TEACHER DECISION-MAKING: CULTURAL MEDIATION IN TWO HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOMS

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Although studies have addressed high school English language arts (ELA) instruction, little is known about the decision-making process of ELA teachers. How do teachers decide between the resources and instructional strategies at their disposal? This study focused on two monolingual teachers who were in different schools and grades. They were teaching mainstream students or English Language Learners. Both employed an approach to writing instruction that emphasized cultural mediation. Two questions guided this study: How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom? What is the nature of teacher decision-making in these high school classrooms during English language arts instruction? Data were collected and analyzed using qualitative methodologies. The findings suggest that one teacher, who was familiar with CMWI's principles and practices and saw students as partners, focused her decisions on engagement and participation. The other teacher deliberately embedded CMWI as an instructional stance. Her decisions focused on empathy, caring and meaningful connections. These teachers enacted CMWI in different ways to meet their students' needs. They embraced the students' cultural resources, used and built on their linguistic knowledge, expanded thinking strategies to make difficult information comprehensible, provided authentic learning opportunities, used formative assessments as instructional guides, and delivered just-in-time academic and non-academic support.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT iii

LIST OF TABLES x

LIST OF FIGURES xii

CHAPTER I STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 1

Purpose of the Study 4

Significance of the Study 5

Research Questions 6

Overview of the Methodology 7

Delimitations 8

Definition of Terms 9

Summary 10

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 11

Introduction 11

The Definition of Literacy and Its Instruction 12

What Do Adolescent English Language Learners Need? 16

Cultural Needs in Classroom Settings 17

The Impact of the Students' and Teachers' Cultures 19

Culture as Seen in the Mainstream 20

What Does a Sociocultural Approach Offer to Address the Students' Needs? 21

Cultural Mediation 22

Sociocultural Approaches to Professional Development 27

The Sociocultural Approach Influenced Writing Theory 27

What Does ESL Instruction Offer to Address the Students' Needs? 28

What Does Writing Instruction Offer to Address the Students' Needs? 29

Writing Seen as the Neglected R 31

Writing Seen from a Product Perspective 31

Writing Seen as a Tool for Learning 33

Writing Seen as a Process 34
Writing Seen as a Tool for Making Meaning 37
How Do Teachers Make Decisions and How Might That Inform Professional Development for These Students' Teachers? 39
Making Straightforward Versus Problematic Decisions 40
Types of Instructional Decisions Teachers Make 41
Making Placement Decisions 41
Making Diagnostic Decisions 42
Making Attainment Decisions 42
Making Monitoring Decisions 42
Making Decisions Based on Naturalistic Observations 43
What Informs Teachers' Decision-Making? 44
Decisions Informed by Personal Experiences 44
Decisions Informed by Professional Experiences 45
Decisions Informed by Curricular Mandates 45
Decisions Informed by Political Climate and Affiliations .. 46
Decisions Informed by Student Needs 46
Decisions Informed by Professional Development 47
Recent Research on Decision-Making in Classroom Settings .. 47
Decision-Making Research Gap 48
The Need to Study Decision-Making 49
Reframing Professional Development Needs 50
What is Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction (CMWI) and How Does it Attempt to Synthesize All of This? 51
Summary 57

CHAPTER III DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 59
Design and Methodology 60
Rationale for Naturalistic Case Study and Grounded Theory . 60
Trustworthiness 62
Site Selection 63
Gaining Access to Site 64
Gaining Access to Participants 64
Purposive Sampling of Teacher Participants 65

Description of the Participants 65
Carmen in the Mainstream Classroom 66
Janet in the ESL Classroom 66
Research Setting 67
Carmen's High School 68
Janet's High School 70
Tools of Inquiry 71
Role of the Researcher 71
Types of Documentation 72
Pre-Entry Interview 73
Teacher Data Forms 73
Teacher Interviews 73
Classroom Observations 74
Timeline of the Study 76
Data Reduction 79
Data Analysis during the Data Collection 79
Data Analysis after Data Collection 80
First Reading—Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction 81
Second Reading—Instructional Affordances 85
Third Reading—Teacher Decision-Making 90
Conceptualizing the Decision-Making Framework 96
Summary 97

CHAPTER IV INSTRUCTIONAL PORTRAITS: CARMEN AND JANET AT WORK.. 99
CMWI in a Mainstream High School English Language Arts Classroom 100
CMWI in an English as a Second Language Classroom 122
Embracing the Students' Sociocultural Resources 152
Taking Advantage of the Students' Linguistic Knowledge ... 153
Thinking Strategies and Guidance 153
Authentic Learning Opportunities 153
Just in Time Academic and Nonacademic Support 155
Using Authentic and Formative Assessments 156

CHAPTER V FINDINGS 158
Research Questions 159
(1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom? 159
(2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in high school during English language arts instruction? 169
The Decision-Making Conceptual Mediation Framework 177
The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger, 1951) 180
Deciding to Read *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) . 184
Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning 185
The Hunger Games (Collins, 2008) 189
Deciding to Read *The Hunger Games* 193
Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning 194
The House on Mango Street (Cisneros, 1984) 197
Deciding to Read *The House on Mango Street* 200
Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning 201
Deciding When and How to Assess Learning 205
Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (Texas Education Agency) 207
Deciding on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills 210
Deciding When and How to Assess Learning 214
The Odyssey (Homer, trans. 1996) 215
Deciding to Read *The Odyssey* 219
Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning 220
Deciding When and How to Assess Learning 223
Summary 228

CHAPTER VI DISCUSSION 230
Summary of Findings 231
Enacting a Sociocultural Perspective 233
Using the Students' Resources 233
Taking Advantage of the Students' Linguistic Knowledge ... 234
Expanding Students' Thinking to Aid Comprehension 235
Providing Authentic Learning Opportunities 236

Delivering Just in Time Academic and Non Academic Support 237
Using Formative Assessments 238
Decision-Making 239
Cultural Mediation 240
Differences that Made the Difference for Participant Teachers 241
Implications 244
Implications for Practice 248
Implications for Policy 249
Implications for Research 250
Implications for Theory 251
Future Research 251
Conclusion 252
APPENDIX A TEACHER CONSENT FORM..... 254
APPENDIX B STUDENT CONSENT FORM..... 257
APPENDIX C STUDENT ASSENT FORM..... 261
APPENDIX D HUMAN SUBJECTS CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION..... 263
APPENDIX E E-MAIL INVITATIONS TO TEACHERS..... 265
APPENDIX F DATA TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE..... 268
APPENDIX G TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE..... 271
APPENDIX H FOLLOW UP QUESTIONNAIRE..... 278
APPENDIX I CMWI LANDSCAPE DIAGRAM..... 280
APPENDIX J CMWI INQUIRY CYCLE..... 282
APPENDIX K CMWI QUESTIONNAIRE..... 284
APPENDIX L CODING DICTIONARY..... 286
APPENDIX M *HUNGER GAMES* SUMMARY..... 290
APPENDIX N *HOUSE ON MANGO STREET* SUMMARY..... 292

REFERENCES..... 295

LIST OF TABLES

Page

1. Grounded Theory Stage..... 62
2. Teacher Characteristics..... 66
3. School Characteristics of Students..... 68
4. Student Ethnicity at Carmen's High School..... 69
5. Student Subgroups at Carmen's High School..... 69
6. Student Ethnicity at Janet's High School..... 71
7. Student Subgroups at Janet's High School..... 71
8. Data Sources and Research Questions..... 72
9. Carmen's Observations..... 75
10. Janet's Observations..... 76
11. Timeline of the Study..... 78
12. CMWI Codes..... 82
13. CMWI Description and Examples..... 83
14. Affordance Codes..... 86
15. Affordance Descriptions and Examples..... 87
16. Decision-Making Codes..... 91
17. Decision-Making Description and Codes..... 92
18. Events and Observations..... 95
19. Data Collection and Analysis Timeline.....97
20. Side-by-Side Summaries..... 150
21. Mainstream and ESL Classroom Comparison..... 165
22. Instructional Units..... 176
23. Resources Examples..... 179
24. Carmen Students' Resources for First Instructional Unit 182

25. Carmen’s Mediated Affordances with First Instructional Unit..... 185

26. Carmen Students’ Resources for Second Instructional Unit 190

27. Carmen’s Mediated Affordances with Second Instructional Unit..... 194

28. Janet Students’ Resources for First Instructional Unit. 198

29. Janet’s Mediated Affordances with First Instructional Unit..... 201

30. Janet Students’ Resources for Second Instructional Unit 208

31. Janet’s Mediated Affordances with Second Instructional Unit..... 211

32. Janet Students’ Resources for Third Instructional Unit 216

33. Janet’s Mediated Affordances with Third Instructional Unit..... 220

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

1. Cultural mediation..... 23

2. Four stages of the zone of proximal development..... 25

3. Critical thinking pyramid..... 148

4. The decision-making conceptual mediation framework..... 178

5. *The Catcher in the Rye* (initial)..... 184

6. *The Catcher in the Rye* (during instruction)..... 189

7. *The Hunger Games* (initial)..... 192

8. *The Hunger Games* (during instruction)..... 196

9. *The House on Mango Street* (initial)..... 200

10. *The House on Mango Street* (during instruction)..... 207

11. Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (initial)..... 210

12. Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills..... 215

13. *The Odyssey* (initial)..... 219

14. *The Odyssey* (during instruction)..... 226

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English language arts teachers, at all levels, face a critical challenge once they enter their classrooms, collectively attending to the literacy needs of 10.9 million (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008) English Language Learners—especially in the era of federal standardized testing mandates. But as they plan, deliver and assess instruction, monolingual high school teachers, in particular, are realizing that "one-size-fits-most" instruction is not suitable to meet the literacy needs of multiple language learners. These teachers need to think about the influence and use of their students' cultural and linguistic resources, the specific contexts in which they teach, the resources provided at their professional setting, and the effects of their particular pedagogical approaches (e.g., Ball, 2008, p. 295; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Luke, 2003). These teachers are realizing that the challenge is exacerbated by some of the curriculum at their disposal. Curriculum, which was once effective to meet the needs of 20th century mainstream students, is no longer effective with today's students—especially English Language Learners— as they prepare for college, career and life. Effective instruction for 21st century students entails more than adding one more step to what teachers are already doing; rather, literacy instruction is

a multifaceted undertaking of listening, speaking, reading, writing, thinking and constructing meaning from many different types of texts (e.g., Erickson, 1984; Gee, 2005; Perez, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1983).

Although changes to literacy curriculum and classroom instruction are not the only answer to the multitude of social problems (i.e., poverty, healthcare, joblessness) that adolescents and their schools face today (e.g., Bruner, 1971; Noddings, 1992), it is a start to help address the burning issues of the day.

> Bottom line, we must address the need to engage in a fundamental rethinking of the structure and delivery of education in the United States…we must do more of what works and less of what doesn't work, this will require transformational reforms. (Barrera, 2010)

So, what do monolingual high school English language arts teachers do to support all learners regardless of linguistic proficiency? What supports and practices do teachers enact to help their students prepare for college, career and life? What instructional decisions do they consciously and deliberately make during English language arts instruction to help their students? The purpose of this study is to help address this quandary.

Due to the changing student language proficiency demographics, technology changes, and cultural shifts, teachers are finding that determining the most appropriate instructional

strategies is a complex undertaking. Although there are research studies that relate to supporting adolescent writing instruction (e.g., Freeman and Freeman, 2008; Panofsky, Pacheco, Smith, Santos, Fogelman, Harrington, and Kenney, 2005; Short and Fitzsimmons, 2007), little is known specifically about the decisions teachers make to support mainstream and English Language Learners as they write in school. Information is still needed about how teachers decide which instructional strategies are the most appropriate to meet the range of student linguistic, thinking and academic needs.

Culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) is an inquiry-based instructional framework (Patterson, Wickstrom, Roberts, Araujo, and Hoki, 2010) developed for a research project funded by the National Writing Project. It is an attempt to articulate research-based principles and practices to support the writing development of English learners, particularly at the secondary level. These researchers identified five instructional patterns in these teachers' classrooms, and they observed that these CMWI teachers made complex decisions in response to students' strengths and needs. Information is still needed about how teachers like these CMWI teachers decide which instructional strategies are the most appropriate to meet the range of student linguistic, thinking and academic needs.

The teachers who joined CMWI did so by choice. They believed that what they were doing in their classrooms no longer worked; they were tired of maintaining the status quo and working within the existing professional and school constraints, which they felt did not meet the needs of their current students. In CMWI, they searched for real, practical ideas that work with English language learners. In all cases, they were keenly aware that they did not know what they *should do* about providing effective instruction to culturally and linguistically diverse students. One of the CMWI goals, therefore, was to provide information to help teachers answer the "what should I do?" questions. In a sense, they wanted to improve their decision-making capabilities; they wanted to be good teachers for their students.

Purpose of the Study

Good teachers are good decision-makers (e.g., Anderson, 2003; Shavelson, 1973). They make daily decisions about how to best support students in schools. These instructional decisions affect how they meet the needs of students in their classrooms, ultimately impacting student achievement. Understanding the nature of decision-making is essential if we are to provide effective support to teachers and their students. This gap in the literature suggests that teacher decision-making during writing instruction needs to be studied: What is the nature of

teacher decision-making? How does the choice of appropriate supports influence the teacher's decision-making during writing instruction? This study investigated these questions in the context of high school English language arts teachers working with mainstream students and English language learners and mainstream students.

The issue therefore becomes how these teachers decide among the resources at their disposal then mediate them into affordances. The purpose of this qualitative, naturalistic study is to describe the teacher decision-making process and teachers' use of cultural mediation as a tool to provide support during English language arts instruction to high school students. These understandings can help build practical applications to help other teachers who may face similar decisions to address their particular needs. This improved understanding of decision-making can extend the body of knowledge so that targeted professional development can take place to improve writing instruction.

