exactly it is you should be teaching. Other teachers interviewed also acknowledged that many times, other teachers do try and assign writing, but like Mr. E's colleague, they are at a loss on what they should be expecting from students when it comes to writing skills. Ms. G mentioned how recently a colleague

who teacher social studies stopped her in the hall to ask her about how to develop a writing assignment. The social studies teacher said that "she wants to do more with writing. And she said 'writing was never my thing', and she says 'but is that 5 paragraph essay - is that a thing anymore? Because when I was in college, the professor said just throw that out...'" So, again, even when teachers of other disciplines want to encourage students to write in their classes, they themselves aren't sure how exactly to approach creating or evaluating such an assignment. Asking an English teacher for help or advice is one solution other teachers have utilized. Just as Ms. G told the story of the social studies teacher asking her for advice, Ms. P has "had teachers say 'oh, I'm doing a paper and I want to use MLA, can you give me some help?'" - and Ms. P has been willing to help them. Ms. G mentioned that she offered to help her colleague in social studies grade any writing the students did, so that her colleague could see what it is she looks for and so that students would have consistent standards for their writing.

Ms. C teaches 11th and 12th grade, but is good friends with the 9th and 10th grade English teacher. She has felt very lucky, she said, because when she started teaching at the school she communicated with this teaching right away in order to establish common vocabulary and standards for 9th- 12th grade English. "I said, 'Okay, what do you call this? What do you call this? What do you do with this?' And then there were things where he was like 'I don't know, I don't know what you call that." And I'm like, 'I got a word.'" By doing this, they were able to coordinate specifics terms that they could consistently use to reference the things they were teaching, so that the language they used was always the same and thus students were be familiar with and used to

hearing them throughout their high school career. In other words, they made sure they were on the same page.

Ms. C was straightforward in her approach as a new teacher in establishing common expectations with the other high school English teacher. However, when it came to communicating with teachers in other subject areas regarding expectations for writing, establishing a common ground wasn't so cut and dry. One issue Ms. C faced was, "what I found was I was expecting them to cite their sources, and then in their [X] class, they were expected to copy a website for an assignment, and never say they got it from a website." So students were getting assignments in other classes that did not require them to cite their sources, and in fact were being given assignments that required them to, in effect, plagiarize.

Input from other teachers can also impact what English teachers decide to focus on. Ms. J recalled in the last year another teacher at her school who noticed that students were having a hard time reading and understanding instructions related to a piece of machinery, and different types directions on how to do things. This inspired her consider including more texts of that nature in her own classes.

Mr. K, who taught English and History classes for over 20 years and has also adjunct taught at a local university, had many opportunities for collaboration throughout his career. Not just among the colleagues at his own school, but with other teachers across the state. One place where he found support was with the Upper Peninsula Writer's Project (UPWP), which was a sister-site of the National Writing Project. Mr. E, who also has been teaching for over 20 years, spoke about the impact the UPWP had on his career as well. The project started in the late 70's, as a collaborative project among

two local universities. Today, in 2017, the project still exists at one of these universities, but the support for it financially has waned and the group isn't as active today as they once were.

7. "We're all spread out, so it's hard to work together."

Professional development opportunities, such as going to conferences, is something many teachers find valuable. As Mr. E noted, even "a lunchtime conversation with teachers, it's really a good thing to get ideas." Mr. E has been to a regional conference on writing every years since its formation - about 15 years - but which recently has had its own funding issues and didn't take place the past year. Mr. E always found this conference was helpful "because it brought some high school teachers, and college grad students and some other professors together to help find out things you can do to help kids." Mr. E has also been to two NCTE conferences, but "the school won't fund those anymore, so we can't go." This is one of the reasons the UPWP has been so important to local teachers. Since the teachers interviewed live in a rural and remote part of the country, the UPWP was a local opportunity that brought high school and university teachers together. Mr. E recalls that the project would host "Saturday Sessions" where teachers would get together and brainstorm different things they could do in their classes. Mr. K also spoke of the impact the UPWP has on his early days teaching in the late 1970's, recalling that "we walked out of there with lesson plans that we could use almost immediately."

The UPWP also provided professional development training. Mr. K recalls:

> We would go to each other's schools and put on workshop and writing across the curriculum, making suggestions for writing classes, you know, writing assignments that could be done in math, or in history classes, or what no. Showing some samples and then talking about collaborative working, too.

Ms. C was another teacher who spoke in detail about planning and implementing professional development within her school that addressed writing. At a school she previously taught at, the English teachers trained all other teachers in MLA citation style, so that what they were expecting from students was clear to all faculty. The school also had a large ESL population that needed to address the fact that the second language students were consistently doing poorly. Ms. C approached the principal and proposed a workshop/in-service that addressed this problem directly. She worked with the Spanish teacher and an ESL teacher to develop a professional development called "ESL Sensitivity" in order to address the language difficulties the ESL students at her school were facing that affected them in all their courses.

Even in best case scenarios like Ms. C's story, where an administration listens and supports the ideas of teachers who want to improve the learning experience for students, doesn't mean all the teachers were willing to cooperate. In Ms. C's case, there was one teacher who said ESL students would never earn better than a "D" in their class. Nevertheless, she persisted in working with this teacher to create bilingual word banks, and had native English speaking student who were taking Spanish class translate the multiple choice tests he gave.

Mr. E believes that "the really beneficial thing for a teacher is to have dialogue with your colleagues." Ms. G also expressed that she wished "we could work more closely with the other teachers." Communication among colleagues seems simple, but it's

not when every minute of your workday is filled with other tasks and duties. Teachers

rarely all have the same prep hours. Even after school, many of the teachers interviewed

were leaders or coaches for after-school activities, so when classes let out they

immediately go to a practice, meeting, or rehearsal. Ms. P explains:

> High school wise, it's harder to get that sort of collaboration because we don't
> have common preps. Our schedule for next year - I just got the final one - I have
> 1st hour prep by myself. No one else has it. Then there's high school teacher with
> 3rd hour, 5th hour, 6th hour...we're all spread out, so it's hard to work together.

Ms. C is another teacher who addressed the desire to collaborate, but again, time to do so

is limited:

> I can easily adapt whatever I'm doing to what the science teacher is doing, where
> you can get all this cross-curricular work, which is what they want us to do. They
> want us to do collaborative assignments or units or whatever with a teacher in a
> different discipline, but then of course we don't actually get the time to actually
> do it, and so then we all feel like failures because we have, like, half-assed time.

While time is certainly an issue, but another issue is the fact that other teachers don't

necessarily feel as though writing *is* their responsibility. Several of the teachers noted that

they don't want their colleagues to feel like they are imposing another on them. When

Ms. C coordinated her ESL professional development, she noted that she intentionally

didn't "run" it - she had another teacher do it. "I was trying to kind of restrict my role.

Because I kind of became this force, and I think some of the teachers were like

[grumble]." Mr. K made the same decision, when the UPWP hosted a professional

development opportunity at his school. Through the UPWP, "we would go to each

other's schools and put on workshops and writing across the curriculum making suggestions for writing classes, you know, writing assignments that could be done in math, or in history classes, or what not. Showing some samples and then talking about collaborative working, too." However, Mr. K can specifically remember that "we didn't put the workshops on in our own schools because we...the prophet in their own town routine, right? We didn't necessarily want our coworkers to think this was something we were demanding of them, as opposed to some larger entity." He gives an example of the tension that these workshops could create:

> But when friends had some to put on the writing workshops at our school, I can remember one of my coworkers, a math and gym teacher, being so upset that he literally stalked out of the workshop altogether because he was being asked to do something that wasn't his job.

These concerns of being a "prophet in your own town" have merit: in his reflection on heading a writing-across-the-curriculum initiative at Michigan Tech, Toby Fulwiler (1984) wrote that when he ran writing workshops for faculty across disciplines, faculty at universities where he had been hired as an outside writing consultant were more receptive of his ideas and methods, as opposed to running workshops "internally" at Michigan Tech where he was received with speculation. As an outside consultant, he felt that "my pedestal was higher and so my word less debatable" (p.115). Ms. G also referenced being aware of this fine-balance: "I'm thinking the English teachers should probably have some little in-service or something: "this is what we do, this is what we expect" But, you know, again you can't tell the social studies teachers and science teachers "This is what you have to do", because it's, you know..."

Ms. R said that at her school, there have been conversations about making the standards for students' writing more cohesive across the curriculum:

> The English department has had many conversations about the aspects of writing that need to be uniform across all curriculum. Unfortunately, the problem that we are running into is that many students don't apply what they learn about writing in classes other than English. Their writing knowledge and skills seem to fly out the window when they are required to do any writing for other classes.

What Ms. R states alludes to how these two themes are connected. If teachers don't have time to work together, how can they possibly achieve a cross-curricular goal such as teaching writing? The implications of this are that students "forget" how to write. "In a perfect world", said Mr. K, "I think educators would work together a tad more across the curriculum." All of the teachers interviewed showed willingness to do this, but logistical constraints prevent it from happening as regularly as they would like. This section had addressed some of the issues that prevent this collaboration from happening. Fundamentality, the idea of asking teachers across the curriculum to be responsible for teaching writing goes back to teacher training programs. Teachers in different subject areas can't be expected to teach writing if they themselves were not taught methods or even expectations for student writing. Collaborating with colleagues would be much easier if teachers were given adequate prep time to meet with each other and create cross-curricular assignments, or even discuss common expectations they hold for things such as student writing. Collaborating with colleagues would be easier if teachers were given time and funds to attend (or create) more professional development workshops and

conferences where they could come together with local teachers, and also keep in tune with trends happening on a national level.

4.3.1.2 Theme B (Students Forgetting How to Write) and Repeating Ideas 8 & 9

Lack of colleague collaboration seems to be one issue at the root of student performance when it comes to writing. If teachers do not have the time or resources to establish consistent expectations for student writing, to suggest that it should be a shared responsibility is only merely paying superficial lip service to the issue because the logistics make it a nearly impossible endeavor. This section will explore some of the repeating ideas that emerged that involved students forgetting how to write[20].

8. "Kids sort of play the game though, they learn something in English and they forget it in another class."