Significance of the Study

This study provides insight about how teachers make decisions in adolescent English language arts classrooms. In addition, it provides insight about how sustained, inquiry based, professional development can aid teachers as they work with students. The information obtained provides a perspective of decision-making and assists teacher educators and staff

developers when planning activities in their schools and in their districts. From a scholarly perspective, this study provides literacy researchers case studies that are rich in description to help enrich an understanding of decision-making in English Language Arts classrooms. This study can guide administrators and policy makers as they evaluate and support effective instruction in a language arts classroom. The information obtained in this study may provide further understanding that can help participating teachers as they plan their educational trajectories. As educators continue to explore ways to support mainstream and adolescent English language learners toward academic writing, documenting and understanding teacher decision-making is essential.

Research Questions

This qualitative, naturalistic study investigates how two monolingual high school teachers who serve mainstream and English language learners make decisions in English language arts classrooms. This investigation attempts to identify and study the decisions these teachers make during classroom instruction.

The findings are presented as case studies. Because cases are constructed, not found, researchers make decisions about their vision, interests, and what stories to focus on (Dyson and Genishi, 2005). To further understand the enactment of CMWI,

teacher decision-making and the use of cultural mediation, the following two questions guide this research:

(1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom?

(2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in these high school classrooms during English language arts instruction?

Overview of the Methodology

The study uses a qualitative, naturalistic methodology to document the way teachers make decisions during writing instruction because this study is trying to understand a phenomenon, which can be described best from an emic perspective.

The qualitative components follow the methods of Wolcott's (2009) ***Writing up Qualitative Research***. The qualitative data collected is analyzed using a grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1992). In addition to grounded theory, a constant comparative methodology (Glaser, 1992) is used to cross reference the data so that new meanings can be developed. This methodological stance allows theory to be derived from the data.

From the data (interviews, questionnaires and observations) codes were generated to identify patterns. The concepts formed categories, which helped to identify themes relevant to the research questions. Member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) during

the interview and during data analysis contributed to the credibility of the findings.

Archival and participant observational data from two teachers were used to answer the research questions. Teachers chosen to participate in the study were members of a local Texas site of the National Writing Project who attended a professional development called culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) during the past three years. The students in one teacher's class were considered mainstream learners, while students in the other teacher's class were all English language learners. The researcher used observational data, follow up interviews, student writing samples, and other tools to write case studies for both teachers to address the questions of the study. The data were examined to find patterns about the teachers' instructional decisions and the impact on student learning.

Delimitations

There are two delimitations, which are inherent to this study. The findings of this study are descriptive, not explanatory. In other words, conclusions or cause-and-effect relations cannot be drawn. Findings from these two case studies are particular to the two teachers being studied, and therefore cannot be generalized to other teachers.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are necessary for the purpose of this study:

- *Affordance* refers to a resource (tool) in the environment, teacher, student, or text that allows an individual to perform an action (i.e., a resource in action).
- *Cultural mediation* teachers use culture (practices, discourse, norms, etcetera) as translators to support student learning.
- *Culturally mediated writing instruction* (CMWI) is a researched-based approach grounded on guided inquiry and writing to authentic audiences for significant reasons (Patterson, 2007).
- *Differentiated instruction* refers to how teachers vary their instructional practices to accommodate the needs of English language learners, among others.
- *English language learner* (ELL) is a student whose first language is not English. In the state where this study was conducted, these students were judged to be at the "beginning" to "advanced" level of acquiring English and, therefore, were identified as needing special instruction in English.

- *Resources* are physical or psychological tools. They are available to students and teachers to help mediate learning (e.g., context, text, personal).

These definitions are intended to provide the reader some understanding for the context of this study. They are considered as a list of constructs, which may carry further meanings for the reader of this study.

Summary

This chapter provided the introduction to the study, the purpose to the study, need of the study, significance of the study, framework and researcher questions, overview of the methodology, delimitations, and definition of terms.

In the next chapter, the study provides the review of the literature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this naturalistic study was to compare the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) in two classrooms and describe the instructional decisions of two high school teachers during English language arts instruction in a mainstream classroom and in an English as a second language (ESL) classroom. Ultimately, the findings of this study contribute to an understanding of the key elements of effective language and literacy instruction for English language learners.

This review of the literature begins with a conversation about the multiple meanings of literacy because understanding its evolution creates a path for understanding current principles and practices and ideas for moving forward. Because some of the student participants of this study are English language learners it is important to discuss the implications of persistent growth of linguistic diversity in schools.

The discussion continues with the sociocultural perspective, with a focus on research pertaining to mainstream and English language learners, as a way to foreground a theoretical foundation for this study. A review of recent literature provides some evidence that sociocultural perspectives have emerged to appropriately and consistently

address the educational needs of mainstream and English language learners. Since the sociocultural perspective focuses on teachers using cultural tools as resources to support students, a brief review will be offered about the role culture takes in educational settings. A review of the literature indicates that instruction that focuses on balancing product and process is effective for all students because it allows them to construct and experiment with their writing by transferring prior literacy skills. This is followed by a brief discussion of the existing literature on traditional versus inquiry-based professional development and the description of CMWI—the professional development program led by a local National Writing Project initiative, which the two participants teachers took part in during the last three years.

The review of the literature suggests that we need more detailed, finely grained descriptions of teacher decision-making to support writing development so that we can improve our support for teachers through sustained professional development; therefore, the literature supports addressing the aforementioned Chapter 1 research questions.

The Definition of Literacy and Its Instruction

The historical context of literacy instruction in general and writing instruction in particular is relevant to an examination of literacy teachers' decision-making because there

exits many perspectives about what is literacy and the best way to instruct it. Half a century ago literacy was defined as the ability to read and write print (Flesch, 1955). Current definitions, however, have moved beyond reading and writing print to include multiple knowledge bases, competencies, forms and functions (Cobb and Kallus, 2010, p. 332). Some argue that "consensual agreement on a single definition is quite implausible" (Soares, 1992). However, for the purposes of this study, literacy is defined as (adapted from Harris & Hodges, 2005):

- The ability to read and write (Flesch, 1955)
- The basic or primary levels of reading and writing that serve comparatively over time and space (Graff, 1987)
- A set of reading and writing practices governed by the conception of what, how, when and why we read and write (Lankshear, 1987)
- A strategy of power and liberation, to see the word and the world (Freire, 1972)
- To have disposition to engage appropriately with texts of different types in order to empower action, thinking and feeling (Wells & Chang-Wells, 1992)
- A continuum of skills, applied in the social contexts (Gray, 1956)

- Constructive, and socially situated (Giroux & McLaren, 1989)
- The set of skills to function in one's group and community (UNESCO, 1962) and
- Special competence needed to effectively communicate in professional fields (i.e., the field of writing).

Writing researchers (e.g., Flower, 1994), in particular, have presented their ideas for the definition of literacy. Flower (1994) sees literacy as an action, which depends on knowledge of social conventions and individual problem solving. Literacy opens the door for metacognitive and social awareness (Flower, p. 27). In this view, teachers are able to focus on strategic thinking and reflective learning so that students can develop metacognitive awareness about the written conversations in which they are engaging.

While the definition of literacy has always been a moving target, innovations have made it nearly impossible for the definition to keep pace (e.g., technology, new media, and printing press). These innovations continue to change our definition.

These various definitions of literacy reflect a range of underlying learning theories and have, for that reason, influenced the instructional decision-making in English language arts classrooms. First, reading was a process of decoding words;

students were seen as passive participants who acquired reading skills. Instruction was intended to modify a behavior through stimuli (Skinner, 1957). Second, reading was taught as a meaning-making activity. Smith's (1975) comment about "reading behind the eye," shows how the field moved beyond seeing reading as simply decoding print. Instruction recognized that prior knowledge and experiences were assets to students learning language and literacy and incorporated these supports with their students, particularly with English language learners (Turbill, 2002). Third, the focus shifted from reading to reading and writing and how each could support the learning of the other. Instruction focused on using reading and writing as knowledge sources. Literacy was seen as social practice (Vygotsky, 1978), the sociocultural approach. A heightened focus was given to writing (Atwell, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Graves, 1981; Wells, 1985) and its implication for learning new concepts, not just polishing mechanical errors. Most recently, literacy has taken on a new role—as a source of power and social equality (Freire, 1971).

Due to the changing levels of student English proficiencies in classrooms and rapid technological advances (i.e., digital writing/media literacy), teachers are finding it difficult to identify which learning theory to apply. History and sociocultural theory tells us, though, that recognizing

students' prior experiences and everyday language as assets improves meaning making, language, and literacy learning (e.g., Goodman & Goodman, 1971; Cambourne, 1995). In sum, the meaning of literacy and its instruction has evolved over time and needs to continue to change to meet the needs of our 21st century students.

What Do Adolescent English language learners Need?

> In an increasingly culturally diverse society, literacy cannot be a process of simple transmission and internalization of a set of cognitive functions…literacy is an interactive process that is constantly in need of being negotiated as the individual transacts with the environment (Perez, 1998, p. 5).

In 2011, linguistic diversity can be found in almost every public school in the United States. However, how effective instruction programs are implemented for students who are linguistically diverse has been a point of great debate (e.g., Cummins, 1979; Krashen, 1982; Thomas & Collier, 1996). Some argue that students need to assimilate, therefore, English should be the only language of instruction; others argue that language and literacy instruction for multiple language learners should happen in English and their home language(s) simultaneously. Recently, pragmatic approaches to educating English language learners have been explored because of the inability to improve literacy rates in English only classrooms, the lack of teachers with academic proficiency in students' home

languages, dropout rates nearing 50% (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2010), and the overwhelming number of English language learners in schools (10.9 million, National Center of Educational Statistics, 2008).

Cultural Needs in Classroom Settings

Each of us possesses a culture and is multicultural (Banks & Banks, 2001, p. 33). While we may have some similarities with others, we are all different. Because of this, identifying what works for one group, and then applying it to the general population is a stance we need to think about.

Culture is a combination of symbolic, linguistic and meaningful aspects of human collectivities (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). It is embedded in every second of our lives. It informs our decisions. Our family, friends, community, and television update our cultural view of how we see the world around us. We are in a constant process of cultural renewal.

Culture is invented, passed from one generation to the next, borrowed, refined, molded, and passed on through the learning process in an out of school. Culture provides a lens for human development. Its aids everything we do.

Until recently, studies about culture have been predominantly the focus of anthropologists (Boaz, 1912; Mead, 1928; Tylor, 1897). Education researchers began to study culture and its impact on student learning during the rise of the

sociocultural perspective (e.g., Goodman & Goodman, 1978; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Spindler, 1997; Prior, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978). One of the first publications to focus on student culture and its impact on student learning was Heath's (1983) ***Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms***. Taking an ethnographic perspective of two communities in the Carolina Mountains, she found that language and literacy expectations for the students were different at home and at school. She argued that the students' culture and language development were interdependent (Heath, 1983).

Gunderson (2009) writes, "Teaching and learning—that is, schooling—is not culture free" (p. 83). Although the word "culture" is discussed often in and out of school, there exists little agreement about its definition (Gunderson, 2009). Some say culture guides our behavior in our communities, helps us know how far we can go as individuals, and defines our responsibility to the group (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). Others say culture is "a system of integrated parts which govern human behavior" (Condon, 1973). Thus, culture is complex and always shifting.

The definition of culture is dependent on the discipline; it is often set by the parameters of how culture is being studied, by whom, and what purposes. In addition, culture can be studied at the macro-level and micro-level. At the macro-level

studies focus on shared features of groups, while at the micro-level, studies focus on the individual in very small groups.

In sum, culture is a process (Spindler, 1997) that is frequently informed by our experiences; while we may find a strategy or classroom activity that works with a set of students, it does not necessarily mean that it will work for all students, including those who may have the same background. It would behoove teachers to think about cultural diversity in the classroom as they make decisions.

The Impact of the Students' and Teachers' Cultures

Teachers and students seldom take time to examine their own values, beliefs, and cultural underpinnings (Wolcott, 1997). However, as teachers and students interact with one another there is a profound impact on each other's culture, especially when there are differences in values, principles, and practices. These differences will sometimes cause students and teachers to assimilate or acculturate to each other's ways of seeing the world. Therefore, it is necessary for both teachers and students to learn more about them. Wolcott argues that teachers and students are in a "constant game—to socialize each other" (Wolcott, 1997, p. 82) to a way of life.

> To achieve racial and ethnic harmony, it is not sufficient merely to expose children to different groups. They must have time to develop caring relationships with particular others. (Noddings, 1992, p. 68)

To that end, everything we do as teachers and learners has to do with the way we see the world around us. In fact, many would argue that schooling transmits cultural beliefs and values to students (e.g., Dewey, 1915/1916; Freire, 1978; Spindler, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978). As the years have passed, the culture differences between students and teachers have impacted student learning in all grades. This cultural disconnect between teachers and youth at the high school level is worrisome to both educators and researchers. In many cases this mismatch between both parties leads to academic failure.

Wolcott says that teacher should remember that the students set their own pace (Wolcott, 1997, p. 79) and they hold expectations about the kinds of activities that are appropriate for school (Wolcott, 1997, p. 81). Therefore, teachers need to think deeply about the student's background as they plan, deliver, and assess their lessons.