Students may learn how to do something in English class, but that skill for some reason at times fails to transfer to their other courses. As one teacher described it, "kids sort of play the game though - they learn something in English and they forget it in another class." In some cases, students will tell a teacher they haven't learned something when the teacher knows they have learned it - because they taught it to them. When this

---

[20] To be clear, when I refer to students "forgetting" how to write, this word encompasses all kinds of forgetting - including the deliberate kind. While I believe some students do genuinely forget how to do something, there is also an element of students trying to "get by" or "play a game", as two teachers put it during their interviews.

happens to someone like Ms. G, who has taught a range of grades from 6th grade to 12th grade, she is able to call them out on this:

> **I:** It must be kind of nice, or interesting in a way, to see the students as 6th graders and then again as 9th graders. You can kind of follow their progression.
>
> **Ms. G:** 9th grade: "We never learned that!" Uuuuuughhh...I taught you that in 6th grade, so I knowww...I know I taught you that, we worked with that. So, uh, who do you think you're talking to?

Ms. P, who has been teaching at her school for three years now, had a similar experience:

> ...the thing that really bothered me this year is the kids would just complain and say they don't know how to do these things. And I would just say, 'Yes, you do. You've been doing this since 7th grade. This is not new.' The idea of MLA citation is not new. The idea of, you know, putting quotes in quotation marks and not copying and pasting, that's not new. You know what plagiarism is, you've heard the word since probably elementary school.

Ms. P also described it as sort of a game that students play to try and see what they can get away with. "Part of it is I think they try and get something over on a teacher. Like, say, 'I don't know how to do this' but actually know how to do it, to see if they can get it by me." As an example, she recalls one student who had properly used in-text citations and quoted sources for the first 5 pages of his 10 page research paper. Then, she says, "I get to page 6 and I don't see any citations in the rest of the paper." When she called him into her classroom to discuss how he plagiarized the last 5 pages of his paper because he didn't cite anything, he said that he "didn't know he had to do that". A pretty suspect excuse, she tried to tell the student, considered he did know he had to do it for half of the paper.

In some instances, English teachers were in communication with middle and elementary school teachers, so that they were aware of what students had covered by the

time they reached high school. Ms. J has a friend who teaches 4th grade in the same district, so that she would say to students "'I know you learned this in 4th grade", and then suddenly, she says, "they would remember it." The teachers who referred to this phenomena of students "forgetting" how to write as a game didn't seem to really believe students had forgotten at all. Rather, they were simply "testing boundaries", or just seeing what they can get away with. If someone isn't going to require them to write in complete sentences, then why do the extra work?

9. "What were the expectations?"

"Forgetting" how to write, however, can also be about figuring out what each teacher expects. Mr. K explains that "On the high school level, especially a small one, people can figure out what the expectations are, you know, from each teacher. And that's what they can give. So they know if they can get away with this is history class as opposed to an English class, then that's what they're doing to do." One of Ms. J's strategies for holding students accountable to her expectations for their writing is to simply start marking things wrong and taking off points. That is something she says they react to instantly. As an example, she tells a story of a student who wasn't using complete sentences, and so she would mark it wrong. "He was like, 'Oh, maybe I should change', you know." The problem, however, is that "he probably goes to science or math class and he doesn't use complete sentences, because it's okay because he's not getting the same reaction from the other teachers." Ms. G believes making sure everyone is on the same page when it comes to writing expectations is key, and that if this was the case, perhaps students will adjust accordingly: "If they [students] know that you're going to check with the other teachers

and you're going to follow through, they'll be more careful. More complete with their writing." On the one hand, it seems like teachers expectations for writing are so varied across the curriculum that students will disregard any rules they learned in English class, and figure out the bare minimum of what each teacher expects and just do that. Yet at the same time, teachers in other disciplines are able to recognize "bad" writing and never hesitate to bring examples back to show English teachers.

Many of the teachers interviewed told stories of other teachers coming up to them with student writing, or trying to tell them that the students can't write. Ms. J sees the shared responsibility of writing as an ongoing issue, where "you'll have the science teacher, the math teacher, come to the English teacher and say 'these kids can't even write in sentences!' Well, they cannnn....and they do. I mean, in English of course they know that they have to." In Ms. J's eyes, students often see writing well as exclusive to English class. The skills they learn about writing in English class never transfers over to other classes because they think "This isn't English class, why do I have to write in a complete sentence?" The expectation to write well is an unspoken requirement for teachers, but it's an expectation that needs to be spoken in order for students to follow it. Ms. G also recalls a conversation she had with a social studies teacher at her school, "we were talking about that and how she had her juniors writing an essay about something. And we were specifically talking about one junior who's an "A" student, and she read the essay he wrote in social studies to his English teacher, and the English teacher is like "No - he can do so much better than that." Mr. E recalled a similar situation, where "I had the history teacher bring me some essays and I said 'well, these kids can write way better than that!' But its history, so they don't think that, you know, across the curriculum that they should be able

to do that." Even in the instance of another teacher who does uphold many of the "rules" of good writing in an assignment they give, a student might tell that teacher, "well we've never had to write a thesis statement!", Mr. E explains. "And it's like 'yes, you have. You write thesis statements all the time.' So if you're in history you should be able to come up with thesis statement." So even if teachers are on the same page in regards to expectations for writing, students still seem reluctant to practice their writing skill holistically, that is, across the curriculum. Mr. K has experienced this, too. He recalls that:

> There were times when students, you know I'd take a look at something they write for say, a science class, and it was just like...nothing like what they were producing as far as in English class, or for one of the Social Studies classes that I taught where you had to write as well. And there was a lot of that. The other thing was too, a lot of the...other faculty members in other disciplines were never really, really taught to recognize what was good writing and what wasn't in the first place.

Mr. K alludes here to another factor that plays into the idea of writing being a shared responsibility, which has to do with the teachers themselves. Not only are many of them not trained to teach writing, but they are also unsure of what to expect when it comes to student writing. Because of the tight schedules of most teachers, they rarely have time to collaborate or even coordinate the expectations they have for students when it comes to something such as writing.

This chapter discussed the common conceptions of informational texts through the eyes of 8 high school English teachers. Informational texts are largely considered non-fiction, with an emphasis on research. When it comes to writing specifically, informational texts were also seen as practical in that they prepared students for their immediate future - whether that means test prep for the SAT or an AP exam, or focusing

on more writing that is of interest to a student and prepares them for writing they may come across in everyday life. This chapter also addressed the theme of negotiating expectations when it comes to writing. Teachers repeatedly spoke of students "forgetting" the writing skills they learned in English. Often teachers in other subjects are uncertain of what they should expect from student writing. At the same time, collaborating with colleagues on writing can be tricky, often due to lack of time on the part of all teachers, but sometimes it can be related to colleagues simply not accepting that they should have to be responsible for teaching writing.

4.4 Conclusion: A Theory/Practice Divide

This chapter presented the results of my research into how high school teachers conceptualized informational texts, and the shared responsibility of writing across the curriculum. Most of the high school English teachers interviewed generally thought of informational texts in a similar way – as non-fiction – and the two categories of Informational texts as research based and practical revealed that teachers acknowledged both the practical and deliberative aspects of informational writing. However, though the Common Core calls for the teaching of writing to be a shared responsibility among teachers, there was no evidence from the interviews conducted that this was indeed happening. Lack of cohesion among teachers on standards for writing results in confusion for students. It is important that all teachers – not just English teachers – are on the same page when it comes to what they expect from and how they grade student writing. Teachers, of course, face their own problems in trying to navigate the shared

responsibility of writing – for one, a lack of time. Administrators certainly need to prioritize professional development in writing and give teachers the time to collaborate if the shared responsibility of writing ever going to shift from an abstract suggestion into be a practiced reality. Though I advocate for the "higher level" changes to be made regarding teacher's salary, their professional development opportunities, and their general work load, so that teacher's across the curriculum have the resources to collaborate with each other, proposing a new education budget is beyond the scope of this dissertation. It also, quite frankly, seems like a delusion of grandeur, given the historic length of inaction when it comes to making these types of critical changes despite continuous recommendations by scholars over the last 100 years to do so -- not to mention the recent political landscape in regard to the support of public schools.

What these theoretical constructs have also illuminated is the presence of deep-rooted binaries in matters of education, in particular divisions between theory and practice. There is a clear divide between what the CCSS states in regard to the shared responsibility of writing, and what is actually happening in schools. In theory, writing is a shared responsibility among teachers. In practice, it is not.

In the next chapter, I turn to the concept of techne in order to unpack this theory/practice divide further. Why, despite decades of writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives, is writing still not a shared responsibility? Further, why, despite it being written in the standards, indicting an acknowledgement of its importance, is it still not happening in practice? While the term *technê* is often reduced to simplistic terms of "art" or "craft", in his article *Plato's Theory of Technê: A Phenomenological Interpretation* John Wild (1941) considers all of Plato's writing on the topic of *technê* in order outline

its unifying characteristics – not just in terms of technical process, but also knowledge hierarchies as a whole. What Wild does in his article is illuminate the complexity of the term, and also emphasize the importance of theory and practice working in tandem when it comes to distinguishing *technê* from mere technique, as well as the importance of the knowledge hierarchy between different technai that ensure all art (such as education) is guided by knowledge.

5 DISCUSSION

"School programs have an inertia which can create a surprisingly large gap between educational thought, as expressed at conferences and in the professional literature, and educational practice as it actually transpires in the schools" –Arthur Applebee, "Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History"

5.1 Theory & Practice: A Bridge and a Divide

In Chapter 4, I presented the findings from the qualitative interviews I conducted with eight high school English teachers from eight different high schools in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in order to find out how literacy, specifically writing, is happening in high schools under the Common Core State Standards. Informational texts are heavily focused on in the CCSS, particularly in high schools. In the standards, informational texts are defined through examples of genres that are given which may encompass the scope of "informational". For example, the reading standards note that informational texts (11th-12th grade) include " Literary Nonfiction and Historical, Scientific, and Technical Texts" that include the "subgenres of exposition, argument, and functional text in the form of personal essays, speeches, opinion pieces, essays about art or literature, biographies, memoirs, journalism, and historical, scientific, technical, or economic accounts (including digital sources) written for a broad audience" (NGA, *Range of Text Types*). In the goals listed in the CCSS for reading informational texts, the standards use much of the same language that teachers did during their interviews, outlining the importance of citing "strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says…" and students' ability to "Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to

address a question or solve a problem" (NGA, *ELA Literacy*). In addition to evaluating

and incorporating sources, students should be able to "Analyze a complex set of ideas or

sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and

develop over the course of the text" and to "Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and

nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance",

and finally "Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his

or her exposition or argument" (NGA, *ELA Literacy*). Words such as "evaluate",

"analyze", and "determine" are used multiple times throughout the standards for reading,

and these words imply cognitive action; that a student must think. Students are being

asked to analyze, evaluate, and determine the meaning of a text, the integrity of the

sources, and the way in which a text has been composed. This knowledge is a tool that

will help them when they are asked to put this knowledge into practice by writing their

own texts.