Culture as Seen in the Mainstream

In the mainstream, culture as a term is seen as a way to categorize, to differentiate people. Teachers, politicians and students see culture as concrete external differences that exist between people. In classrooms, cultures are seen through the external rituals (e. g., birthday parties, religious events, and educational attainment). Culture is not seen as one of the most basic aspect of human development. That is to say, culture is

not seen as the basis that guides our actions daily. Therefore, it would be incumbent upon teachers, policymakers and researchers to think more about their own definition of culture and how it aids during the learning process.

What Does a Sociocultural Approach Offer to Address the Students' Needs?

It has been widely accepted that we learn concepts long before we start formal schooling, but how we learn concepts has been a debate for many years. Some believed that learning happened due to stimuli (Skinner, 1957), through passive and negative reinforcement. On the other hand, others believed that the mind was a processor that stored and provided an output when necessary (Rumelhart, 1976). Today, it is widely believed that learning is an active and constructive process (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning in this perspective happens through apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990); the expert leads the novice until the novice can do the task without help or assistance.

> Vygotsky's sociocultural approach can best be characterized using these three themes: (1) a reliance on developmental analysis; (2) the claim that higher mental functions in the individual have their origins in the social life; and (3) the claim that an essential key to understanding human social and psychological processes is the tools and signs used to mediate them. (Wertsch, 1990, p. 113)

Vygotsky's ***Mind in Society*** (1978), a translation of his original work from the 1930s, led the emergence of the sociocultural perspective in the United States in the late

1970s. In this perspective, learning a language is shaped not only by the student's prior learning experiences, but also by tapping into the social capital (e.g., Bourdieu, 1972; Dewey 1899; Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez, 2001), linguistic knowledge and culture, educational experiences, and individual learning patterns (Gardner, 1987). The view for socioculturalists is that learning happens socially, between and among people through the use of tools. Psychological tools or signs (Vygotsky, 1978) such as symbols are integral to help students mediate as they engage in the learning of new concepts through activity. According to Wertsch (1990) the tools are fundamental to shaping and defining the activity the learner engages in.

Cultural Mediation

Vygotsky (1978) argued that humans are always transacting with their surroundings. Humans mediate transactions of their worlds through the use of physical and psychological tools and signs that are socially and culturally constructed. As humans transact with these tools and signs they make sense of their local and global cultures which directly impact how they see the world. Because culture is a process (Spindler, 1997) these tools and signs their use are in constant flux both individually and collectively. That is to say, (1) these tools, signs and stimuli are always changing; (2) they may be different from the learner;

and (3) they may need mediation. The learner is constantly crossing cultural and social borders that may or may not be similar to their world views. In the classroom, the teacher in some cases takes on the role of mediator helping the student to make sense of the tools and stimuli around them. Figure 1 displays a way to think about the cultural mediation students engage in.

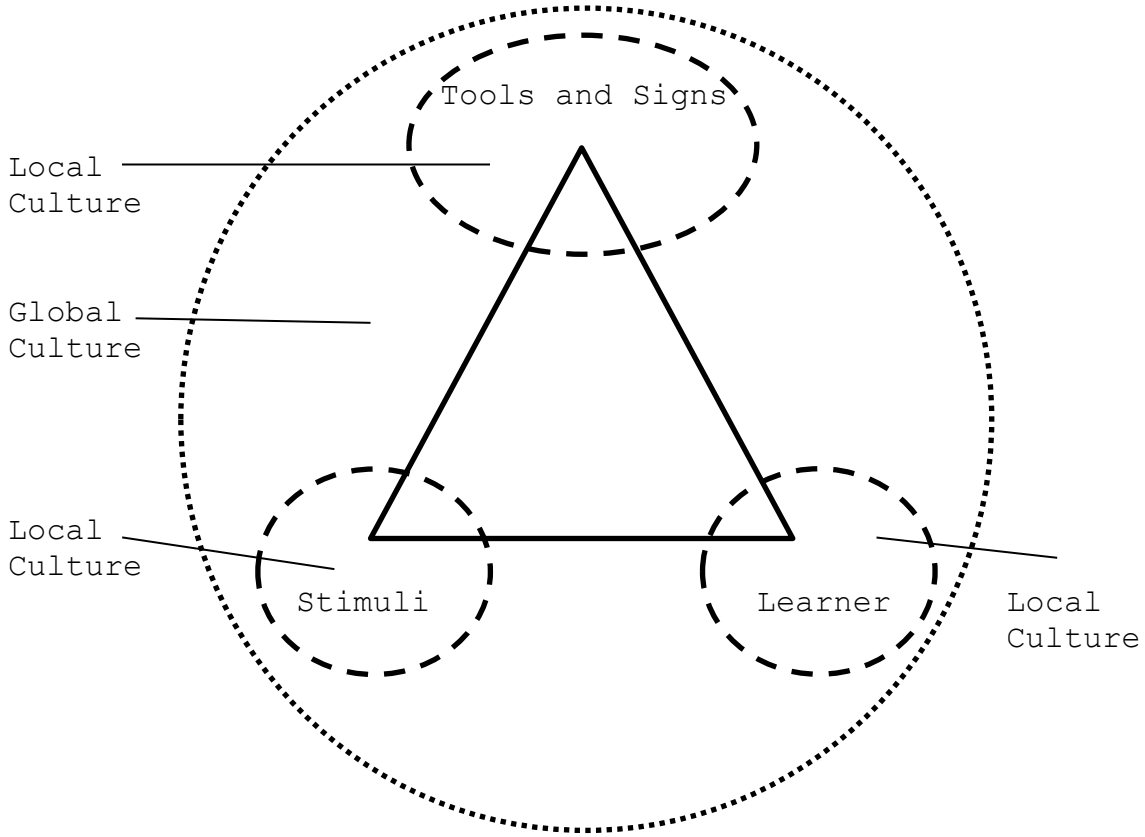


Figure 1. Cultural mediation. (adapted from Vygotsky, 1978).

For Vygotsky there were two characteristics of mediation that were specific to instruction: conscious awareness and voluntarily control of knowledge (Moll, 1990). Conscious awareness concepts or "everyday concepts" (Tharp and Gallimore,

1987) are concepts that are not systematic and may be learned outside of school settings. On the other hand, voluntary control of knowledge concepts is systematic or "schooled" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1987) and, therefore, may often happen in academic settings. Every day and schooled concepts while different are interconnected and interdependent (Moll, 1990). Each concept has the ability to mediate each other. In a sense, Vygotsky was proposing that students can use their everyday language as temporary scaffolds to mediate the learning of a new academic language and vice versa.

One of the most recognizable terms associated with Vygotsky (1978) is referred to as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). In education, the ZPD has been used to explain that it is helpful to assist a student today so that they can do it alone tomorrow (Tharp & Gallimore, 1987). For English language learners (ELL) this is particularly important because their current performance may be far less than their potential performance depending on their first and second language state (knowledge).

Figure 2 displays the genesis of performance capacity from novice to expert (Tharp & Gallimore, 1987, p. 185). In sociocultural theory the beginning capacity is assisted by experts like parents, teachers, and coaches. In addition, they

can be assisted by other resources such as linguistic knowledge, thinking strategies, and other funds of knowledge.

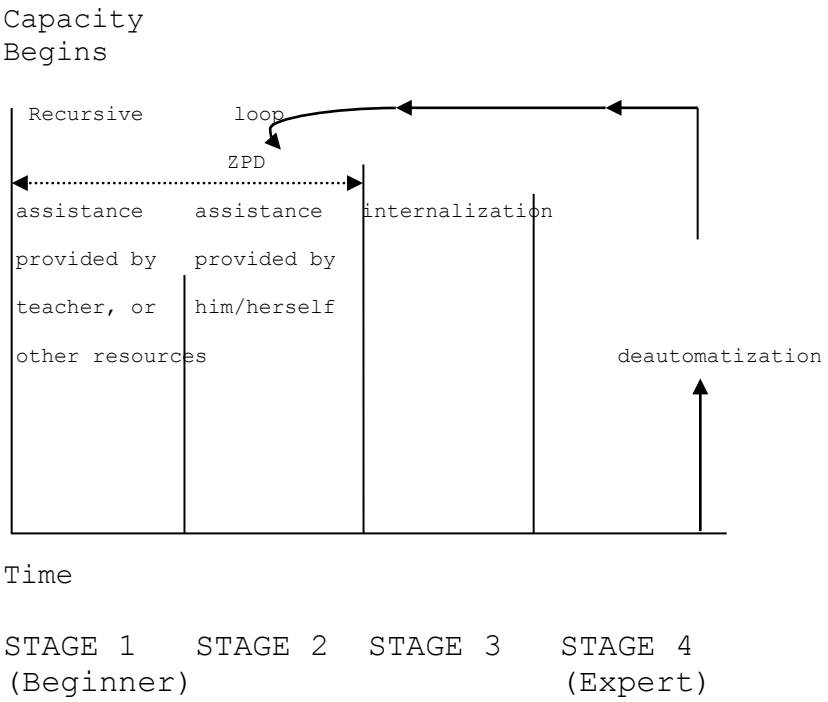


Figure 2. Four stages of the zone of proximal development.

The surfacing of the sociocultural perspective prompted researchers in education and anthropology to conduct studies about the social and cultural practices enacted in and out of schools. In one study, Heath (1983) in *Ways with Words* qualitatively documented two student communities to study the education and discourse practices at home and school. She found that, indeed, there were differences—which eventually caused misunderstandings that affected instruction and learning.

Since Heath (1983) and Tharp and Gallimore (1988), other researchers (e.g., Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lee, 2008; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 2001) have used the sociocultural

perspective to document the way a student's culture, linguistic knowledge, and personal background influence learning at home and school. All of these studies have concluded that it is not only necessary for teachers to focus on the student's cultural and linguistic knowledge, but it is essential, in order to provide effective instruction for mainstream and English language learners.

The sociocultural perspective has also influenced researchers' and educators' definition of literacy. In this perspective literacy is seen as a purposeful social activity, which can lead to different people defining it in multiple ways. Because of this, many have used the plural form literacies or multi-literacies.

> Literacies are social practices: ways of reading and writing and the using written texts that are bound up in social processes which locate individual actions within social and cultural processes . . . . Focusing on the plurality of literacies means recognizing the diversity of reading and writing practices and the different genres, styles, types of texts associated with various activities, domains or social identities. (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000, pp. 4-5)

The sociocultural perspective has also impacted teacher interaction between teacher and students in profound ways. Specifically, researchers (e.g., McIntyre, Kyle, & Moore, 2006; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Wells and Wells, 1989; Wickstrom, Patterson, & Araujo, 2010) have found that students and teachers who interact with one another co-construct a new understanding

of the activity at hand. For teachers this finding suggests that interaction with students is necessary for effective literacy instruction to take place. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (2001) found that teachers should always take the role of learners because students have a wealth of knowledge that can be harnessed to mediate learning.

Sociocultural Approaches to Professional Development

The sociocultural perspective encouraged professional developers to rethink information delivery and assessment. Today, more professional development includes interactive components between and among teachers to aid the co-construction of knowledge. In addition, professional development has become tailored to meet the specific needs of the attendees. For example, culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) provided teachers in-class group inquiries, web-based reading and activities that focused on their particular needs.

The Sociocultural Approach Influenced Writing Theory

The sociocultural perspective has influenced the theory of writing from a focus on products to a collaborative dialogic process of invention where writing is seen as artifacts-in-activity (Prior, 2005). Teachers are seen as co-authors, editors, and audience members who help students mediate their writing as needed by the student. In general, language learning in this perspective is seen as a public act between people and

written for people, instead of a private act separated by space and time.

This study is grounded in the sociocultural perspective because of its focus on the student's culture and its use as a mediation tool for learning. In classrooms this study observes the teacher's use of (student's/classroom/teacher's) culture as a mediation tool to support and extend student learning. In addition, the teachers use the student's *everyday* concepts to mediate learning for *schooled* concepts. In conclusion, sociocultural theory suggests that learning is an interactive social endeavor. There is a wealth of cultural and linguistic resources, which teachers can use in classrooms to improve literacy learning.

What Does ESL Instruction Offer to Address the Students' Needs?

The dominant approach in schools today is sheltered instruction (Northcutt & Watson, 1986) targeted for intermediate and advanced English proficiency students. For example in California, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) has been developed to aid teachers in making learning comprehensible so that students can participate in English mainstream classrooms. The purpose of sheltered instruction is to provide grade-appropriate, cognitively demanding core curriculum using sociocultural features including collaborative grouping, informal assessments, social/affective adjustment, and

first language modification. While many districts across the country have a form of sheltered instruction in place, the enactment of these programs varies depending on teacher preparation, students, and the training at their disposal. Conceptually, these programs have been good, however, most have been difficult to implement in real world applications. On the whole, many of the traditional programs have failed to properly meet the literacy needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students (Thomas & Collier, 1996). One of the teachers in this study used many of the features of sheltered instruction during classroom instruction. Specifically, she focused on providing students collaborative groupings and space for social and affective adjustment.

What Does Writing Instruction Offer to Address the Students' Needs?

Because writing and its instruction is one focus of this study, and because for second language learners writing is still instructed from a product rather than a meaning-making perspective, it is necessary to provide a brief history. Research in writing and its instruction is still in its infancy. Research in writing instruction from the sociocultural perspective can be traced to Emig (1971) who studied 12th graders to examine the process students go through as they write. She found that each student followed a different process as they

wrote. A few years later, Britton (1970) collected and examined 2000 student writing samples. He concluded that the student's writing process depended on genre. In the same year, Graves (1975) studied the writing processes of elementary students and found that in general, like high schools, elementary students' writing process depended on many factors. Collectively, their research suggested that teachers place less emphasis on the writing product and more emphasis on meaning making.