When it comes to writing, the standards state that "informational/explanatory

writing coveys information accurately" and can appear in a "wide array of genres,

including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports,

summaries, and precis writing as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such

as instruction, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and resumes" (NGA, Appendix A,

p. 23). The specific strand standards for writing include "Write informative/explanatory

texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or

technical processes" and "Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection

and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of

discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences."

116

Given the broad definitions and goals for informational texts when it came to both reading and writing, I was interested in seeing if individual teachers conceptualized informational texts in similar ways. First off, the results revealed that, perhaps unsurprisingly, teachers largely characterized informational texts as non-fiction texts. These results are in line with Maloch & Bomer's (2013a) findings that informational texts are most commonly categorized as non-fiction by teachers and researchers alike. As I noted in the previous chapter, nearly all teacher explicitly defined it in this way, most using the language "nonfiction" in their own definitions of informational texts and informational writing. Further, the coding of the data revealed what I *initially* understood as two opposing categories: *Informational Texts as Research Based* and *Informational Texts as Practical*. In how they were described, these categories seemed to represent opposing knowledges to me: conceptual knowledge (research and analyzing texts) and practical knowledge (practical and applied writing). After revisiting the data however, I realized emergence of both of these categories from the interview data is not a sign of a division, rather, the presence of both of these categories was in fact evidence that teachers are creating a bridge between theory and practice when it comes to literacy because they defined it in such a way that acknowledged both conceptual knowledge as well as practical application – in particular in this case, how they approach and conceptualize informational texts.

5.1.1 Bridging Theory and Practice with Informational Texts

If teachers conceptualize informational texts as both research based and practical, what this illustrates is not a divide in theory and practice, but that teachers are in fact

aware of bridging theory/practice when it comes to informational texts. The teachers interviewed for this research did not see informational texts only as practical – each teacher acknowledged both the importance of research and analysis in addition to the value of practical application when discussing informational texts. One wasn't being discussed without the other. For example, many of the teachers focus on students assessing and analyzing the credibility of a source as well as incorporating researched sources into their own written work. As Ms. P stated, informational writing was "nonfiction in nature" and "anything that they had to do some sort of research for". However, she was also a teacher who spoke at great length of her ambitions to continuously make these same assignments more "applied" - or practical – as a strategy for student motivation. She was not looking to divide the research from the writing, but looking for ways to bridge the two in such a way that it would be the most meaningful to a student. At her school, all seniors are required to write a long, 10-page persuasive research paper as a graduation requirement. Because her school consists of many students who are going to trade schools or immediately entering the workforce after high school, she finds this assignment to be out of touch with the reality of the student demographic, stating that she would "much rather have them do applied writing to things that they want to do, and things that truly interest them". She has even gone so far as to develop some alternate options to the assignment that blend both research, writing, and an applied project, which she has slowly started pitching to school board members at her school. Ms. P also illustrates "practical writing" in this case is not only writing that a student might face in the workforce; it also addresses the practical need to prepare students to take the SAT, and for the kinds of writing high school teachers believe students will have to

perform once they are in college. As she succinctly put it, "at that point in high school, you know, you're preparing them for things like that SAT and you're preparing them for college or for going into the workforce".

Other teachers gave examples of this blending of skills as well. Ms. G also discussed how theory and practice go hand in hand when it comes to literacy and life skills:

> If you're going to start a small business and you want to write and grant or something like that – my gosh! You have to be able to prove what you're saying, you have to be able to show where you got this information from and say 'I did this, this, and this, and this is what I want to do'. I mean, there's a lot of reasons just for everyday jobs that need that kind of…do you want to do and vote? Are you going to read all the information?

In her case, she made several connections between "everyday life" tasks that require some research in order for the written task to be effective. Ms. G also emphasized in particular the importance of being able to express yourself clearly, not just in an essay, but in a multitude of situations. Another example she gave was of a construction worker who came to her house and gave her a quote. Though he's the expert, she still "wants to know what's going on", and reminds students they "need to be able to convey that information to your customer". As a librarian as well as an English teacher, she also heavily emphasizes source analysis and citation, and that one goal she has for her students it to "get them to read information critically." Acknowledging the increasing influence of social media, she noted that even when they find sources such as news articles "…you have to be careful there…I think with so little vetted information out there…it's our responsibility to teach them to be more aware of where this is coming from and what it means and how to further investigate". Ms. G emphasizes both critical

analysis and thinking, as well as finding ways to make the application of students'

literacy skills the most relevant to them, and her examples of connecting support,

evidence, and skilled explanations with practical tasks such as construction worker giving

a customer a price quote or writing a small business grant is another example of how

teachers are incorporating theoretical (or reflective knowledge) as well as practical

application, at least when it comes to informational texts.

To summarize, when teachers define informational texts in these two ways

(research based and practical), they are not only in line with how the CCSS is defining

them, the examples they provided in their interviews also illustrated that teachers are well

aware of the importance of connecting theory and practice. However, there were another

theoretical construct that could not be reconciled. The categories of *Colleague*

Collaboration and *Negotiating Expectations* revealed a huge disconnect between what

the standards said in theory regarding writing being a shared responsibility, and what was

(not) happening in practice.

5.1.2 Standards in theory and standards in practice: One major disconnect

The CCSS is a theoretical document in that it provides a framework for standards

in theory. On the one hand, how informational texts are defined in the standards have

shown to be in tune with how teachers perceive and teach them as well. However, a

tension between theory and practice was revealed in one critical way: the CCSS "insist

that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared

responsibility within the school". However, this shared responsibility of writing was not a

reality in practice among the teachers who participated in this research. Teachers seem to recognize this tension. Several teachers noted that their colleagues have shown them student writing and wonder why an otherwise good student "can't write". They also recognize that they, in their role as a colleague, cannot be the ones to enforce initiatives such as writing as a shared responsibility; to do so would risk alienating them from the other teachers. As such, *Colleague Collaboration* faces a two-pronged issue. One, as Mr. E articulated, not all teachers "are on board" with the idea that they should have to be responsibility for writing skills, and English teacher don't want to have to be the ones to enforce this. I noted in the previous chapter how several teachers knew they had to tread a fine line, as to not appear as "prophets in their own towns". Further, the participant interviews acknowledged that not all teachers are trained to teach writing. This bring us to the second issue facing colleague collaboration, which is time. Teachers revealed that they had very little time or opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. Some of the teachers I spoke with taught up to six different classes, with only one "prep" hour during the day, meaning that they had one hour to prep six different classes. To emphasis this point further, one participant told me that when they took a year off of high school teaching to do their Masters, they taught two composition courses at the university and found that "it was so liberating to only have to teach 2 sections of a class, and have the same topic in those same two sections, as opposed to six different class hours and perhaps five different preps." When it comes to teaching writing across the curriculum, collaboration is critical. As the participants noted, many teachers in other subject areas are willing to incorporate more writing into their classes, but they do not feel comfortable doing so because they aren't sure what to assign, or how to assess a written assignment.

121

These problems manifest themselves in the disconnect that has appeared between what the standards are calling for in terms of writing, and the reality of it happening in classrooms.

The second theme under the construct of *Negotiating Expectations* was the phenomena of students "forgetting" how to write. "Forgetting" in this case refers to intentionally forgetting, or as one teaching put it, "seeing what they can get away with". Time and time again, teachers stated that students do not seem to transfer their writing skills from English class to other classes. This is a significant problem, and one that illustrates the consequences of the divide in educational standards as they appear *in theory* and how those standards are playing out in the classroom. Writing as a shared responsibility is a good idea, but simply being a good idea is not enough to make it work. Even the best ideas will fail if they are not implemented carefully. As Fulwiler (1984) observes, if "…we don't fully commit ourselves to make them work; we don't or can't spend the requisite time to make them work" (p.118). Making expectations for writing consistent across teachers is important, and what the multiple tales of students "forgetting" how to write has shown is that students follow a teacher's lead when it comes to expectations for writing. As Mr. K noted, "On the high school level, especially a small one, people can figure out what the expectations are, you know, from each teacher. And that's what they can give. So they know if they can get away with this is history class as opposed to an English class, then that's what they're doing to do." This is not a criticism of students' motivation or their ability. On the contrary, as Mr. K acknowledged, we are *all* like that "whatever level you're teaching on or whatever level you're a student on" – we give what is expected, which is why consistency in

122

expectations for writing is such an important element in the quest to make writing a shared responsibility.

Though this study included a limited number of participants from one geographical area, it nevertheless provided insights into how teachers conceptualize the genre of informational writing, and how writing is happening in high schools. While this research is a starting point, additional research that incorporates a wider breadth of teacher interviews can provide additional insights into how these divisions between theory and practice are effecting schools nationwide. Moreover, it also suggests some possible answers to the question that has plagued English education for decades: why can't students write? One of the strengths of using a grounded theory approach to research is that it allows for a research to study the subjective experience, not test a hypothesis (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This means that out of grounded theory, additional questions, hypotheses, and problems emerge. The question that has emerged from this research is: what's the tension with teaching writing?

Like grounded theory, feminist theory also values the subjective experience and has also complimented this research because one of the core characteristics of feminist research is its dedication to change. The work of a researcher isn't done once the research has been completed; we then must apply what was learned through the research to communities or individuals who are affected by it. Undoubtedly, the best "solution" to remedy a division such as the one revealed in the shared responsibility of writing would be for significant systemic changes to take place. If writing is to be a shared responsibility in public schools, then teacher training programs for all disciplines should offer training in writing pedagogy. School administrators could also take measures

which would make the implementation of writing as a shared responsibility a more plausible goal, such as offering continued professional development in writing, not to mention giving teachers the support, resources, and time to make collaborating amongst one another possible. For example, participants in this research indicated they did not receive any new training (or even materials, such as textbooks) with the implementation of the CCSS. One teacher noted that they hadn't received a new textbook is over 20 years, and instead supplemented the out of date textbook by making their own photocopies of texts to incorporated into their classes. While teachers expressed the need for "a little in-service or something" (Ms. G) to make sure all teachers are on the same page, none of them stated that any actions to support this shared responsibility initiative had actually taken place within their schools. Writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives start with faculty (Fulwiler, 1984; Young and Fulwiler 1986). Teachers in all discipline areas need to be "on-board" with the idea of writing being a shared responsibility, and they also need *some* training in writing before they can be expected to incorporate writing-intensive assignments in their classes. Ideally, teachers would be given the time to do establish common goals and expectations for writing, and to collaborate together to brainstorm and prepare. This means opening up time for teachers during their work weeks to do this, not just simply expecting them to find the time in their already busy days. To tack on an additional responsibility for teachers is unethical and irresponsible, and ultimately results in empty goals that have no practical path to ever being achieved. They need time to be opened up in order to collaborate, because there is simply no time during the school day to meet.

124

Increased colleague collaboration would also benefit student's transferable writing skills, and the writers of the CCSS have acknowledged this in their effort to make writing a shared responsibility. However, teachers are already dealing with being stretched too thin - it would be unreasonable to ask them to "do more" or "find time" to get together with colleagues. Instead, pressure needs to be put on administrators to stop asking teachers to do more with less. There are many ways making writing a shared responsibility could be made possible, and they all require time and money. At some point it would be beneficial to accept that education isn't going to improve unless more funding is spent "in the trenches" - in particular, on teacher training, teacher salary, and teacher professional development.

More broadly speaking, improvement in education as a whole is only possible if there is a fundamental culture change in the U.S, where teachers would be trusted and valued as the experts in their field, and also a societal shift that doesn't believe one particular subject isn't seen as being more important than another (i.e. STEM v. the arts). One of the reasons Finland is continually looked to as a model of successful education is because they rank highly in international benchmarks, and they also have a holistic approach to education -- what in the U.S. we might called interdisciplinary. However, there are fundamental differences in teacher preparations programs and teacher support between the two countries that ultimately prohibit the U.S. from reaching the success of Finland, despite having similar goals of interdisciplinary. Though Finland does have a national education curriculum (the National Curriculum Framework, or NCF), teacher training education is nationally competitive and rigorous, and teachers are trusted to do what is best for their classes, and this means tailoring curriculum to local circumstances

(Sahlberg, 2016). As I illustrated in Chapter 2, teaching and the preparation of teachers has a long history in the U.S. of not being taken seriously. As one teacher I interviewed noted, a major obstacle for having writing be a shared responsibility among teachers is that "other faculty members in other disciplines were never really, really taught to recognize what was good writing and what wasn't in the first place." If writing is to be a shared responsibility across the curriculum, then all teachers should be receiving training in writing and writing pedagogy during their teacher training courses so they are better prepared for this expectation when they reach the classroom. Street & Stang (2008) echo Fulwiler (1984) when they state that teachers' backgrounds have a great deal of influence on how comfortable they are teaching writing. They also reaffirm that while teachers across disciplines may acknowledge the importance of writing well, lack of preparation and time hinder them from developing assignments in their own classes that are writing-based.

Though these changes would be ideal, they do not seem likely. In order to understand this problem more deeply and consider the impact such a division can create, I turn to the concept of technê. Technê it is the embodiment of theory and practice working together and while it cannot solve problems such as lack of time or funds, it can shed light on the problem of the theory/practice divide between education standards and the importance of bridging both theory and practice when it comes to practices such as writing. While technê may not be able to solve the problems that teachers face of time or funding, it can provide way to theorize not only the teaching or writing, but the educational system as a whole. Byron Hawk (2004) wrote, "the recognition of theories don't have to be consciously applied to be a part of pedagogical technique can help

teachers understand their practices in a new way and make us think differently about new practices" (p.388). Like Hawk, my purpose is only to reveal "one way of viewing technê that may be a potentially profitable remake for thinking about pedagogy" (p. 389), and indeed education as a whole. Johnson and Ranney (2009) call technê a "slippery devil" that should be "used like a hot pepper - with discretion and full knowledge of its consequences" (p.238). I am not arguing that technê is the only way to understand this problem. But in the case of this research, I do believe technê is a concept that can help us understand the importance of theory and practice both working together during a technical process (such as writing). But more critically, it can also help us understand the division this research has revealed between education *in theory* and education *in practice*. Specifically, I draw on John Wild's 1941 article *Plato's Theory of Techne: A Phenomenological Interpretation* in order to address the "knowledge hierarchies"[21] that technê presents, and what happens when any of these hierarchies are inverted. These hierarchies exist not only for technical procedures, but also among the arts themselves - including what Wild calls the educational arts and political arts. So to begin, I will address an essential question: what is technê?

5.2 What is Technê?

Technê is a concept that can be related to both the education system in general, and to writing in particular. Interest surrounding technê surged in the last several decades

---

[21] I draw the term "knowledge hierarchy" from Johnson (2010), used in his article *The Ubiquity Paradox: Further Thinking on the Concept of User Centeredness.*

amongst rhetoric, composition and technical communication scholars and there have been many discussions presented about what technê is and is not. While the most basic definition of technê is often that of an "art" or "craft", most scholars interested in technê have also taken care to point out that it is impossible for us in the present day to fully comprehend ancient conceptions of technê, nor does any modern word really encompass the "whole complex structure indicated by the word τέχνη" (Wild, 1941, p. 255). Citing R. G. Collinwood, Joseph Dunne (1997) writes that for ancient Greek philosophers, "art simply *was* craft" (p.56). Johnson and Ranney (2009) suggest that "ancient technê ...was neither design nor fine art, as we now understand them, but an inventively systematic knowledge that aimed toward previous thought-out, but not pre-determined, ends" (p.239). To complicate matters further, even the ancient Greeks were inconsistent, and even at times contradictory, in their definitions of technê. Both Plato and Aristotle, for example, discuss *technê and episteme* as separate concepts while at other times using the terms interchangeably. Joseph Dunne (1997) summarizes all of these elements in a succinct definition of technê based on Aristotle's representation of it in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "technê then is the kind of knowledge possessed by an expert maker; it gives him a clear conception of the why and wherefore, the how and with what of the making process and enables him, through the capacity to offer a rational account of it, to preside over his activity with secure mastery" (p.9). This definition of technê encompasses the essence of technê as I understand it, and touches on concepts central to technê: that is a productive knowledge guided by reason, which implies a level of mastery gained by utilizing both foresight and hindsight – a union of understanding both the *how* and the *why* of a process. Indeed, this aspect of reasoning is also included in Aristotle's

explanation of technê, which he writes in is "a productive state involving true reason" (EN 1140a 5-10).

5.2.1 Foresight

Foresight gives a maker an idea of *how* to approach making. The definitions I provided above from Dunne and Aristotle both emphasize the notion of foresight - that the maker has a vision of the process and the end of what s/he is making (though that is not to say the process will proceed without any interruptions or changes). Technê is not creation happening at random. As both Plato and Aristotle noted, it is making *guided by reason*: "All technê is rationally guided action on some individual stuff to 'transform' it into a certain order or structure, apprehended by reason" (Wild, 258). What Plato means by rational "is to say that it is knowable, which in turn means the one who practices can 'itemize' its component parts and understand how they work together to produce a specific result" (Pender, 2011, p. 22). Wild writes that "the able player is not he who merely adapts to each situation as it arises, but rather her who, from his general knowledge of the structures involved, can see several moves *ahead*" (p.261; emphasis original). What this understanding provides the maker with, then, is foresight into the process and this foresight directs his choice in tools or equipment which are then intentional with the goal of using them to form the end product.

The participants in this research were consciously about providing students with foresight in their writing tasks. There are two examples of foresight that I was discuss specifically: the use of rubric and preparing for the SAT.

Mr. E spoke of how preparing students to take the SAT can help relieve the pressure of taking the actual test. This includes specific strategies, such as practice tests, but also starting to prepare them in advance. At the time of the interviews, schools in Michigan had just switched from the ACT as the standardized test for 11th graders, to the SAT. If students take the test in 11th grade, Mr. E also said it's important to start preparing them in 10th grade, to "give them a flavor for that, so then in 11th grade, you know, they're familiar with it. To just give it to them in 11th grade, they've never had it before so it's like 'wooahhhhh'". Ms. S also goes over SAT prep with students, so that they can "get a feel for what that's going to look like". When speaking about the effect the shift from the ACT to the SAT had on both students at her school, Ms. S noticed that "the students were very apprehensive because it's a totally different animal…especially with the sophomores who were looking at this for the first time and knowing that this, you know, is going to be the expectation for them next year." In order to prepare them, Ms. S "sat down with them at the beginning of last year and really kind of went through it very specifically and we talked about the changes, we talked about how they felt about it, and we did - and we do practice [tests]". In the case of the SAT, teachers were especially conscious about preparing students because the writing in the SAT is different from the one in the ACT. As Mr. E and Ms. S both explained, the SAT provided a piece of informational writing for students to read, and then they are given a prompt asking them to analyze the piece. The ACT, on the other hand, gives students a prompt to which they then have to write an argumentative essay in response. In the measures taken by teachers to prepare students, what they are essentially giving them is experience, so that they know what to expect when it comes time to take the test.

Another way teachers prepare students for writing is by giving them rubrics. Ms. P has found rubrics to be a useful tool because "kinds understand the expectation. They're not wondering, you know, 'okay, wait, so how exactly do I do this?'" She recalls when she was in school and rubrics weren't as widely used, she received a "B", and "I'm like, why? I covered all the assignment?' and you find out that they had all of these, like, almost hidden expectations…" Using things such as rubrics, for example, as good ways to establish the "how" of writing. Modeling and taking other steps to prepare students for a writing task all emphasize the how: this is how the test will look; this is how your essay should look; this is how I am going to grade you.

5.2.2 Hindsight

While hindsight can help a maker understand the how, it is only one part of being prepared if a maker is to engage in true technê. Hindsight, or reflection, can help establish the *why* of a making process. The knowledge gained by foresight gives the craftsperson a certain *sense* of control, and while the element of chance cannot be eliminated totally, foresight can *reduce* the unexpected by thinking ahead to the risks and also then being prepared for what to do if the unexpected happens. It is hindsight, the reflection of a prior scenario or situation that can allow makers to have foresight for the next situation.

Johnson (1998) and Dubinsky (2002) both argue for the value in creating reflective students, not just in the practical sense but also an ethical one. Dubinksy finds technê useful because it encourages students to be "practitioners who use tools and reflect upon their uses", rather than mere tool users (Dubinsky, 2002, p. 130). Though both of

these scholars are writing in the context of scientific and technical communication, it's easy to envision how the ethical and practical value gained in reflection and hindsight can transfer to other types of writing and communication, as well. However, it is often the reflective part of writing that gets left out. Yet, in the interviews the teachers interviewed were indeed conscious of incorporating reflection into their classes. Several teachers address revision as a pedagogical strategy for how they approached the teaching of writing. As one teacher put it, "a heavy focus on revision" gives students "a chance to make mistakes, but then showing them what those are and then working with them." In this sense, the process of revision requires a writer to look at their work and decide if something does or does not work, and why or why not. In other words, thinking about the decisions they made is one way to ensure the why is not left out of the writing process, because without it only half of the making process is being addressed. Ms. G has students often read news articles, and

> they are required to formulate an opinion about the event: they must think and then write about why this news event is important or relevant to us as a country, state, community, family, school, or individual (themselves). They think about how this news event shapes lives, positively or negatively. I even challenge them to think about how this event could have been stopped or changed.