Research in writing instruction was at a standstill until the work of Flower and Hayes (1981) who studied the composing practices of university students. They found that less proficient writers had a limited repertoire of strategies at their disposal as they wrote. In Vygotskian terms, less proficient students tapped into fewer tools compared to the manner in which effective writers tapped into the tools at their disposal.

This work and the growing body of research of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) invigorated other researchers to look at writing. Today, writing is social, mediated by tools, and context-dependent (Vygotsky, 1978). It is dynamic (Short, Harste with Burke, 2002), transactive (Rosenblatt, 1978), and a tool that extends learning (e.g., Britton, 1970; Emig, 1971). Still, many teachers at the high school level still focus on the mechanics of writing (Perl, 1994).

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are all connected like tapestries, providing each other ongoing support. Writing is purposeful and developmental. It is communal because writing happens between people for the purpose of communicating to other groups or themselves. However, like reading, the use of writing has evolved since the 1960s.

Writing Seen as the Neglected R

Until the 1960s writing as a research focus was neglected. Writing instruction during this era was teacher-directed, grammar and vocabulary focused, and repetitive. Students for the most part were passive participants; writing was not used as a tool for learning, but rather, a tool for showing what they had learned. Students spent most of their time focused on vocabulary, spelling, and copying texts. Two reasons for this was 1) writing was not thought of as a learning tool, and 2) it was somewhat expensive to mass-produce literature because of the printing press's poor efficiency.

Writing Seen from a Product Perspective

Until the early 1970s writing was analyzed and studied predominantly through the student's product (output). Those who use writing as product as their framework are concerned with the text. They are concerned with studying grammar, spelling, and handwriting. Many researchers believe that all students go through the same cognitive process. In other words, they believe

that students' writing goes through predictable concrete stages and can therefore move students from one stage to the next by providing direct grammar instruction.

Another factor which added to supporting product theory was the fact that many agreed that when the time came to analyze the process inside the head, it would be easy to discover and put together (Freedman, Dyson, Flower & Chafe, 1987). During the writing as a product era many researchers adopted the theory of Piaget (1924) who believed that a child's learning depended strictly on their mental maturity (cognitive development). It would be nearly impossible for a child to acquire any learning until the child reached a set mental maturity. In other words teachers would wait until writers or readers were ready to acquire the skills. A good example is the reading readiness belief, which suggested that readers would be ready to acquire literacy skills after 6.6 years of age (Gesell, 1925).

Graves (1984) reported that 84% of all writing research from 1955-1972 was done by dissertation alone. This is important because it points to the lack of interest in writing by both faculty and teachers. More important is the fact that much of the research (68%) was focused on the teacher and not the student. Graves stated that teachers were so preoccupied with how they were doing as teachers that teachers neglected to study what it is that the students were writing. One of the reasons

why researchers concentrated on the product was due to the lack of understanding of how writing skills were acquired and developed (Freedman, Dyson, Flower & Chafe, 1987). Graduate students using positivistic quantitative methods, not qualitative ones, conducted most of the research during this era.

In 2011 writing as a product is still prevalent in public education, especially at the middle and high school level. This can be seen in district and local curriculums where academic writing takes place. At the state and national level writing as a product is the primary way of assessing student's writing ability because it provides a way to concretely assign a grade. From a sociocultural perspective, the central argument against writing as a product is the assumption that all students have the same linguistic needs; this assumption fails to meet the social and cultural ones. As teachers make decisions, they should think about the students' linguistic needs but also address the social and cultural needs.

Writing Seen as a Tool for Learning

James Britton (1970) is one of the earliest influential researchers who supported writing as a tool for learning. Unlike his predecessors, Britton argued that writing is used for multiple reasons—not just for copying, highlighting, or spelling. He said that writing was used for transactive,

aesthetic, and educational purposes. Until the 1960s his findings (1969) suggested that writing was used for educational purposes, neglecting aesthetic and transactive purposes. Emig (1971) supported these findings in ***Composing Practices of Twelfth Graders***. Emig observed and interviewed 8 high school students as they engaged in the writing process. Her findings indicated that all students were engaged and learning as they wrote. In addition, she found that students followed a process as they wrote. Students were brainstorming, drafting, editing, and publishing. Altogether, Emig found that students were learning as they wrote, were making meaning, and extending their learning.

Writing Seen as a Process

In the late 1970s a paradigm shift occurred; changing the focus from product to process. Freedman, Dyson, Flower and Chafe (1987) partly credit this shift to the realization by researchers that it was more difficult to describe what a good writer looks like than initially anticipated. Vygotsky's theory of ZPD (1978) was another integral component for the reasons why researchers experienced a shift in ideas of how a child learns. He suggested that learning takes place in a "zone of proximal development" through collaboration with teachers and peers. When applied to writing instruction, this indicated that a student's experience with the process of composing was just as integral as

the product. Hillocks (2006) stated that the research focus changed from a waiting game of cognitive development to a game of understanding how to develop the child's literacy development within the zone of proximal development.

There are three possible scenarios researchers think about when they think of process. The first is the process that takes place inside the head as students write; the second, the instructional process that happens inside the classroom as students write; and finally, the process that happens when writing connects schools and communities (Dyson, 1987). This review of literature will focus on process as it relates to what happens inside the writer's head as writing takes place.

In the early 1970s there was still very little research being done on the writing process. Graves (1971), Sawkins (1970), Holstein (1970) and Emig (1969) were four of the few researchers beginning to be concerned with children's in-the-head processes during writing rather than their products. Using a case study oriented approach, Graves studied the writing process of 7-year-old children to be able to characterize what it is that good writers do. He found that direct contact and extended observation of the child are necessary to reach conclusions relating to developmental variables (Graves, 1973, p. 222). The main idea of writing as a process was that writing

skills develop naturally. The more students write, the better writers they become.

It is important to note, however, that writers rarely, if ever, follow the same process from one piece of writing to the next. As writers move from novices to experts they acquire knowledge that provides additional background information when writing the next piece. However, the next writing piece will be different, depending on the topic, audience, and length; therefore, it becomes extremely difficult to replicate the same steps again and again. As the saying goes, "you never step into the same river twice."

Elbow (1994) believes that attention to in-the-head processing is central to developing children's writing. In *Writing without Teachers* (1973) he illustrates his belief of the importance of the process by using free writing to allow students to build confidence and build encouragement while writing with minimal interaction with teachers.

Elbow (1973) and Romano (1987) liken the writing process to cooking. Romano said that different writers use different ingredients and that, like the meals, the writing pieces are sometimes great and sometimes not so great. Similarly, writers use different tools to make their pieces depending on familiarity and availability.

In 1984, Hillocks published a meta-analysis of writing research for the time period covering from 1962 to 1983. The study focused on the advantages and disadvantages of product versus process. Using meta-analysis, a quantitative approach, he showed that neither product nor process made a difference in improving student writing. More importantly, as it relates to this review, he found that it was the student's environment created by the classroom teacher that was the most statistically significant in improving writing. An interesting area of research might be to study how the growth of individual students differs depending on their levels of interaction with the same environment.

Writing Seen as a Tool for Making Meaning

The history of writing over the past 60 years includes various theoretical frameworks (writing as a product, writing as a process, writing in context) and various methodological perspectives like ethnography, and discourse analysis. At this point it makes sense to recognize that there is merit to each theory and that in order to address the instructional needs and diversities of individual student writers it is important that all theories are advanced within a sociocultural framework that focuses on meaning-making at its center. Using this perspective, teachers and students can be writing collaborators, where the

instruction focuses inquiry and invention, and where the quality of learning is transformational for students and teachers.

All writing is about meaning making (Wells, 1985; Gee, 2005). As researchers or classroom teachers it is best to think of writing as a tool that builds a student's identity and well-being not as merely a product or a process. Writing incorporates the process, product and context components. We teach "students," not "writing." Each writer experiences their own process when they write. The process depends on the writer's context, experiences, knowledge and cognitive abilities at that particular point in time. Holdaway (1978) states that theory or practice of literacy, which fails to take into account the deep and powerful implications of language in the whole person, fails at the most fundamental level. Writing is social in nature; in fact, Holdaway articulates that literacy cannot be separated from the student's health and well-being. In sum, writing and its instruction needs to balance products and process to improve meaning-making especially for the new majority of students in public schools. Writing should focus on creating 21st century thinkers using 21st century tools. Teachers who use writing as a meaning-making tool are taking on the sociocultural approach.

How Do Teachers Make Decisions and How Might That Inform Professional Development for These Students' Teachers?

So, what makes an effective mainstream or English as a Second Language teacher? Is it their dispositions, characteristics, or friendliness (Anderson, 2003; Ryan, 1960)? Is it based on the way they interact with students in classroom settings (e.g., Anderson, 2003; Brophy & Good, 1986)? Does it depend on how well students perform on standardized testing as mandated by No Child Left Behind (2001)? These are questions researchers have been trying to answer. Shavelson (1973) argued that the effectiveness of teachers depends on the decisions they make—he said, "the basic teaching skill is decision-making" (Shavelson, 1973, p. 18). Effective teachers make effective decisions about their students' needs. Effective teachers consistently make educated decisions with the information at their disposal—this enables them to do their jobs better.

Good decisions are made by teachers who have extensive background knowledge (Kinder, 1978) about supporting their students. Without this knowledge decision-making becomes a daunting undertaking. Teachers require knowledge about their students, curricular mandates, local and national policies. Effective teachers have the means of obtaining the necessary information to make the best decision possible. While obtaining the education information is important, this information is not

sufficient to make good decisions (Anderson, 2003). Instructional decisions depend on many other factors including time, materials, curricular mandates, and practical and personal experiences.

Making Straightforward versus Problematic Decisions

Anderson (2003) suggests that decisions can be dichotomized between ***straightforward*** and ***problematic*** decisions. Straightforward decisions generally tend to be easy for teachers to make. Examples of these kinds of decisions can be: how to arrange a classroom, grading policy, when to contact the administration. Problematic decisions, on the other hand, are difficult, and may require additional information than available at the time. One example of this kind of decision can be how to motivate a student who is an English Language Learner. For the purposes of this study, an example is how to effectively provide literacy instruction for students who are English language learners. While the problem has clearly been found, solving the problem is a different story. Anderson (2003) points to other kinds of problematic decisions, all of which pertain to this study.

- What should I teach students in the limited time available?
- How much time should I spend on a particular unit?

- What should I do with students who are having serious difficulty learning?

In this study, both straightforward and problematic decisions are documented. In the end, it is the job of the teacher to decide what to do with the information. Another way to look at decision-making is to focus on the instructional decision teachers make to improve student achievement.

Types of Instructional Decisions Teachers Make

Teachers are constantly making instructional decisions about how to best support students. Nitko (1989) discusses four types of instructional decisions teachers make about their students: (1) placement decisions, (2) diagnostic decisions, (3) monitoring decisions, and (4) attainment decisions.

Making Placement Decisions

Each August, teachers make initial decisions about where to begin instruction. While some teachers have relied on past school performance and their particular objectives, Anderson (2003) argues that this is not sufficient. How the student performed last April is very different from how the student is performing today. For English language learners, this information may not be available or accurate depending on their past academic experiences. Second, what the curriculum mandates is different from what happens in the classroom (Westbury, 1989), especially for English language learners who are often

academically behind when compared to mainstream learners. In such cases, administering informal and semi-formal assessments may be necessary to obtain accurate information about what the student can actually do.

Making Diagnostic Decisions

Diagnostic decisions are those made by using information about what practices the student possesses or still needs. These decisions depend on what the teacher determines the student needs to be successful in class. For teachers, therefore, diagnostic decisions should be made on an individual basis, relying on the student's learning continuum not a comparison to other students (Anderson, 2003).

Making Attainment Decisions

Attainment decisions refer to decisions that are made about student achievement. In most cases, student attainment is measured using informal, semi-formal or formal assessments. For teachers, like diagnostic decisions, attainment decisions should be made on an individual basis, relying on the student's learning continuum not a comparison to other students (Anderson, 2003). From a sociocultural perspective, these decisions can be based on ongoing observational data.

Making Monitoring Decisions

Monitoring decisions are made through naturalistic observations. These informal observations are based on what the

teacher notices about the student. Nitko (1989, p. 450) says that teachers decide whether the student is attending to the decisions as they are happening, whether or not the instruction is working, and whether a change should happen about the kind of support the student needs.

Making Decisions Based on Naturalistic Observations

During classroom instruction teachers are constantly making decisions which impact student learning. On average it is believed that teachers make instructional decisions once every two minutes as they observe their students in class settings (Fogarty, Wang, Clark, & Creek, 1982). In other words, many of the decisions are based on naturalistic observations, which are immediate. While many of the observational decisions teachers make are effective (Anderson, 2003) for instructional purposes, some decisions may be based on misunderstandings (Anderson, 2003) between student and teacher, especially in English as a second language classroom settings. For example, a teacher may believe a student is lazy because they have not completed their writing assignment. As discussed earlier in sociocultural theory, it is important for teachers, at all levels, to be familiar with the cultural practices of their students to address the need to change their instructional course of action.

What Informs Teachers' Decision-Making?

Teachers are informed by many factors as they make instructional decisions about how to meet the needs of their students. These factors can be student or teacher related, organizational, instructional, professional, local or national. In ways, these are the factors teachers operate within as they provide instruction. These factors are sometimes broad or narrow depending on the teacher's particular situation. Regardless, these affordances affect the decision-making process for all teachers (Kinder, 1978).

In this study, one of the focuses is to document the factors that inform teachers as they make instructional decisions. Particular interest will be attended to documenting the way culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) informed the teachers' instructional decisions.

Decisions Informed by Personal Experiences

Teachers are informed by their personal experiences as they make decisions. In some cases, their decisions are based on their personal experience as teachers and learners. These experiences shape their theoretical framework about teaching and learning. For example, as stated earlier, writing instruction in the 1970s was product based. Much of the instruction focused on grammar, spelling and handwriting exercises. If the teacher had a positive experience with this approach, they would incorporate

grammar, spelling, and handwriting as often as possible into their lessons.

Decisions Informed by Professional Experiences

Teachers are informed by their professional experiences as they make decisions. Although a majority of the teachers hold traditional certificates in their disciplines, some have had multiple professional experiences prior to entering the classroom. This experience informs their decision-making about what's important, its application, and how it relates to student learning. For example, today the use of technology tools like Microsoft Word, MS PowerPoint, and others are the norm across all industries, however, there are some technology tools that are specific to certain industries.

Decisions Informed by Curricular Mandates

Teachers are informed by the national, state, and curriculum mandates as they make decisions. The passage of No Child Left Behind (2001) shifted the focus for teachers across the country from local expectations to state and national expectations based on scientifically based research. In many districts across the country curriculum and instructional goals are centralized at the district level, with little or no input from classroom teachers. For many teachers central office personnel plan yearlong curricular objectives for each subject area based on the state standards rather than student needs. In

some districts, the plans are so detailed that teachers are told what to be working on everyday. In those instances, teachers are "technicians" instead of professionals. Decisions about what to cover, and when to cover it are made at the district level, instead of at the student level. This shift, at times, creates a mismatch between the students' needs and the curricular mandates, which makes decision-making, very difficult for classroom teachers.

Decisions Informed by Political Climate and Affiliations

Teachers are informed by political expectations at the local, state, and national level as they make decisions. In Texas, this is recently shown with the 2010 Social Studies textbook adoption. The central debate is what students should learn about United States history. Even though many teacher groups have expressed their discontent with the final outcome, the decisions made about what students should know will be effective for the next 10 years based on the beliefs of a textbook chairperson.

Decisions Informed by Student Needs

Teachers are informed by their students' individual needs as they make decisions. To make decisions, teachers must gain perspective about the students' strengths and challenges through authentic assessment practices.

Decisions Informed by Professional Development

Teachers are informed by their professional development experiences as they make decisions. Teachers who take part in professional development build a deeper understanding of their subject, best practices, and delivery methods. In addition, professional development that provides teachers with effective learning communities is essential for improving professional development because of its reciprocity.

Recent Research on Decision-Making in Classroom Settings

In English as a second language (ESL) classrooms understanding how teachers make decisions is of great importance because of the many instructional approaches, the varying perspectives about how students acquire English, and the many strategies at the teachers' disposal While there has been extensive research on teacher decision-making in mainstream classrooms (e.g., Anderson, 2003; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1983) very little research has been conducted in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Woods, 1989). Cumming (1989/1991) investigated the conceptions pre-service teachers had about curriculum; two years later he investigated how experienced teachers approached curriculum planning. In 1989, Woods (1989) investigated the types of curriculum and lesson decisions that experienced teachers made.

Decision-Making Research Gap

The gap on teacher decision-making research coincides with the surfacing of No Child Left Behind (2001) because of its focus on standardized, objective-based assessments. In this perspective, teachers are judged by local, state and federal authorities based on student academic yearly performance as measured by their state's chosen measurement tool. Because of this action, teachers find themselves teaching to the needs of the measurement tool, not teaching to their students' short and long-term academic, career and life needs.

After the passing of NCLB (2001) school districts across the United States adapted to the mandate "every child will be reading and writing at grade level by 2013" by implementing centralized scripted curriculum across grades and content areas to ensure that students met and exceeded the standards set at the state and national level. In Texas, many school districts centralized instructional decisions about lessons, pacing, sequence and rigor to the point that teachers were provided and expected to adhere to daily lesson plans about what to cover with students. Teachers became technicians; the capacity of their decision-making was reduced to classroom management, attendance, and seating arrangements. Today, however, teachers are realizing that effective instruction for their students goes beyond the scripted curriculum at their disposal.

The Need to Study Decision-Making

The review of the literature on teacher decision-making suggests that decision-making is essential to teaching. Teachers regularly make both straightforward and problematic decisions. Instructionally, teachers make four types of decisions. Teachers' decisions, for the most part, take place during instruction as they observe their students; these decisions are naturalistic. As teachers make decisions, they may be helped by their personal and professional experiences, curricular mandates, and political considerations. Although there has been some research on decision-making in the classroom setting it is limited in both mainstream classes (e.g., Anderson, 2003; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1983) and multilingual classrooms (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Smith, 1996; Woods, 1989). Moreover, the research has focused on the students' performance, not the teachers' performance. There is some literature about decision-making in English as a Second Language classrooms; however, the participants were adults in university classes. Clearly there is a need to study teachers and their decision-making capabilities. Information about how teachers decide in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms is still needed.

Reframing Professional Development Needs

Because CMWI, a professional development advanced institute at a Texas site of NWP, is at the center of this study it is important to discuss its recent history. Although teacher professional development is a tool school districts use to sustain effective instruction in classrooms, many have argued that current models of professional development delivery, assessment, and follow up are insufficient to address the knowledge gaps of classroom teachers (e.g., Anders, Hoffman & Duffy, 2010; McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Munoz, & Beldon, 2010) and the wealth of expertise teachers possess, especially with instruction for English language learners. While there are many reasons for these insufficiencies, the primary reasons are teachers that (1) fail to see a connection between the professional development and their students' immediate needs (e.g., Guskey, 2002; McIntyre, Kyle, Chen, Munoz, & Beldon, 2010), (2) don't connect with the delivery format, or (3) knowledge gaps are too great to address in one or multiple sessions. Effective professional development requires an authentic, concentrated, and sustained effort by teachers, staff developers, and administrators. Darling-Hammond (1994, 1996) suggests that we learn from other counties like Japan and provide more time for teachers to learn from one another, visit

other classrooms, confer with students, and engage in activities that improve knowledge gaps.

> The most fundamental change required is to empower teachers, as we want them to empower students. We do not need to cram their heads with specific information and rules. Instead we should help them learn to inquire, to help seek connections between their chosen subject and other subjects, to give up the notion of teaching their subject for its own sake, and to inquire deeply into its place in human life broadly construed. (Noddings. 1992, p. 178)

Recently, communities of continuous inquiry and improvement or professional communities of learners (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree, & Fernandez, 1993) have emerged as possible solutions to the professional development dilemma. In this framework, teachers share responsibility about what are the knowledge gaps and how to best address them; and through collective creativity and vision teachers construct supportive environments where they can learn and act on their learning in productive ways (Hord, 1997). In sum, traditional professional development models have failed to close knowledge gaps. Sustained professional development that values the teacher's expertise and needs has emerged as a solution.

What is Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction (CMWI) and How Does it Attempt to Synthesize All of This?

To help teachers address the needs of mainstream students and English language learners and to help teachers exceed the standards put forth by the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), the

National Writing Project (NWP) funded a Texas local site writing project for a Local Site Research Initiative grant (LSRI V, 2007-2010), which developed CMWI. The core research team was composed of Texas university faculty with the assistance of doctoral students. The purpose of CMWI was to provide teachers with the opportunity for professional development, then to document "what worked" with their students. During the institute teachers were introduced to inquiry-based instruction, language acquisition theories, cultural practices, and writing strategies to help support their students as they wrote. CMWI's theoretical underpinnings were based on a socio-literate approach (Johns, 1997, p. 15), which supports students to "constantly be involved in research...and into strategies that employ in completing literacy tasks in specific situations."

Initially, the principles and practices of CMWI were drawn from four bodies of research: Communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1998); funds of knowledge (Moll, 1996); mediation (Vygotsky, 1978); and inquiry-based writing instruction (Wilhelm, 2007). At the end of the first advanced institute, teacher participants developed and refined a list of principles and practices to outline their decision-making. The 2007 CMWI principles and practices are listed here (Patterson, Wickstrom, Roberts, Araujo, & Hoki, 2010):

CMWI principles

- We learn best with opportunities for social interaction.
- We need opportunities to make strategic choices about what, when, or where we learn and how we read and write.
- We respond positively to purposeful, challenging tasks.
- We learn best when we can make connections to our lives.
- Our sense of identity influences our academic learning.
- We learn more easily and powerfully within a community of practice.
- We learn best (as individuals and as communities) through inquiry.
- We need to participate in dialogue and critique about significant issues (including our own learning strategies).

CMWI practices

- Inquire, write, and publish together
- Build on experiences outside and inside school
- Activate prior knowledge and provide common experiences
- Frame significant issues as springboards for inquiry
- Demonstrate strategies and resources for inquiry, reading, and writing
- Provide time for individual and shared investigation

- Respond and revise; provide feedback for revision and editing
- Publish and present findings in a variety of ways/media/genre to a range of real audiences
- Invite further inquiry and opportunities to apply what we have learned
- Assess learners' strengths & targets for growth; use assessment data to inform instruction
- Use state and district curricular frameworks and standards to guide instructional decisions

These CMWI practices are enacted from an inquiry stance and can be organized as a series of inquiry cycles (Appendix J) adapted from the work of Short, Harste, & Burke (1996). The overlapping phases or components of this recursive cycle include:

- Exploring (reading, prewriting, discussing, etc.)
- Focusing (framing issues and questions, etc.)
- Searching (gathering information from many sources)
- Synthesizing and Evaluating (putting the information together, making sense of it all)
- Creating, Publishing, and Presenting (composing a message, drafting, revising, editing, publishing/presenting to authentic audiences)

- Reflecting, Assessing, and Moving Forward (evaluating the product and the process of the inquiry; looking for new questions)

The preliminary themes of culturally mediated writing instruction (Patterson, Wickstrom, Araujo, & Hoki, 2010) suggested that teachers were deciding how to use four types of language and literacy resources to mediate the students' learning. These four resources include: (1) Social and Cultural (e.g., Edelsky, 2006; Gay, 2000; Gee, 2005; Gonzalez & Amanti, 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1993; Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rendon, Rivera, Gonzalez & Amanti, 1993; Moll & Greenburg, 1993), (2) Linguistic Knowledge (e.g., Collier, 1995, Cumming, 1979; Freeman, Freeman & Mercury, 2004; Fu, 2009; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007) (3) Thinking Strategies (e.g., Dyson & Freeman, 1991; Goodman & Marek, 1996; Olson & Land, 2007), and (4) Academic Content Knowledge (e.g., Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2000; Lee, 2007; Freeman & Freeman, 2008).

The findings (Wickstrom, Patterson, & Araujo, 2010, p. 64) suggested that more research was needed about how teachers and their students think about academic writing and about how the dimensions of literacy (sociocultural, linguistic, thinking strategies, academic content) connect to changes in student writing, which is one of the foci of this study.

Examples of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1972) include opportunities for student choice, culturally responsive teaching, use of media and technology, and social interaction. CMWI participants encouraged the use of the students' linguistic knowledge. For example, they allowed the use of native language, talked about the similarities and differences between native and English, and encouraged bi-literacy. They frequently used mentor texts, anchor charts, and think-aloud as thinking scaffolds. Finally, teachers bridged everyday knowledge to academic content through the use of short and long term inquiry cycles.

The themes provided some evidence that teachers who use: (1) empathy and caring (e.g., John-Steiner, 2000; Leve & Wenger, 1991; Noddings, 2005; Smith, 1998; Goodman & Marek, 1996): (2) made meaningful connections (e.g., Bomer, 1995; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Wells, 2007); (3) took an inquiry stance (e.g., Burke, 2919; Dewey, 1923; Short, Burke & Harste, 1996; Wilhelm, 2007); (4) provided authentic work (e.g., Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Smith, 1988; Wink, 2010); and (5) gave appropriate mediation (e.g., John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Larkin, 2001; Rogoff, 1990; Smith, 1988; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978) provided some effective instructional options for their students.

In sum, the literacy field will benefit from more detailed, finely grained descriptions of teacher decision-making to support writing development in mainstream and English as Second Language classrooms so that the literacy field can improve its support for teachers through professional development.

Summary

The review of the literature suggests that it is true that linguistically and culturally diverse students continue to increase in schools. Instructional approaches that may have worked many years ago have failed to meet the language and literacy needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. The sociocultural perspective, as presented by Vygotsky (1978), provides teachers a framework to help all students. The literature indicates that teachers who adopt a sociocultural perspective will enable and nurture their students' culture and mediate to meet the students' needs. CMWI provides teachers a professional development opportunity to gain perspective about how to meet their instructional needs. In sum, the review of the literature suggests that we need more detailed, finely grained descriptions of teacher decision-making to support writing development so that we can improve our support for teachers through professional development; therefore, the literature supports addressing the research questions of this study.

In the next chapter, I describe the design and methodology for the study.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative, naturalistic study was to compare the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) in an English as a second language (ESL) classroom and in a mainstream classroom and particularly to describe the nature of teacher decision-making during language arts instruction.

The qualitative, naturalistic methodology employed is presented in this chapter to investigate the guiding research questions:

(1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom?

(2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in these high school classrooms during English language arts instruction?

The study focused on the decision-making teachers engaged in during writing instruction in a mainstream classroom and in an ESL classroom. This chapter provides a description of the methods used in this research study. Those procedures are presented under the headings: (a) Design and Methodology, (b) Trustworthiness, (c) Site Selection, (d) Teacher Participant Selection, (e) Setting and Context, (f) Tools of inquiry, (g) Role of the Researcher, (h) Data Collection, and (i) Data Analysis.

Design and Methodology

This study presents two naturalistic case studies that document the enactment of CMWI and the nature of decision-making in adolescent English language arts classrooms. The qualitative data collected was analyzed using a grounded theory methodology (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this method, theory is derived from the data collected not vice-versa.