Ms. J also uses reflection to help students apply the skills they've learned to informational texts specifically, and also asks them to consider how a topic they have chosen is particularly relevant to their own lives or the community. After their unit on informational texts, Ms.J gives students a reflective assignment:

> They first choose a topic and have to find three different pieces of informational text covering the topic. Then they have to "study" each piece using the tools and skills we learned during the unit. With this, they are required to write a reflection

132

essay discussing what text features were found in each, how the piece was relevant to their topic, and then they have to tell me how each one was beneficial to their life or the lives of the people around them.

This assignment is a great example of technê in action. Students are not only looking at how something is written (understanding the skills and tools being used), but also considering the larger context of it – asking who this was written for, why it might have been written, and how it benefited that audience. Both Aristotle and Plato also write about the importance of reflection in differentiating between a knack and art, and technique and technê. For Plato, for a craftsperson to be able to articulate why they do something is crucial. Understanding the process of making so thoroughly - the how *and* the why - means that a true technê is always transferable (Atwill, 1998). This is because, as Dunne argues, technê is most concerned with the general, not the specific, and it is through a comprehensive knowledge of their craft (of having both theoretical and practical knowledge) that a maker is able to transfer her/his general knowledge to a specific situation. For example:

Medicine, for instance, does not theorize about what will help to cure Socrates or Callias, but only about what will help to cure any or all of a given class of patient: this alone is subject to technê [is *entechnon*] - individual cases are so infinitely various that no knowledge of them is possible [they are *apeiron kai ouk epistēton*]. (Aristotle as qtd. in Dunne, p. 259).

This example could very easily be applied to writing: writing "cases" are rarely ever the same. I would also contend that writing is ultimately uncontrollable, meaning that the elements surrounding writing are never static. In fact, they are quite the opposite - audience, situation, contexts, and even "rules" are always changing. This lack of control stands in contrast with elements of education such a standardized testing, which score

133

students based on the idea that they can master writing if they master one particular way to write.

5.3 Divisions & Hierarchies of **Technê**

I've discussed technê and how it has been defined by other philosophers and scholar, and how the concepts of foresight and hindsight are central to technê. Now I will turn to John Wild's article, *Plato's Theory of Techne: A Phenomenological Interpretation*, in order to discuss it in more specific terms and in relation to the questions of this research. In his article, Wild presents a philosophy of technê that aims to understand "the nature and methods of technê "(p.268). He does this in two ways that are relevant to this research: One, he reinforces not only the importance of the how and why being present during a technical process (such as writing), but also the hierarchy between the two. Second, he expounds upon the hierarchies which exists within the arts (technai) themselves, and what happens when this kind of knowledge hierarchy is inverted, providing a way to analyze the current educational system as a whole.

5.3.1 The five factors of technê and education as a directing art

First, I will look at the five factors of technê which Wild presents, because these factors illuminate in more depth what I have already discussed regarding the importance of the how and the why in relation to writing. Wild carefully mines Plato's various dialogues for discussions on technê, and presents the five factors which together (and together only) comprise a "true*"* technê:

(1) the useful end, *on account of which* the art exists;

134

(2) the work or concrete achievement of the art, which can serve this purpose;
(3) the general form or structure which every such work must exemplify if it is to meet the end;
(4) the technical procedure *by which* this form is imposed on the matter;
(5) and finally, the concrete matter, *on which* the form is imposed.

By using the language "true" technê, Wild is implying an inherent hierarchy within these five factors. Importantly, while (4) and (5) address the "how" of making, (1), (2), and (3) are concerned with the "why". As we can see, those criteria concern with "why" have been positioned at the top of this list; the why guides the how - not vice versa. To better explain how these factors work together, as well as their individual distinctions, Wild provides an example of a student learning to play the piano:

A student who is about to learn to play the piano must already recognized in some form the utility or value (1) of this achievement, and must be confronted with a material piano (5). What he had to learn falls into two groups: the nature of a musical composition, and its various structural features such as time, melody, harmony, etc. (3); and the various technical procedures required (4). Should he learn primarily the former (3), he will become primarily a theorist. Should he learn primarily the latter (4), he will become a technician. But he can become a trust artists only so far as he succeeds in mastering both theory and practice. (260-261)

As we can see, while (1) requires the student to ask why he is learning the piano, (5) is concerned only with the material structure of the piano itself. All of these factors such be present in order for something to be considered technê; in the highest forms of technê , all five factors are "exactly known beforehand" (259). If, Wild argues, only 4 and 5 alone are present or in the event that the hierarchy is reversed - where (5) and (4) guide (1) (2) (3) - then true technê has been impoverished into mere technique.

While these five factors illustrate the necessity for the how and why to be present together for a technical procedure conducted by an individual. And while the categorizing of these factors as they relate to technical produces is impressive in and of itself, Wild then goes on to divide and categorize different *kinds* of art. In other words, he categorized

not just the procedure technê follows, but also the different types of technê. It has been established that technê is most commonly defined as an art or a craft; however it is significant to note that Wild (by way of Plato) actually defines art as a *science*, "growing by various degrees into activity" (p.268). This means that art is not viewed in the same theory/practice binary that is most common today, but that science "falls into two major kinds: (1) that which provides insight alone; and (2) the various arts and crafts (χειρουργία), which involve technical action, but also possess scientific insight as part of their inherent structure" (p.268). In other words, "practice" *always* has a theoretical component to it if it is within the context of technê. If science is the starting point, Wild then goes on to separate the arts into various categories – no easy feat, as he himself acknowledges the "bewildering …array or arts and techniques which have been accumulated in the history of western civilization" and the "complex…interrelationships between them" (p.267). For the purposes of this research, I am concerned most with the second division noted above, that of "arts and crafts". Wild goes on to further divide the different kinds of arts under this "arts and crafts" category, but the two that concern this research are what he refers to as the *therapeutic arts* and the *directing arts*.

When an art is primarily concerned with preserving something, it is what Wild calls a "therapeutic art". While, as I will discuss in detail soon, education and statesman ship are both considered "directing arts", Wild notes that they are at the same time they are also very close to being a therapeutic art as well. The therapeutic arts do not create something new, but rather tend to the preservation of creations that already exist. Medicine, according to Wild, is an example of a therapeutic art which is concerned with

the body. In medicine, and in all therapeutic arts, "we may distinguish two portions, one which corrects diseases and malformations once they have attacked the organism…and another which prevents disease by a maintenance of the normal state..."(p.273). So, therapeutic arts both *correct* (or *heal*) as well as *prevent*. Wild in fact specifically notes that the example of medicine he gives is also an analogy for both statesmanship and education.

The directing arts, under which statesmanship and education fall, don't necessarily provide specific skills or techniques, but rather "knowledge for the direction of those manifold activities and techniques" (p.273). Much of the work of the political arts is therapeutic or preventive, achieved by creating laws and other rules that ensure social order, by "governing the proper distribution of their products to the citizens, thus providing them with 'wealth, freedom, and immunity from faction' in the proper proportions" (p.275). But what good are these measures, Wild argues, if the citizen hasn't participated in the process nor do they understand what or why something is being done? The political arts and the educational arts are so "intricately…interwoven with one another that Plato himself, in his involved and lengthy considerations of them, seems hardly to have made up his mind as to which really directs the other" (p.274). It is the task of education to provide this understanding to citizens. This doesn't mean "the imposition of an externally contrived order", but rather a "drawing out" or leading a student "to an insight which in itself is uncontrived" (p.275). Education seeks to draw out uncontrived knowledge, while statesmanship "supervises all the less arts of contrivance. The end of education, however, is the truth, which is uncontrived" meaning that education "stands over statescraft as a primary art" (p.275).

Is that indeed how we conceive of education today? That education is a "higher"

art than statesmanship, or in short, politics? I believe we would all probably like to think

so, but the evidence might show us otherwise. While the government officially had no

hand in the creation of the Common Core State Standards, in that government officials

were not on the drafting team, there were several members on the drafting team

associated with standardized testing companies. Though the government did not force

any state to adopt the standards, they did offer a monetary incentive if states did so. As I

mentioned previously, I am not opposed to the idea of common standards. However, as

this research as hinted at, there is a deep disconnect between those who "directed" the

development of the standards, and how teachers can realistically follow them. In his

article *Ubiquity Paradox,* Johnson (2010) wonders if this inversion is already present

within the context of high education. As he asks: Has the boiler room begun telling the

captain how to navigate? For that matter, who is the constituency of the boiler room: the

systems administrators, the educational computing firms that sell the products, the

institutional pundits who argue for more and better computer resources so that we do not

'fall behind'?" (p.348). The same question can of course be asked within the context of

high school education and what this research has revealed regarding how we continue to

teach (or not teach) writing. As one teacher noted during their interview, "I would say I

have yet to work under an *amazing* principal with an understanding of curriculum and

instruction... and if you don't know curriculum you cannot effectively lead your teachers

to be collaborative and to create these extremely enriching experiences for students."

Another teacher was blunter about the lack of guidance from administrators, stating that

previous principal they had "didn't know what he was doing..." When Ms. P was telling

me about the decades-old graduation requirement at her school of senior's writing a 10-page persuasive researcher paper, it wasn't her principal or administrators who recognized this assignment as out-dated and irrelevant for most of the student population – it was her, the teacher. And yet, despite the fact that she is the one responsible for teaching and grading this required assignment, she is unable to make changes to it herself, without administrative entities signing off on it first. What these teachers are describing is the inversion Wild (and Johnson) refer to.