Rationale for Naturalistic Case Study and Grounded Theory

There exists a wide variety of reasons why case studies are used in educational research settings. For the purpose of this study they are used because it helps to answer questions that are targeted to a limited number of events, ten or less, and how these events relate to each other. Additionally, case studies are used as a way to provide a contextual analysis of the teachers and the relationship to their decision-making process during classroom writing instruction. Yin (1984) says that "case study design is effective when it is used to investigate: 1) a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; 2) when the boundary between the phenomenon being studied and the context where the phenomenon are being studied are not clearly articulated; 3) and where multiple sources of evidence are used to study the problem at hand (p. 84)."

Case studies are effective for the purposes of teacher decision-making because it requires "an intensive, holistic

description of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 16). This descriptive, non-experimental design (Merriam, 1988) provides a way to further understand the complex issue of teacher decision-making in order to extend and strengthen what is already known. Further, there exists no clear boundary of when the decision takes place, the reasons behind the decision, and which factors (teacher, students, curriculum, and local/state/national) act as an influence as teachers make their decisions, so therefore, the descriptive approach is appropriate for this study.

Next, multiple sources of evidence were collected to study the decision-making process. The sources collected include teacher demographic data sheets, semi-structured interviews, audio and written observations, lesson plans, and instructional artifacts. Further detail is presented in the data sources section below.

From the data (transcripts of interviews and field notes from observations) codes were generated after several readings. Codes are words (e.g., inquiry) or phrases (e.g., meaningful connections) that allowed the key points of the study to emerge. The codes with similar patterns were then grouped into similar concepts. Concepts are collections of codes with similar contexts (e.g., I wish I could do more). The concepts with similar patterns were then grouped to form similar categories.

Categories are collections of concepts with similar concepts (e.g., Affordances). These categories were shared with the teacher participants prior to developing the themes. The themes are explanations that emerged from the categories to answer the two questions that guided this study. More information is provided in the data analysis section. Table 1 provides an overview of the grounded theory stages.

Table 1

Grounded Theory Stages

Stages
Codes
Concepts
Categories
Themes

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) for this study was accomplished in several ways. First, I hold insider's knowledge with the district, school, teachers and students because of the work I have completed with 9 National Writing Project teacher consultants (TCs). In addition, I have been involved with these teachers through conferences and professional development presentations, and at local, and national meetings relating to writing. Also, I have been part of the local NWP siteteam where I have had a chance to interact both at a professional and

personal level with many of the potential participants of this study. Because I have gone through a research cycle with all of the potential participants with CMWI a sense of trust was established.

Because there were several different sources of data and methods, triangulation was established. The data sources used to triangulate included observations, questionnaires and student samples.

Talks with colleagues took place during the analysis and interpretation portion of this study. Specifically, I consulted with two other doctoral students, who had been members of the writing project initiative, but who had not been involved with the advanced institute or taken any part in the study.

Site Selection

This study was conducted in a ninth grade mainstream classroom and an eleventh grade ESL classroom during spring 2010. The classrooms included mainstream and English as a Second Language students.

The teacher participants were chosen based on their experience with the National Writing Project and their training with CMWI. Both participants willingly agreed to participate in this study.

Gaining Access to Site

Gaining access to the site required obtaining district approval from two school district central offices. Approval was granted for the researcher to document how teachers implement the principles and practices of CMWI from the summer 2007 through the spring 2013. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was granted.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this study was submitted and accepted at the school, district, and university level accordingly in April 2010. Teacher and student consent forms were distributed and collected from all participants.

Gaining Access to Participants

There exists a professional relationship with the two participants through membership in both the CMWI project team and the Texas National Writing Project local site. Prior to submitting a proposal in accordance to the Institutional Review Board Committee guidelines at a university in the state of Texas, I obtained written permission from district central offices. Once I obtained permission, invitations were e-mailed to potential teachers. Once the teachers accepted invitations, I obtained consent forms from all participants. Copies of the permissions and blank consent forms can be found in the appendix.

Purposive Sampling of Teacher Participants

For the purposes of this study a criterion sampling technique (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) was used when choosing the two participants. The teachers selected for this study met the following criteria: 1) participation in the Texas National Writing Project local site Summer Invitational Institute, 2) membership in the CMWI project team, 3) utilization of CMWI principles and practices, 4) teach English language arts to mainstream and English language learners, and 5) be a member of the local National Writing Project site. The participants who volunteered for this study were high school teachers located in school districts surrounding the north Texas area. The two teachers were female, White with English as both their native language and their primary language of instruction. Their educational level ranges from an earned master of education to pursuing a master of education. For the purposes of confidentiality, teachers are referred to with pseudonyms.

Description of the Participants

Table 2 provides a list of the characteristics of the two teachers. The teachers consisted of 2 females. The students participants in one class consisted of 9 English language learners; there were 20 mainstream learners in the second class.

Table 2

Teacher Characteristics

Name	Gender	Native Language	Ethnicity	Educational Level	Grade Level	Class Observed	# of Years Teaching	Years Teaching at this level
Carmen	F	E	Anglo	Masters	11th	English III	7-10	2
Janet	F	E	Anglo	Bachelors	9th	Language arts	11-15	11

Carmen in the Mainstream Classroom

Carmen is a secondary thirty-something English language arts teacher, who teaches American literature. She has taught at the middle and secondary grades. Her professional development activities focus on technology. She uses a writing workshop approach. Students spent most of the time inquiring, reading and writing about the day's topic. Carmen was attentive to student needs, frequently engaging with students individually and collectively. During the classroom observation period she focused on two long-term instructional units. Using a mix of formative assessments students became motivated and took responsibility for their learning. She mediated learning using technology, conversations, and interactive writing activities.

Janet in the ESL Classroom

Janet is a secondary English language arts teacher, with an emphasis on English language learners. Her professional development activities focus on writing with linguistically and culturally diverse students. During instruction her teaching

style followed the writing workshop approach. As she delivered instruction, she embraced the sociocultural resources around her. During the observation she focused on three long-term instructional units. She was often torn between delivering the mandated curriculum and the realities of her classroom. Preparing students for the mainstream classroom guided the case-by-case, moment-by-moment, decisions she made. Using reflective journaling, observations, writing prompts, and conversations Janet mediated challenging academic material.

Research Setting

The study took place in two adolescent classrooms, at two different high schools in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. These particular classrooms were chosen because of the researcher's long-term insider's knowledge with the site and with the teacher participants. These established relationships allowed for high accessibility, understanding in the patterned ways of interacting with the staff and the teachers, and an established rapport with the school administrators. For the purposes of confidentiality, classrooms and schools are referred to with pseudonyms. The teachers who volunteered for this study predetermined the potential sites. Table 3 provides a list of the characteristics of two of the schools.

Table 3

School Characteristics

Characteristics	School 1	School 2
Students Economically Disadvantaged (Percentage)	23	21
Racial Diversity (Percentage)		
Hispanic	23	24
Anglo	62	52
Black	11	14
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	10
Native American	<1	<1
Limited English Proficient Students (Percentage)	6	4
Student Population	1,661	1,944
Expenditure Per Pupil ($)	7,840	6,091

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2007-2008

Carmen's High School

Carmen's high school is located in a midsize city in north Texas. It serves about 2,200 students in Grades 9 through 12 many of whom are typically middle and upper class students from Anglo, Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and Native American backgrounds. At Carmen's High School, as displayed in Table 4, the students identify themselves as 61% Anglo, 24% Hispanic/Latino, 11% Black, and 4% Asian.

In 2008-2009, Carmen's high school was well below the state average for limited English proficiency students. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reports that Carmen's High School English Language Learner population was less than 6%.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported that in 2007-2008 the student subgroups for limited English proficiency, as reported in Table 5, was 6% at Carmen's high school compared to 17% for the state average. The economically disadvantaged population was 23% compared to 55% for the state average. In other words, Carmen's high school students who are limited English proficient is half compared to other schools in the state of Texas.

Table 4

Student Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Carmen's High (%)	State Average (%)
White, not Hispanic	61	34
Hispanic	24	48
Black, not Hispanic	11	14
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<1	<1

Source: NCES, 2008-2009

Table 5

Student Subgroups

	Carmen's High (%)	State Average (%)
Economically disadvantaged	23	55
Special education	10	10
Gifted/talented students	12	8
Limited English proficient	6	17

Source: TX Education Agency, 2007-2008

Janet's High School

Janet's high school is located in a suburban city in north Texas. Currently, it serves about 1,500 students many of whom are White, Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and Native American. At Janet's High School, as reported in Table 6, the students identify themselves as: 85% Anglo, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 4% Black, and 4% Asian.

In 2010, Janet's High School was well below the state average for limited English proficiency students. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reports that Janet's high school English language learner population was less than 1%.

The *Texas Education Agency* (TEA) reported that in 2007-2008 the student subgroups for limited English proficiency, as reported in Table 7, was 1% at Janet's High School compared to 17% for the state average. The economically disadvantaged population was 3% compared to 55% for the state average. In other words, Janet's high school students are more economically stable than many surrounding schools and districts. While the characteristics of Janet's high school were more affluent than many of the urban surrounding schools, this school provided an opportunity to work within an emerging ESL campus and understand more about the enactment of CMWI.

Table 6

Student Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Janet's High (%)	State Average (%)
White, not Hispanic	85	34
Hispanic	8	48
Black, not Hispanic	4	14
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	<1	<1

Source: NCES, 2008-2009

Table 7

Student Subgroups

	Janet's High (%)	State Average (%)
Economically disadvantaged	3	55
Special education	9	10
Gifted/talented students	16	8
Limited English proficient	<1	17

Source: TX Education Agency, 2007-2008

Tools of Inquiry

Role of the Researcher

My role for this study was as a participant observer. For the purposes of this study I observed the teachers during interactions with the students to better describe the process teachers engage in during literacy instruction. I am a proponent that cultural beliefs and meanings are socially constructed,

situated, not fixed, negotiated, multiple voiced and participatory (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999, p. 50).

Types of Documentation

The study uses several types of documentation. Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) identified five different types of data sources that are important to case studies. They include interviews, artifacts, direct and participant observations, archival data, and documents to help triangulate the data.

Table 8 presents the data sources and their relation to the question raised by this case study.

Table 8

Data Sources and Research Questions

	Pre entry Interview	Teacher Surveys	Classroom Observations	Teacher Interviews
How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom?	X	X	X	X
What is the nature of teacher decision-making in these high school classrooms during English language arts instruction?	X	X	X	X

Table design adapted from 2009 CMWI Comprehensive Report

Pre-Entry Interview

During the pre-entry phase a semi-structured interview took place with the two classroom teachers prior to the observations. The purpose of this interview was to obtain background information from teachers, and also to become acclimated to the school environment, classroom settings, teacher's preferred times, inquiry cycle and to schedule visits during the general phase. The pre entry interviews took place during the first week of February 2010.

Teacher Data Forms

During the culturally mediated writing instruction advanced institute, teachers completed a Teacher Data Form (Appendix F), which asked them to document their educational attainment, professional experience, and writing attitudes. The purpose of this data form was to gather information about teacher characteristics and writing attitudes. In addition to the Teacher Data Form, participants filled out a Teacher Knowledge and Practice Questionnaire (Appendix G). The purpose of this questionnaire was to obtain information about the teacher decision-making priorities.

Teacher Interviews

Semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted periodically after classroom observations when time permitted. The purpose of teacher interviews was to discuss in more detail

what was observed, ask questions that come up as the observations happened, and discuss points where decisions were made during classroom instruction for the purposes of writing.

Classroom Observations

Periodic classroom observations took place in the spring 2010 semester. The number and duration classroom observations depended on the teachers' schedules and school district calendars. Typically, most classroom observations ranged between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. Janet's class met daily 8:30-10:20 am, Carmen's class, on the other hand met twice a week from 12:30 - 2:15 pm with lunch in the middle of the period. The data set includes a total of 13 observations (18 hours) in Janet's class and 7 observations (approximately 11 hours) in Carmen's class. The observations were documented using Microsoft Word and a digital recorder. Tables 9 and 10 display the observation dates and a brief activity description for each teacher participant.

Table 9

Carmen's Observations

Carmen	Activity
February 12, 2010	Class walkthrough, No students present
February 19, 2010	Reading and Discussion of As I Lay Dying
February 27, 2010	TAKS practice/Storyboarding/*Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951)
March 12, 2010	Satire Writing/ Lesson on Hyphens and Dashes
March 23, 2010	*Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951)/Vocabulary Development
March 25, 2010	Book Talk/Sharing and Rating Books
April 19, 2010	*Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008)
April 21, 2010	*Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) /Poetry

Table 10

Janet's Observations

Janet	Activity
January 19, 2010	Book leveling/Editing for Author's Chair
January 26, 2010	*House on Mango Street*/Talks about Power
February 2, 2010	*House on Mango Street*/ Talks about Homework
February 9, 2010	House prompt response/Students write
February 25, 2010	SOAPS Exercise
March 1, 2010	Kevin and Adeline's writing
March 2, 2010	TAKS practice/ A Horse for Matthew
March 12, 2010	TELPAS/One-on-one Conferences
March 23, 2010	TELPAS/Greek Heroes Project
April 15, 2010	Greek Heroes/*The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996)
April 16, 2010	*The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) discussion for Book # 1
April 22, 2010	*The Odyssey* (Homer, 8th Century B.C.) chapters 9-10
May 7, 2010	*The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) chapters 18-27

Timeline of the Study

This study is an analysis of the archival data collected in the spring 2010. Table 11 provides a timeline of the steps from the approval process through the study's defense.

Prior to filing for IRB approval, school district endorsements were obtained from school principals and administrative district offices in January 2010. Soon thereafter, consent and assent forms (Appendixes A, B, and C), IRB application, and supporting documentation were submitted to the University of North Texas for official approval (Appendix D). Participants were formally contacted by e-mail and invited to participate in February (Appendix E). Of the volunteers, two teachers were chosen to participate in the study. Criteria for choosing the participants were dependent on the grades they taught, whether the students were English Learners or not, the class times, participation in the advanced institute, and proximity to the university. The teacher participants taught 9th grade ELL or 11th grade mainstream learners.

Table 11

Timeline of the Study

Date	Activity
December 2009	Obtained schools and
January 2010	districts approval
February 2010	Submitted for IRB approval
February 2010	Sent out invitations to
February 2010	teachers
March 2010	Initial walkthrough
June 1, 2010	Began observations
December 2010	Obtained IRB approval
December 2010	Exited the field
January 2011	Read, coded, analyzed data
February 2011	Read, coded, analyzed data
February 2011	Debriefed with peers
February 2011	Developed themes
February 2011	Debriefed with peers
February 2011	Wrote case studies
March 2011	Member checked with peers
August 2011	Defend dissertation

As the observations took place from January to May 2010, interviews were conducted and transcribed.

After conducting member checks and debriefing with peers, case studies were written and presented to participating teachers for feedback.

Data Reduction

Ongoing data analysis took place throughout the data collection phase. As stated earlier, constant comparative methodology was used during this study (Glaser, 1992). Data were collected for two teachers and their students. Data were organized by participant, day of observation, observation, interview, student assignment, or teacher directed assignment.

CMWI created a way for teacher participant data to relate to each other. This connection played a critical role during the organization and analysis of the data. The following section describes the analysis and the procedures during the data collection, analysis during and after the data collection, coding, inter-coder reliability, and its procedures.

Data Analysis during the Data Collection

Analysis of the data during the collection phase consisted of transcribing, note-taking, and beginning to notice patterns of teacher's decision-making and the enactment of CMWI. This process involved arranging the data, searching for patterns and recording them according to each teacher participant in the study. Ultimately, these emerging codes were included in the final coding dictionary (Appendix L).

The patterns, codes, and themes that were emerging were similar for both Carmen and Janet. The initial emerging codes for both teachers provided guidance as the next phase of analysis took place.

Data Analysis after Data Collection

The method of analysis for this study is qualitative. Before the first reading, the first step was to transcribe the audio tapes and notes using Microsoft Word. Then, I read through the observations and interviews to get an understanding of the data. With multiple readings of the data, four sets of codes/categories were identified: 1) The CMWI instructional patterns; 2) affordances; 3) decision-making; and 4) instructional events.

For the first reading an etic perspective was used. That is to say, that the focus was to understand the classroom by comparing the instructional patterns and seeking to explain the relations between CMWI and the teachers. Some of these codes and concepts were meaningless for the teachers.

For the second reading and third reading an emic perspective was used using inductive analysis. That is to say, that the focus was to understand how the teachers saw their classrooms. The goal with these readings was to deepen an understanding of how these teachers created affordances for

students and how they made decisions to support language and literacy instruction.

At the end of these readings, I was not aware how these codes and categories would help me answer the research questions.

First Reading—Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction

The first reading focused on highlighting the statements that pertain to CMWI. To do this, codes were used that emerged from a study that was conducted during the 2008-2009 academic years as seen in Table 12. This study documented the patterns of implementation of CMWI in in middle and high school settings. Researchers observed, collected, analyzed, and reported their findings.

This previous study of CMWI classrooms pointed to five instructional patterns that seemed to mediate students' progress in writing. These patterns were used as etic codes in the initial reading of the transcripts from Carmen's and Janet's classes. The themes that emerged from the data were: (1) empathy and caring relationships, (2) making meaningful connections, (3) authentic tasks, (4) taking an inquiry stance, (5) providing just enough support.

Table 12

CMWI Codes

CMWI Theme	Code	Possible Categories
Empathy and Caring	EC	Caring, Mutual Engagement, Joint Enterprise as Writers
Meaningful Connections	MC	Students' lives, literature, to each other
Authentic Tasks	AT	Guide instruction, meaningful to students, use funds of knowledge
Inquiry Stance	IS	Students answer own questions
Just Enough Support	JES	Knew when to step in and back off

These patterns are further identified with a full description an example of each from Carmen and Janet's observations. Table 13 displays examples of each of the themes from Carmen's and Janet's observations.

Table 13

CMWI Description and Examples

Code	Description
Empathy and Caring (EC)	Documented evidence of teacher empathy and caring through verbal, written, or other interaction.
Carmen Example:	"Why don't you seem to care about your grades? It is very apparent that you have not tried very hard" (Carmen/Observation/75-76/March 23, 2010)
Janet Example:	"I get so sad that their [my students'] sense of discovery is lost in high school." (Janet/Interview/7-8/February 9, 2010)
	"School does not have to be boring. I look at [my students] sense of discovery; I want them to have that, even if it's in high school. I want to create a classroom where they can ask questions. Literature can be used to make sense of their worlds." (Janet/Interview/4-6/February 9, 2010)
Meaningful Connections (MC)	Teacher's comments and actions provide help and feedback for students as they engage in literacy practices (Reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and/or representing).
Carmen Example:	"I am trying to figure out how to do the middle ground thing" … So I've decided to read a book they will enjoy" Carmen/Int/62-66/March 23, 2010)
	Juan: "What beliefs do you hold for kids?"
Janet Example:	"To help kids understand that literature can be used to make sense of the world. It is not just a requirement of class, but can be used for meaning making." (Janet/Interview/9-10/February 9, 2010)
Authentic Tasks (AT)	Teacher provides students tasks that provide opportunity for choice, use of funds of knowledge, and encourages for students to capitalize on individual background interests, strengths, etc.

(*table continues*)

Table 13 (*continued*)

Code	Description
Carmen Example:	Students presented a soundtrack of songs that related to the themes they saw in Catcher in The Rye. (Carmen/Observation/March 23, 2010)
Janet Example:	"Today we are going to start with Author's Chair, yesterday everyone but M shared their stories" (Janet/Observation/1/February 9, 2010) Students wrote an essay "Why Learning English is Hard" (Janet/Student Writing/May 2010)
Inquiry Stance (IS)	Teachers provide students opportunity to answer their own essential/burning questions.
Carmen Example:	"Your assignment will be to research a topic you are interested in from *The Hunger Games* Themes" Carmen/Assignment Sheet/April 19, 2010
Janet Example:	"Here's the thing, what we're doing is we have our [essential] question, what we are looking for [on the internet] is for traits of Greek heroes." (Janet/Observation/19/March 23, 2010)
Just Enough Support (JES)	Teachers provide students personal/interpersonal, content knowledge/development, meaning making, linguistic, and academic support.
Carmen Example:	Carmen explains whole group, then walks around to answer questions from individual students. Carmen/Observation/Ongoing Mandy: "How do you make something stand out? I know I can use all capital letters, but what can I do that's correct?" Carmen: "You can actually use dashes to emphasize!" Carmen/Observation/31-33/March 12, 2010

(*table continues*)

Table 13 (*continued*)

Code	Description
Janet Example:	Anna: "I wrote down Odysseus and the thought of the wind. She kicked them out." Jane: "She [The God of Wind] kicked them out, but there was something else that happened." Anna: (blank stare) Jane: "Who got kicked out of the island by the God of Wind? Did he [Odysseus] take something though?" Kyle: "A sack?" Janet: "OK, what's in the sack?" Anna: "A sack of wind!" Janet: "You see you knew it!" (Janet/Observation/75-83/April 22, 2010) Janet: "See you put that in quotations marks, but that is not what the book says! It has to be word for word. Write it word for word, don't edit. You put in parentheses what you want to say. Therefore it tells the reader what YOU want to say. That's a little trick you can use. Don't put what you infer, write it directly from the story. We are truly playing a game here, when you change it, even if it's minor, it can tip the scale. Don't add anything that is not in the text." (Janet/Observation/69-73/February 25, 2010)

Second Reading—Instructional Affordances

The second reading focused on highlighting statements that pertain to the resources and affordances. The context, teacher, student, instructional approach, and text codes emerged from an inductive analysis of the transcripts. Table 14 provides a list of the affordance codes with the code and possible category.

Table 15 offers a list of the affordance codes with a short description, and examples from Carmen’s and Janet’s classrooms.

Table 14

Affordance Codes

Affordance	Code	Possible Categories
Context AFDC	CAFDC	Classroom, School, home aid
Teacher AFDC	TAFDC	Knowledge, Tools, Professional development Planning, Motivation
Student AFDC	SAFDC	Funds of knowledge Skills Background, Culture Choice Opinion
Instruction AFDC	IAFDC	Curriculum Strategic Plan Leadership Focus
Text AFDC	TAFDC	Theme Genre Setting Plot Academic

Table 15

Affordance Description and Examples

Code	Description
Context Affordance (CAFDC)	Affordances in the environment that allows the student to perform an action.
Carmen Example:	Carmen: "Today we are going to do what is called a fishbowl or an inside/outside circle." Carmen/Observation/42/March 23, 2010)
Janet Example:	Janet: "[OK, guys], put your desks in a circle." (Janet/Observation/35-36/April 22, 2010)
Teacher Affordances (TAFDC)	Affordances in the teacher that allows the teacher/student to perform an action.
Carmen Example:	Have you done the fishbowl or inside outside circle before? Yes (this morning). What I learned was that my students in the inside circles were really contributing, but those on the outside circle did not. For this I class I created a rubric to give them more ownership. Carmen/Observation/42/March 23, 2010)
Janet Example:	Janet: [*The House on Mango Street*]"It's so rich and thick of ideas. There's so much you can teach from this book. You can use it for the figurative language." (Janet/Inter/13-16/February 9, 2010)
Student Affordances (SAFDC)	Affordances in the student that allows the teacher/student to perform an action.

(*table continues*)

Table 15 (*continued*)

Code	Description
Carmen Example:	Carmen: "Today you will be selling the book to the rest of the class" Jan: I read the book The Great Escape. It's not what you'd expect it to be-that's why I gave it a 7. It could have used more substance and detail. (Carmen/Observation/1-18/March 25, 2010)
Janet Example:	Maria: "One of my friends read this book last year…She liked it." [student was familiar with ***House on Mango Street***] (Janet/Observation/96-97/January 26, 2010) Janet: "Alright Maria. What are you thinking? What's your head telling you? How do you know that? That is part of our job explaining how you know that. Maria: [points to the paper to a part of the passage] Janet:" What about this that makes it important? What did he have a hard time with? Maria: America Janet: "What about his family?" Maria: "Yeah" Janet: "There were many little things that he went through. What was the hardest? This guy has got a lot of things going on in his life. And he got through them all, but, out of all those things, that he had to get through learning English was the hardest. Try to play with that." [Janet is trying to help students' affordance of learning a new language to connect to the book] (Janet/Observation/82-95/February 25, 2010)

(*table continues*)

Table 15 (*continued*)

Code	Description
Instructional Affordances (IAFDC)	Affordances in the instructions that allows the teacher/student to perform an action.
Carmen Example:	This part in the book [As I Lay Dying} reminds me of The Green Mile [movie]. What about it? About shaving the hair? Why do we shave the hair? So he doesn't catch on fire? Carmen/Observations/18-21/February 19, 2010) Juan: What supports have you provided Kevin to be successful?
Janet Example:	Janet: [opportunities to speak] to build his confidence, and opportunities to write. (Janet/Interview/7-13/March 1, 2010) Janet: "I think {writing} and the writing process, [writing] conferences. They love conferences. I can get through the kids that signup for conferences. I'll have conferences over and over." (Janet/Interview/26-27/March 1, 2010)
Text Affordance (TXAFDC)	Affordances in the text that allows the teacher/student to perform an action.
Carmen Example:	[Teacher used themes in *The Hunger Games* to connect to themes students wanted to explore which the book allowed for. e.g., Survival] "Gale and I were thrown together by a mutual need to survive." (Collins, 2008, p. 136)
Janet Example:	Janet: "[*The House on Mango Street*] is so rich and thick of ideas." [Janet was referring to the themes (immigration/adolescence/power) that students could connect to as they read] Janet/Interview/13-14/February 9, 2010)

Third Reading—Teacher Decision-Making

The third reading focused on highlighting statements that pertain to the nature of teacher decision-making and the kinds of support teachers provide to the students. An initial list of codes was generated from the list of statements. In the next step, the codes were categorized into factors, which influenced the decisions (i.e., professional development, students, district, and school) and kinds of support (sociocultural, linguistic, thinking strategies, and academic content). The initial categories from the analysis generated questions to follow up with teachers during one-on-one conversations and emails.

Table 16 provides a list of the decision-making codes with the code and possible category. Table 17 offers a list of the decision codes with a short description, and examples from Carmen and Janet's classrooms.