5.4 Recommendations

This research has revealed some of the gaps between theory and practice as it relates to educational standards regarding writing. For example, while all participants agreed that writing *should* be a shared responsibility - and the standards support this notion as well - achieving this in reality has proved difficult. Further, it was generally perceived that most students "forget" how to write well outside of the English classroom. The teachers interviewed hypothesized this could be because students try to "get away with" more lax writing in other classes, or also simply because of the inconsistency in standards and expectations for writing among all teachers. The teachers interviewed expressed that they would welcome more collaboration with colleagues, but lack of resources (time, but also money) prevents them from doing so. An absence in dialogue means teachers are rarely on the same page when it comes to "shared" standards, and this is then reflected in how students perform writing. Studies have shown that teacher professional development directly impacts student achievement (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Cohen & Hill, 2000; Corcoran, Shields, & Zucker, 1998; Darling-Hammond &

McLaughlin, 1995; Elmore, 1997; Little, 1993; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). The participants in this research have revealed that they value communicating and collaborating with one another - across the curriculum, the state, the nation. However, one of the structural elements that needs to be in place is proper professional support in order to achieve this. Jenkins & Agamba (2013) argue that the lack of professional development to support the implementation of the standards is the missing link in the CCSS initiative. One of the biggest implications of this research is to implore education administrators to support teachers and provide them the time and quality resources to work with one another[22]. Without this support, educational standards that have been proposed on paper – including writing as a shared responsibility – will never manifest in practice among teaching staff. While it is important to continue advocating for these systemic changes to be made, there are some steps secondary and university teachers can take in the meantime to move this goal of writing-across-the-curriculum forward.

I will turn now to some specific recommendations for the local area in Michigan where this research took place. I noted briefly that the Upper Peninsula Writing Project (UPWP) was conceived as a joint effort between Michigan Tech and Northern Michigan University in the late 1970's. Eventually the role of Michigan Tech fell away, and the UPWP remained at Northern Michigan where faculty continued to host workshops and summer institutes for teachers. One important step that can be taken on the local level is

---

[22] See Ball & Cohen (1999), Cohen & Hill (1998), Little (1993), and Wilson & Berne (1999) for discussions about the issues of professional development workshops, including a lack of quality and a "patchwork"-like organization.

to for faculty at Michigan Tech (and other Upper Peninsula universities and community colleges) to once again connect with and offer their support to the UPWP and rebuild a community of practice (Wenger, 1999) among teachers of writing, or teachers who are interested in learning more about writing. Because of rural nature of where this research was demographical situated, it is all the more important to foster communication and support between groups of educators. Not only is the Upper Peninsula semi-isolated from the rest of the country, making it difficult to participate in even regional conferences which often still prove to be a great distance away, but the lack of funds for participating in such professional development is an additional burden as well. Further, there is power in numbers: the more people who participate in these kinds of initiative and support systems, the more workshops can be offered, the more grants can be written, and the more people the concept of writing-across-the-curriculum can reach. Making these connection could also potentially lead to offshoot projects of the UPWP, such as a summer workshop series that would include composition instructors (including graduate students) and high school writing teachers.

The National Writing Project (NWP) has also been a unique program because it uses the approach of teachers-teaching-teachers. However, Borko (2004) argues that the program has failed to produce "a well-specified professional development program with evidence that it can be enacted with integrity at multiple sites" (p. 11). What Borko means by this is that the NWP relies on surveys and interview and other self-report data from teachers who participated in a NWP summer institute or NWP workshop, and that there is too little information available about the content or activities that happen inside

the summer institutes and workshop[23]. While it may seem that what Borko is advocating for then is some standardized materials which the institutes and workshops would follow, Borko clarifies that "that maintaining integrity does not imply rigidly implementing a specific set of activities and procedures" (p.12). For the NWP, Borko argues, "appropriate use of curricular materials is not the central issue. Instead, content and activities of the summer institutes and workshops must maintain integrity with the Project's conception of the writing process and writing instruction" (p.12). The NWP, and local sites affiliated with the national project, such as the Upper Peninsula Writing Project (UPWP), has also welcomed teachers from across content areas; but, as one teacher stated "mostly English teachers gravitated to it", which presents another issues as well: how to encourage cross-disciplinary participation in these professional development initiatives.

However, a workshop that brought together secondary and university teachers of writing would also serve the additional purpose of building better relationships between teachers of high school and college English. Secondary and college teachers face a similar problem in that they have a lot of responsibilities that often pull them in different directions. I gave many examples of the overwhelming teaching loads many of the participants of this research spoke of; of how even in the evenings and in the summers, they are "prepping" for their next class, whether than be the next day or the next year.

---

[23] This does appear to be consistent with the most recent research reported on the National Writing Project website, which was published in 2011 and consisted of surveys from 2009 Summer Institute participants, as well as a follow up survey in spring 2010.

WAC initiatives, such as the one developed at Michigan Tech, are a "teacher-centered model" (Fulwiler, 1983), and thus depend on teaches to sustain them - teachers who have other classes to teach, other initiatives to develop, other research to conduct. Fulwiler writes that while administration at the university was supportive of their WAC program (which was developed and ran for the first five years thanks to external funding), "the very same administrators were encouraging higher standards for tenure and promotion, asking for more research, more publications, and the generation of more external money". This pressure "actually pushed faculty at our university in opposing directions, suggesting that they spend more time assigning and evaluating student writing, on the one hand, while asking them to research and publish more of their own work on the other" (p.120). Navigating responsibilities that stretch teachers thin can be challenging, which is another reason why building a strong community of practice is all the more important. Building a strong community of fellow teachers who share resources and collaborate among each other, can actually help ease at least some of these pressures, whether faced at the secondary or university levels.

Another possible step forward for university instructors, who often have more flexibly than secondary teachers, is to work to collaborate more within the university. As with any approach to WAC, it is critical to find other professors willing to collaborate. As Fulwiler (1984) learned during his time conducting WAC workshops at campuses across the country, "writing workshops cannot inspire or transform unmotivated, inflexible, or highly-suspicious faculty members" (p.115). So, in a way, the first step is finding like-minded teacher who see (or are open to seeing) the value of teaching writing across the disciplines. One such collaboration among university professors might include a

graduate-level course focused on writing-across-the-curriculum pedagogy. During the interviews with teachers, I asked them about how they learned how to teach writing. Many of them could not recall taking a specific class that focused on writing pedagogy. However, while they may not have received such training during their undergraduate degree, several of the teachers interviewed had gone on (or are currently) to receive an advanced degree in education or leadership. Graduate classes presents another opportunity for faculty to get involved with WAC pedagogy. Indeed, a course that covered strategies for teaching writing across the curriculum would be appropriate of any secondary teacher who was interested in playing a role in writing as a shared responsibility. Ideally, such as course would be a collaborative design between professors in different disciplines and, because the whole point of such a course is to appeal to secondary teachers in multiple disciplines (not just English Language Arts), professors from multiple disciplines would also share teaching responsibilities during the run of the course.

The one element all of these recommendations have in common is something I have been discussing throughout this dissertation: collaboration. Collaborations can be fruitful on many levels, and can benefit both teachers and students. Further, collaborations among high school and university teachers can benefit both groups in many ways, including the dissolving of any unspoken hierarchies between the groups and instead promoting communication and collaborations that have the same common goal of teaching students how to transfer their writing skills across disciplines.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how the concept of technê relates to both of the themes which emerged from this research. Technê can be used to theorize both the process of writing, as well the relationship between education and government in order to reflect upon how educational system as a whole is functioning at present. While the teachers interviewed for this research defined informational writing in a similar manner, that categories also revealed that they were conscious of balancing analysis and research with applied, or "practical" curricular tasks and assignments in their classes. This was also in line with how the Common Core standards outlined the goals for both informational reading and writing. However, the standards also "insist" that writing be a shared responsibility among teacher, yet this was not happening. There were many understandable reasons given for this – non-English teachers don't feel as though it's their job to teach writing, many teachers lack the training in writing pedagogy to feel comfortable teaching writing, and simply teachers do not have enough time to collaborate in order to be "on the same page" when it comes to expectations for teaching writing. However, what it also suggests is a disconnect between a good idea in theory, and the steps needs to implement it properly in practice. All the teachers interviewed agreed it is a good idea to have writing be a shared responsibility, but the structure and support for teachers just isn't in place for it to actually happen. It's a pressing issue, because it speaks to the never-ending complaint of having students who "can't write".

To address the cause of this tension, we should consider what is "guiding" education today – does the educational art reign supreme over the political art? Or has an

inversion occurred that is prohibiting certain problems in education from being resolved? Regarding the directing arts, Wild writes "…the higher natures are subject to the more serious corruptions…the two most important directing arts, that of statesmanship and that of education are peculiarly susceptible to such corruption" (p.274). The idea of writing being a shared responsibility is championed in the standards themselves, and all the teachers interviewed expressed this would be the ideal scenario. If most everyone seems to agree writing should be a shared responsibility, why is it still not happening?

I have presented technê not as a solution to these problems that arise in education, but as one way of understanding theory/practice tensions as they appear in writing and in an educational context, as well as the implications of knowledge hierarchies being reversed. These implications are not so much suggested as they are revealed, at least in part, in the disconnect between the writers of the standards who call for writing to be a shared responsibility and the teachers who are held accountable to these standards. Though there are many structural and systemic issues within education more broadly that prohibit large-scale changes to issues such as writing-across-the-curriculum and writing pedagogy to be implemented, there are some ways teachers of writing - on the secondary and collegiate levels – can support one another in initiatives, such as writing-across-the-curriculum, that can lead to better experiences for both students and teachers when it comes to writing. As I noted in the introductory chapter, there is very little communication between high school and college writing instructors. Given the context of this research, which focused on small schools in small towns in rural areas which also had public universities nearby, building a relationships between the two seems especially important and necessary, and would be a relationship where both could learn quite a bit

from the other. One of the teachers, Mr. K, spoke at length of the different ways he used to work with the local university in the 1980's and 1990's, in particular for his Senior English class. He would collaborate with writing instructors at the university, having the instructor grade student essays based on the expectations they would find in a college-level class. He also worked with the university library, which allowed students from his class to use the library resources for research purposes. Mr. K noted that students would come to tell him that these small collaborative acts helped them build confidence in their writing and researching skills, which in turn made their transition into college easier than it might have been otherwise.

I have also noted in this chapter that there has been some grassroots initiatives to provide support for anyone interested in writing pedagogy. In the 1980's and 90's, it was through the UPWP which was funded using a government grant. During this time, the program was robust, but then, as one teacher put it "the funds dried up." Not only did the UPWP host weekend workshops, they also coordinated teacher-led writing workshops for other schools. These workshops mirror those that Fulwiler (1984) and his colleagues hosted for different department at Michigan Tech, and Fulwiler also reflects that in his experience leading afternoon writing-across-the-curriculum workshops at Michigan Tech, a single afternoon was quite enough time to provide teachers across disciplines for ideas on how to incorporate more writing into their classes, and how to provide feedback on student writing. So, in the case of the Upper Peninsula community specifically, we have a model that has been used previously for WAC workshops in both high schools and at the university level.

The catch-22 of these suggestions is, of course, that they still rely on the unpaid time of teachers to get started. Mr. K was lucky to find teachers at a university who were willing to read his students papers – on top of the papers from their own students that were surely waiting to be graded. This is an act of service (and kindness). While service to the university and to the field is expected of university faculty, opportunities for such service seem to know no bounds. So while this kind of collaboration is important, it nevertheless is still difficult to propose ideas that would add to teachers' unpaid labor rather than reduce it. While the UPWP was once successful model for promoting WAC initiatives, to obtain additional grant funding for such as project or program on the local level would again require volunteered time to write an initial proposal. Building better communication between university and secondary writing instructors, and between writing instructors and instructors in other disciplines can be initiated though one-on-one connections and through larger programs that offer guidance in writing pedagogies, such as the UPWP once did. Those these initiatives require (at least initially) unpaid time to be spend by teachers, building and sustaining this type of support and resource system is ultimately invaluable.

6 Reference List

Adams, Susan. (2012). Hi? Dear? The State of The E-Mail Salutation. *Forbes.* Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2012/08/08/hi-dear-the-state-of-the-e-mail-salutation/#271e56e7788d

Applebee, Arthur. (1981). *Writing in the Secondary School: English and the Content Areas (NCTE Research Report No. 21).* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Applebee, Arthur. (1984). *Contexts for Learning to Write Studies of Secondary School Instruction*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Applebee, Arthur and Langer, Judith. (2013). *Writing Instruction that Works: Proven Methods for Middle and High School Classrooms*. Berkeley: National Writing Project.

Atwill, Janet. (1998). *Rhetoric Reclaimed*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Auerbach, C. & Silverstein, L. (2003). *Qualitative Date: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Ball, D. L., & Cohen, D. K. (1999). Developing practices, developing practitioners: Toward a practice-based theory of professional development. In G. Sykes & L. Darling-Hammonds (Eds.), *Teaching as the learning profession: Handbook of policy and practice* (pp. 30–32). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Beck, Frederick A.G. (1964). *Greek Education, 450-350 B.C.* London: Methuen & Co.

Berlin, James. (1987). *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press.

Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher,* 33(8), 3–15.

Bosley, Deborah (1992). Broadening the base of a technical communication program: An industrial/academic alliance. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 1(1). 41-56.

Brady, M.A. (2002). Techne goes professional: Ancient knowledge in the contemporary workplace. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 11(2). 216-219.

Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, N., McLeod, A., & Rosen, H. (1975). The development of writing abilities. London: MacMillan Education.

Carter, Michael. (2003). *Where Writing Begins: A Postmodern Reconstruction*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Caswell, L.J., & Duke, N.K. (1998). Nonnarrative as a catalyst for literacy development. *Language Arts*, 75, 108-117.

Chafetz, Janet S. (1997). Feminist Theory and Sociology: Underutilized Contributions for Mainstream Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology, 23*, 97-120. Doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.23.1.97

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K and Bryant, A. (2011). Grounded theory and credibility. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research, 3rd edition* (pp. 291-309). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cochran-Smith, Marilyn. (2003). Teaching Quality Matters. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54(2). 95-98. Doi: 10.1177/0022487102250283

Cochran-Smith & Fries. (2009). Researching Teacher Education in Changing Times: Politics and Paradigms. In Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Kenneth M. Zeichner (Eds.) *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education*. 69- 108. Routledge.

Cohen L., Manion L., & Morrison, Keith. (2000). Research Methods in Education. Routledge.

Cohen, D. K., & Hill, H. C. (2000). Instructional policy and classroom performance: The mathematics reform in California. *Teachers College Record*, 102(2), 294–343.

Collins, P. (1997). Comment on Hekman's "Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited": Where's the Power? *Signs, 22*(2), 375-381. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3175278

Collins, P. (1998). It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation. *Hypatia 13(3)*, 62-82. doi:10.1111/j.1527-2001.1998.tb01370.x

Corcoran, T. B., Shields, P. M., & Zucker, A. A. (1998). *The SSIs and professional development for teachers*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Connors, Robert. (2003). *Selected Essays of Robert J. Connors*. Lisa Ede & Andrea Lunsford (Eds.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St.Martin's.

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, *13(1)*, 3-21. 10.1007/BF00988593

Crenshaw, Kimberle (1989) Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1(8). 139-167. Retrieved from http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cuban, Larry. (1993). *How Teacher's Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1990.* New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.

Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan,* 76(8), 597–604.

Darling-Hammond, Linda. (1996). The Quiet Revolution: rethinking Teacher Development. *Educational Leadership 53*(3), 4-10.

Darling-Hammond, L. et al. (2010). Developing and Assessing Beginning Teacher Effectiveness: The Potential of Performance Assessments. *Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity.* PDF.

Dewey, John. (1974). The Educational Situation: as Concerns Secondary Education. In Reginald D. Archambault (Ed.). *John Dewey on Education* (pp. 404-421). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Donovan, C.A., & Smolkin, L.B. (2002). Considering genre, content, and visual features in the selection of trade books for science instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 502-520.

Dorazio, P. (1996). Professional advisory boards: Fostering communication and collaboration between academe and industry. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 59(3). 98-104.

Dreher, M.J. (2003). Motivating struggling readers by tapping the potential of information books. *Reading and Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 19*(1), 25-38.

Dubinsky, James M. (2002). More than a Knack: Techne & Teaching Technical Communication. *TCQ*, 11(2), 129-145.

Dudley-Marling, Curt; Abt-Perkins, Dawn; Sato, Kyoko; Selfe Richard. (2006). Teacher Quality: The Perspectives of NCTE Members. *English Education, 38(3).* 167-193.

Duke, N.K. & Roberts, K. L. (2010). The genre-specific nature of reading comprehension and the case of informational text. In D. Wyse, R. Andrews, & J. Hoffman (eds.), the international handbook of English language and literacy teaching (pp.74-86). London, UK: Routledge.

Duke, N.K., Caughlin, S., Juzwik, M., & Martin, N. (2012). *Reading and writing genre with purpose in K-8 classrooms.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Dunne, Joseph. (1997). *Back to the Rough Ground: Practical Judgement and the Lure of Technique.* Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press.

Edie-Hill, Thomas. (1883). Hill's Manual of Social and Business Forms. Chicago, IL: Hill Standard book Company.

Elmore, R. F. (1997). *Investing in teacher learning: Staff development and instructional improvement in Community School District #2, New York City*. New York, NY: National Commission on Teaching & America's Future.

Emig, Janet. (1971). *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders (NCTE Research Report No. 13).* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Foucault, Michel. (1977*). Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison*. New York Vintage Books.

Fraser, James W. (2007). *Preparing America's Teachers.* New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.

Fulwiler, Toby. (1984). How Well Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work? *College English*, 46(2). 113-125.

Fulwiler, Toby and Young, Art (Eds.). (1986). *Writing Across the Disciplines: Research into Practices.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Gill, Rosalind. (2010). Breaking the silence: The hidden injuries of neo-liberal academia. In Róisín Ryan-Flood and Rosalind Gill (Eds.), *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections.* (pp. 228-244). New York, NY: Routledge.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine Publishing Company.

Glaser, Barney G. with the assistance of Judith Holton (2004). Remodeling Grounded Theory. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *5*(2), Art. 4, 1-80. Retreived from http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs040245.

Guthrie, J.T., McRae, A., Coddington, C., Klauda, S.L., Wigfield, A., Barbosa, P. (2009). Impacts of comprehensive reading instruction on diverse outcomes of low-and high-achieving readers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42(3). 195-214.

Halloran, Michael S. (1990). From Rhetoric to Composition: The Teaching of Writing in America to 1900. In James Murphy (Ed.), *A Short History of Writing Instruction From Ancient Greece to Twentieth-Century America* (pp.151-182). Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.

Hamblin, James. (2016). How to Email. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/09/brevity-in-email/501986/

Harding, Sandra. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press.

Harding, Sandra. (2004a). Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophical, and Scientific Debate. In Sandra Harding (Ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader* (pp.1-15). New York, NY: Routledge.

Harding, Sandra. (2004b). A Socially Relevant Philosophy of Science? Resources from Standpoint Theory's Controversiality. *Hypatia, 19(1)*, 25-47. doi: 10.1111/j.1527-2001.2004.tb01267.x

Harding, S. and Norberg, K. (2005). New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction. *Signs,* (30)*4*, 2009-2015. DOI: 10.1086/428420

Hartsock, Nancy. (1983). The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism. In Sandra Harding & Merill Hintikka (Eds.) *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science*. 283-310. Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Hawk, Byron. (2004). Toward a Post-Techne – Or, Inventing Pedagogies for Professional Writing. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 13* (4), 371-392.

Hesse-Biber, S.N. (2011). Feminist Research: Exploring, Interrogating, and Transforming the Interconnections of Epistemology, Methodology, and Method. In S.N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis (*pp.2-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

hooks, bell. (2000). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center.* London: Pluto Press.

Horner, Winifred Bryan. (1990). Writing Instruction in Great Britain: Eighteenth and
    Nineteenth Centuries. In James Murphy (Ed.), *A Short History of Writing
    Instruction From Ancient Greece to Twentieth-Century America* (pp.121-150).
    Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.

Jameson, Fredric. (1988). History and class consciousness as an unfinished project.
    Rethinking Marxism, *1*(1). 49-72.

Jaschik, Scott. (2008). What Is a Composition and Rhetoric Doctorate? *Inside Higher Ed*.
    Retreived from https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/04/04/cccc

Jenkins, S., & Agamba, J. J. (2013). The Missing Link in the CCSS Initiative:
    Professional Development for Implementation. *Academy of Educational
    Leadership Journal (AEIJ),* 17 (2),69-79.

Johnson, Robert R. (1998). User-Centered Technology: A Rhetorical Theory for
    Computers and Other Mundane Artifacts. Albany, NY: State University Press.

Johnson, R. R. and Ranney, F. (2009). Recovering Techne. *Technical Communication
    Quarterly 11.2*: 237-351.

Killeen,K.M., Monk, D.H. and Plecki, M.L. (2002). What school districts spend on
    professional development: Insights available from national data (1992-1998).
    Journal of Education Finance, *28*(1), 25-50.

Kinneavy, James. (1983). Writing across the curriculum. *Profession*. 13-20.

Kletzien, S.B., & Dreher, M.J. (2004). Informational text in K-3 classrooms. Newark,
    DE: International Reading Association.

Kluhara et al. (2009). Teaching Writing to high school students: A national survey.
    Journal of Educational Psychology, *101*(1). 136-160.

Kolowich, Steve. (2014). Writing Instructor, Skeptical of Automated Grading, Pits
    Machine vs. Machine. *Chronicle of High Education*. Retrieved from
    http://www.chronicle.com/article/Writing-Instructor-Skeptical/146211/

Lagemann, E. (2000). *An elusive science: The troubling history of education research*.
    Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lauer, Janice. (1982). Writing as Inquiry: Some Questions for Teachers. *College
    Composition and Communication*, *33*. 143-52.

Layton, Lyndsey. (2014). How Bill Gates pulled off the swift Common Core revolution. *Washington Post.* Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-bill-gates-pulled-off-the-swift-common-core-revolution/2014/06/07/a830e32e-ec34-11e3-9f5c-9075d5508f0a_story.html?utm_term=.177b5f34f4f1

Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1944). The Controversy Over Detailed Interviews-An Offer for Negotiation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *8(1),* 38-60. doi: 10.1086/265666

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2010). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Little, J. W. (1993). Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform. *Educational Evaluation & Policy Analysis, 15*(2), 129–151.

Maloch, Beth and Bomer, Randy. (2013a). Informational Texts and the Common Core Standards: What Are We Talking about, Anyway? *Language Arts*, *90*(3), 205-334.

Maloch, Beth and Bomer, Randy. (2013b). Teaching about and with Informational Texts: What Does Research Teach Us? *Language Arts*, *90*(6), 441-449.

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Merriam, S. B. (1997). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education: Revised and Expanded from Case Study Research in Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, Carolyn. (1984). Genre as Social Action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70, 151-167.

Miller, Carolyn. (1979). A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing. *College English* 40, 610–617.

Miller, Carolyn. (1989). What's Practical about Technical Writing?" *Technical Writing: Theory and Practice.* Ed. Bertie E. Fearing and W. Keats Sparrow. New York: Modern Language Association. 14–24.

Miller, Thomas. (1990). Where Did College English Studies Come From? *Rhetoric Review, 9(1)*, 50-69, Retreived from http://www.jstor.org/stable/465417

Moeller, Ryan & McAllister, Ken. (2002). Playing with Techne: A Propaedeutic for Technical Communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 11*(2), 185-206.

Moon, Gretchen Flesher. (2007). Locating Composition History. In Patricia Donahue & Gretchen Flesher Moon (Eds.), *Local Histories: Reading the Archives of Composition* (pp.1-13). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Murphy, James. (1990). Roman Writing Instruction as Described by Quintilian. In James Murphy (Ed.), *A Short History of Writing Instruction From Ancient Greece to Twentieth-Century America* (pp.19-76). Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (N.d.). *Fast Facts*. http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=28

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). (1983). *A Nation at Risk*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. New York, NY: Author.

National Education Association (NEA). "Myths and Facts about Educator Pay." http://www.nea.org/home/12661.htm. Accessed 10/30/16.

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Appendix A*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Washington, DC. Retreived from: http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Development Process*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/development-process/

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Introduction*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards1.pdf

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Myths v. Facts*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/myths-vs-facts/

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *Key Designs*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from:

http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/key-design-consideration/

North, Stephen. (1987). *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Oakley, Ann. Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. In Roberts, H (Ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*. (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Office of the State Superintendent of Education. *Race to the Top Common Core Standards and Assessments*. Retrieved from http://osse.dc.gov/service/race-top-common-core-standards-and-assessments

O'Shaughnessy, S. & Krogman, N. (2012). A Revolution Reconsidered? Examining the Practice of Qualitative Research in Feminist Scholarship. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 37* (2), 493-520.

Ostergaard, Lori and Ludwig, Jeff. (2014). Discovering Histories of High School Writing Instruction. *Journal of Teaching Writing*, *29*(2), 69-84.

Owens, Deborah. (2015). *The Origins of the Common Core: How the Free Market Became Public Education Policy*. New York, NY: Palgrave.

Pender, Kelly. (2011). *Techne, from neoclassicism to postmodernism*. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.

Purcell-Gates, V., Duke, N.K., & Martineau, J.A. (2007). Learning to read and write genre-specific texts: Roles of authentic experience and explicit reading. Reading Research Quarterly, 42, 8-45.

Ravich, D. (2014a, May 2). My Reply to Alexander Nazaryan of Newsweek. [web log post].Retrevied from https://dianeravitch.net/2014/05/02/my-reply-to-alexander-nazaryan-of-newsweek/

Ravich, D. (2014b, Jan. 18). My Speech about Common Core to MLA. [web log post]. Retrieved from https://dianeravitch.net/2014/01/18/my-speech-about-common-core-to-mla/

Ravich, D. (2011, Oct. 11). What can we learn from Finland? [web log post]. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/Bridging-Differences/2011/10/what_can_we_learn_from_finland.html

Reinharz, S., & Davidman, L. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rice, Mary Frances. (2015). Finding Space for Transfer of Writing in Common Core Curricular Standards. *Language Arts*, *30*(2). pp. 47-72.

Rich, Motoko. (2014). Why don't more men go into teaching? *New York Times*, SR3. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/sunday-review/why-dont-more-men-go-into-teaching.html

Roberts, William. (1843). History of Letter-writing: From the Earliest Period to the Fifth Century. London: William Pickering.

Rohman, Gordon D. (1965). Pre-Writing: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process. *College Composition and Communication, 16*, 106-112.

Sahlberg, Pasi. (2011). Lessons from Finland. American Educator, *35*(2). 32-36. Retrieved from http://pasisahlberg.com/portfolio-writings/selected-writings/articles/sahlberg-p-2011-lessons-from-finland-american-educator-352-32-36/

Schmuck, P.A. (1987). *Women educators: Employees of schools in western countries.* New York: SUNY Press.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Semuels, Alana. (2016, Dec. 6). How to Kill the Middle Class. *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from: https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/12/unions-wisconsin/509798/

Smith, Dorothy. (1990). *The conceptual practices of power: A feminist sociology of knowledge*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Spellmeyer, Kurt. (1989). Foucault and the Freshman Writer: Considering the Self in Discourse. *College English* , *51*, 715-724.

Spencer, Dee Ann. (1997). Teaching as Women's Work. In Bruce J. Biddle, T.L. Good, I. Goodson (Eds.), International *Handbook of Teachers and Teaching*. New York, NY: Springer.

Street, C. and Stang, K. (2008). Improving the writing across the curriculum: A model for teaching in-service secondary teachers to write. *Action in Teacher Education*, *30* (1), 37-49.

Sullivan, Sale. (1990). Political-Ethical Implications of Defining Technical Communication as Practice. *JAC*.

Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall (2013). "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* 38*(4),* 785-810.

Tebeaux, Elizabeth. (1989). The High-Tech Workplace: Implications for Technical Communication Instruction. *Technical Writing: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Bertie E. Fearing and W. Keats Sparrow. New York: MLA, 136-44.

Tovey, Janice. (2001). Building connections between industry and university: Implementing an internship program at a regional university. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 10*(2), 225-239.

Webber, Jim. (2012). *Towards Public Professionalism: A Pentadic Intervention in Debate Between the Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).* Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1034778292

Weeks, Kathi. (2004). Labor, Standpoints, and Feminist Subjects. In Sandra Harding (Ed.) *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader.* (p.181-194). New York, NY: Routledge.

Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from Strangers: the art and method of qualitative interview studies.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

Welch, Kathleen. (1990). Writing Instruction in Ancient Athens After 450 B.C. In James Murphy (Ed.), *A Short History of Writing Instruction From Ancient Greece to Twentieth-Century America* (pp.1-18). Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press.

Wenger, Etienne. *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whitburn, Merrill D. (2000). *Rhetorical Scope and Performance: The Example of Technical Communication*. Stamford, CT: Ablex Publishing Company.

Wild, John. (1941). Plato's Theory of Techne: A Phenomenological Interpretation. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1(3), 255-293.

Wuest, J. (1995). Feminist grounded theory: An exploration of the congruency and tensions between two traditions in knowledge discovery. *Qualitative Health Research*, *5*(1), 125-137.

Young, Richard E., Alton L. Becker, & Kenneth L. Pike. (1970). *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*. New York: Harcourt.

Appendix A. Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Informational Writing in U.S. High Schools

I am Jessica Lauer, a doctoral student of Dr. Brady from the Humanities Department at Michigan Technological University. I am requesting your participation in a research study to be used for my doctoral dissertation. I am conducting a research project on how informational writing is understood and taught in high schools across the country.

I hope to use what I learn from this study to strengthen the bridge between high school and college writing courses in the field of Writing Studies.

You are being asked to participate in a 30-minute interview. I will take notes and ask both prepared and spontaneous questions. The questions of the interview will be about your general knowledge of and classroom experiences with informational writing. The interview may be conducted face to face, via email, or over the telephone. I would like to tape record our conversation, so that I can accurately record your response. You may ask me to turn off the machine at any time if you become uncomfortable and no longer wish to be recorded. If you agree, the interview will be audio-recorded, and I will take precautions to preserve both your anonymity and confidentiality.

You may ask me questions at any time and talk about things you think I should know about, even if I don't ask. You should feel free to interrupt me if you want to ask. You are not required to talk to me or answer my questions. Even if you decide now to talk to me about your experience with informational writing in school, you may later ask me to stop asking you about it. When you ask me to stop, I will stop asking you questions. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can end your participation at any time.

I will not reveal anything that you say to me beyond anyone helping me whom I trust to maintain your confidentiality. I will do everything I can to protect your privacy, but there is always a slight chance that someone could find out about your participation.

I am asking if you would agree to participate in this study, and to talk to me about your experience with informational writing. Do you agree to participate?

Initial here if you allow me to audio record our conversation _____

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please contact:

Jessica Lauer   Dr. M.A. Brady

Doctoral Student   Associate Professor

Humanities Department   Humanities Department

Michigan Technological University   Michigan Technological University

Houghton, MI 49931   Houghton, MI 49931

906-231-2424   906-487-2540

jlauer@mtu.edu   mabrady@mtu.edu

Sincerely,

Jessica Lauer

Michigan Technological University

Appendix B. Interview Questions

1. Can you start by telling me about your "past life", or your life up until you became a teacher?
2. Can you recall how you were taught how to teach writing?
3. What are some specific goals or expectations your hold for your students when it comes to their writing skills?
4. How would you define informational writing?
5. Can you give some some examples of assignments you give that incorporate informational writing?
6. How do you see the teaching of writing, especially information writing, being conducted as a "shared responsibility" among teachers?

Appendix C. Images

PARTS OF A LETTER.

Hill, Thomas Edie. "Parts of a Letter"