Table 16

Decision-Making Codes

Decision-making	Code	Possible Categories
Decision-making (DM)	DM	Course of Action
Decisions-sociocultural (DMSC)	DMSC	Funds of knowledge Skills Background Culture
Decisions-Linguistic Knowledge (DMLG)	DMLG	Semantic Vocabulary Pragmatic Grapho-phonemic
Decisions-thinking strategies (DMTH)	DMTH	Prediction Analysis Summarization Synthesis Self-Monitoring
Decisions-Academic Content (DMAC)	DMAC	TEKS TAKS CCRS District & Campus Curriculum

Table 17

Decision-Making Description and Examples

Code	Description
Decision Making (DM)	Evidence of teacher decision-making related to instruction.
Carmen Example:	Juan: Who decided to read *The Catcher in the Rye*? The curriculum. (Carmen/Interview/72-73/March 23, 2010)
Janet Example:	Janet: "Today we are going to do a state of where everyone is." [Janet decided to do a leveling activity to find out their reading level] (Janet/Observation/18-19/January 19, 2010)
Decision-making Sociocultural (DMSC)	Evidence of teacher decision-making related to instruction based on students' sociocultural resources.
Carmen Example:	Carmen: "I read this one article that our kids now, our society now shares everything with everybody, they put everything on Facebook, If they have a problem they say, "Guys I don't know what to do?" and *Catcher in the Rye* is so different than that. Holden is so different than that. I think all generations before [Facebook] understand that because we have not been able to do that. (Carmen/Interview/81-84/March 23, 2010)
Janet Example:	Janet: "[We are going to work together to study the characteristics of Greek Heroes] "Each group will be the expert for the rest of the class." (Carmen/Observation/37-38/April 16, 2010)
Decision-making Linguistic Knowledge (DMLG)	Evidence of teacher decision-making related to instruction based on students' linguistic knowledge.

(*table continues*)

Table 17 (*continued*)

Code	Description
Carmen Example:	Carmen: "This book [*The Hunger Games*] is so [linguistically] easy; it's like a middle school reader. But the thing about it is that all students are contributing. (Carmen/Observation/33-37/April 21, 2010)
Janet Example:	Janet: "I am so happy that I have the flexibility to modify the content, I can only imagine if I had to follow through with what I started yesterday!" [After reading *The Odyssey* for the first time Janet realized that the book was linguistically challenging for the student and had to modify her lesson]. (Carmen/Observation/10-11/March 23, 2010) Janet: "Does anybody know what foreshadow means?" Kyle: "He is getting ready to say something." (Janet/Observation/57/March 2, 2010)
Decision-making Thinking Strategies (DMTH)	Evidence of teacher decision-making related to instruction based on students' thinking strategies.
Carmen Example:	The tone in chapters one through three in the Seam is very different than the tone in chapters four through six in the capitol…Why do you think Collins wrote them this way? (Carmen/Observation/15-19/April 21, 2010)
Janet Example:	[Janet is using the S.O.A.P.S. strategy to helps students answer questions about what they have been reading] Janet: "You are doing literacy analysis." "Ok this is just a tool, we get to use different [thinking] tools, OK, somebody might use a plier to get a nail out others might use a hammer."

(*table continues*)

Table 17 (*continued*)

Code	Description
Decision-making Academic Content (DMAC)	Evidence of teacher decision-making related to instruction based on students' academic content knowledge.
Carmen Example:	"Today, we are going to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between Walt Whitman and Emily Dickenson using or class book" (Carmen/Observation/42-45/April 21, 2010)
Janet Example:	Today students are continuing to take the practice test A Horse For Matthew. (Janet's Notebook/Observation/1-2/March 2, 2010) [In the next examples students are getting ready for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Test] Janet: If they ask you to focus on paragraph 5/6 focus on paragraph 5/6 do not think about [the overall] story. Janet: "Victor do not over think, focus on what's in the story![do not infer, stop using your background knowledge]

Table 18 provides a list of the event codes with the code and possible category. These event codes were used to group the teacher's instructional units which helped to analyze the nature of decision-making. In Carmen's case, there were two long-term instructional units this study captures [*The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) and *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008)]. In Janet's case, there were three long-term units this study captures (*The House on Mango Street*, Texas State Assessment practice, and *The Odyssey*).

Table 18

Events of the Observations

Events	Code	Possible Categories
Interview	IN	Talking to Teacher
Observation	OBS	In class, hallway
Mainstream	CARMEN	Monolingual Class
ESL Class	JANET	ESL Class
Catcher in the Rye	CITR	Book Discussion Quiz Assignment Decisions Assessments
The Hunger Games	Hunger	Book Discussion Quiz Assignment Decisions Assessments
The House on Mango Street	Mango	Book Discussion Assignment Decisions Assessments
Texas Assessment Practice	TAKS	Book Discussion Quiz Assignment Decisions Assessments

(*table continues*)

Table 18 (*continued*)

Events	Code	Possible Categories
The Odyssey	ODY	Book Discussion Quiz Assignment Decisions Assessments

Conceptualizing the Decision-Making Framework

Once this process was complete a set of hypotheses (themes) emerged. These themes are discussed in detail in the next chapter. Once the themes were identified, the next step was to validate the interpretations with information from the observations and interviews. The themes are supported directly from observational data, and verbatim quotes from teacher participants.

The next step in the process was to write the instructional portraits for the teacher participants with a focus on CMWI's instructional patterns using the codes and categories that emerged from the reading of the transcripts. The purpose of these portraits was to provide a context for how the teachers enacted CMWI in their particular situation. The next step was to compare the enactment of CMWI in a mainstream and English as a Second Language classroom. More information is provided in Chapter 5.

The final step was to build The Learning Zone Decision-Making Conceptual Heuristic as a way to analyze the nature of decision-making in these two classrooms. More information about the model and examples of its use can be found in Chapter 5.

See Table 19 for a timeline of how the data were collected and analyzed for this study.

Table 19

Data Collection and Analysis Timeline

Date	Activity
December 2010	Read, code, analyze data
January 2011	Read, code, analyze data
January 2011	Debrief with peers
February 2011	Develop themes
February 2011	Debrief with peers
February 2011	Write case studies
February 2011	Member check with peers
August 2011	Defend Dissertation

Summary

This chapter provided the research design and methodology. This includes rationale for case studies and grounded theory, timeline of the study, site selection, participant selection, gaining access to the sites, gaining access to the teachers,

confidentiality, data collection procedures, data analysis and procedures, credibility and summary.

In the next chapter, I provide Carmen’s and Janet’s instructional portraits.

CHAPTER IV

INSTRUCTIONAL PORTRAITS: CARMEN AND JANET AT WORK

The purpose of this naturalistic study was to compare the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) and describe the instructional decisions of two high school teachers during English language arts instruction in a mainstream and English as a second language (ESL) classroom. The following two questions guided this study:

(1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom?

(2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in these high school classrooms during English language arts instruction?

The purpose of this chapter is to present the ways that Carmen and Janet enacted CMWI in their classrooms, to serve as the context for findings that answer the two research questions. Carmen's and Janet's portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis, 1997) are a way to "deepen the conversation" (Geertz, 1973, p. 29) and "present an authentic and convincing narrative" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 12) to help frame the school, teacher, personal, and historic contexts. The portraits are compilations from observations, interviews, and student comments. By viewing these teachers through the portraits the reader will gain a deeper understanding of CMWI.

CMWI in a Mainstream High School English Language Arts Classroom

Carmen is a young English language arts teacher. She lives about 20 minutes south of Carmen's high school with her husband James and baby Mia. Carmen describes herself as a down-to-earth mom who is learning to navigate the expectations of high school students. Academically, she holds a Master of Education and currently, is pursuing a Master of Library Sciences.

Carmen joined the faculty at Carmen's high school two years ago. Previously, she had been a middle school teacher for 4 years at the 5th and 6th grade levels serving English language learners at a neighboring district about 25 minutes south. The population she serves is middle-class Anglo students who are different than the Mexican American population she worked with during her middle grades tenure.

Carmen's 9th grade teaching assignment is a course titled American Literature which provides students' exposure to American authors from the 1900s to the present. This is her first year teaching 11th graders so Carmen has been experimenting with how to mediate the curriculum. The district provides Carmen a time line to follow with ten text choices. She says everyone follows a time line, but she strays from it frequently.

Carmen is a professional development junkie. She frequently attends workshops to learn about the latest ideas to better serve the students. In the spring of 2007, Carmen attended CMWI,

a professional development workshop provided by a local site of the National Writing Project. She was invited because she was serving English language learners and was interested in finding innovative ways to serve her struggling students. During the institute, Carmen often shared her experiences and provided the group with ideas about how to integrate technology to aid reading and writing activities.

In the year reported for this study, she no longer works with English language learners. Since English language learners were initially the focus of the work of CMWI, Carmen is adamant that CMWI is not happening in her classroom. From her perspective, CMWI is a program for English language learners, not a stance to inform teaching.

> I don't have any ELL in my class this year. I don't know if you will see anything! (Carmen/Initial Walkthrough/Notebook/February 12, 2010)

Nevertheless, Carmen, without realizing it, enacts CMWI's instructional patterns on a daily basis. She provides assignments that are authentic for students (e.g., music soundtrack). She focuses on choosing assignments that are meaningful and that address the students' particular needs (e.g., documentary and "significant issue" research project). She is aware of the surroundings and the resources at her disposal. Carmen takes more and more professional risks. Her

calculated risk-taking is rewarded by the students' commitment to do great work (i.e., *The Hunger Games*, Collins, 2008).

Carmen believes her students are capable readers and writers. During the study she used the students' sociocultural knowledge (e.g., *Hunger Games* research project), linguistic knowledge (i.e., Dear Abby Letters), academic content knowledge (e.g., *Hunger Games* research project), and thinking strategies to enhance the learning experience for students.

Carmen shares a similar background with the students. She has firsthand knowledge of their experiences. She deliberately plans lessons and chooses books that take advantage of the students' sociocultural, linguistic, and academic resources. For example, Carmen knows her students watch reality television and care deeply about social issues (e.g., hunger, war, and love) so they read *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008).

> [I've decided to] read *The Hunger Games* so that they can see you can actually get into a book.
> (Carmen/Interview/64/March 23, 2010)

She intentionally plans for students to make documentary movies and presentations so that they can explore and present their findings about their significant issues to the rest of the class. War especially is an issue students often speak about because of what they see and hear about Iraq and Afghanistan in the news.

> Your movie should be well-researched and should include ***your opinion*** and discuss how it pertains to ***The Hunger Games***. (Carmen/Assignment Sheet Directions/April 2010)

Teaching so close to two universities Carmen knows students expect to be prepared for college. She prepares them by providing numerous activities that range from essay, satire, reality, and script writing. During the observation, students are excited to take part in a workshop writing approach.

> I am not really a good writer, but have enjoyed some of the writing assignments you have given us. The fairy-tale one was my favorite. I like how you let us write it in slang that was fun. The only book I liked this year was ***The Hunger Games*** (Collins, 2008). I don't know why, but maybe it was because the kids were kind of like us, the kids have a little rebel in all of them. (Jeff/Final Essay/May 24, 2010)

Because the class deals with American authors she immerses them in critical conversations about Salinger and Faulkner.

Carmen knows the context and uses it effectively to mediate learning. She is familiar with her school and the resources it provides for the students. For example, during ***The Hunger Games*** research project and the video documentary project Carmen encourages the students to go out and use their environment. Students interviewed peers, administrators and security personnel to answer their question.

Carmen is learning to take advantage of the text resources. With ***The Hunger Games*** (Collins, 2008) Carmen effectively uses

its themes (e.g., reality television, war, and friendship) to connect with the students.

As Carmen became more knowledgeable of the student's strengths and needs, it was evident the students saw her as empathetic and caring.

> I saw you try to persuade your students into doing their work, and turning it in on time, like we were supposed to, but what can you do we are teenagers!...I enjoyed the fact that you tried to come to terms after break, you tried to build relationships with us, which a lot of the teachers don't do. I didn't experience this kind of relationship with you in 9th grade. (John/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010).

Carmen encourages students to take an inquiry stance about significant topics. Initially, the students' inquiries focused on the daily assignments (e.g., satire writing, and comic strip writing). At the end of the study Carmen's inquiry projects connected to the day's assignment and also to global issues and perspectives. For example, she assigned a research project and a documentary where students had the latitude to choose their own topics. The inquiries went beyond facts. The students made concrete connections to the assignment.

> I think you tried to take our suggestions and tried to make the class what we wanted. (Mandy/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)

> This has been my best English class in high school. (Carol/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)

> Learning didn't feel all too bad. (Sid/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)

When the students presented the findings Carmen said that she was impressed with the documentaries and decided it to do it again for the next inquiry project.

Carmen offers students authentic opportunities for individual and collective learning. Initially, Carmen just focused on providing students authentic learning opportunities. As the study progressed, she adapted her stance to make sure that the authentic assignments students were doing directly connected to the overall themes. For example, Carmen initially asked students to make a satire about any event in their lives. This activity did not have any connections to *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). With *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) the assignments were both authentic and directly connected to the themes of the book.

The Role of culturally mediated writing instruction in Carmen's Classroom "I don't have any ELLs in my class"

Carmen was adamant that CMWI was not happening in her classroom. From her perspective, CMWI was a program for English language learners not a stance to inform teaching.

> I don't have any ELL in my class this year, I don't know if you will see anything! (Carmen/Initial Walkthrough/Notebook/February 12, 2010)

However, as the observations progressed the data revealed that Carmen took the role of a caring and empathetic teacher;

encouraged students to make meaningful connections; provided ways to make assignments authentic; stepped back more often; and allowed students to take the lead and ask for help when they needed it.

Of importance to this study were the different ways Carmen used the many resources at her disposal to mediate student learning.

Empathy and Caring "I'm gonna try the middle ground thing"

> I am trying to figure out how to do the middle ground thing… So I've decided to read a book they will enjoy. Carmen/Interview/62-66/March 23, 2010)

The students' perception of the level of empathy and caring in Carmen's classroom changed from the beginning of the study to the end of the study. At first, students assumed that Carmen did not care about their needs because she rarely adapted the lessons to meet their suggestions; however, as the semester progressed Carmen incorporated more of the readings and activities the students suggested. Consequently, this shift improved the engagement of the students and the ownership they felt about their academic work. Students were appreciative that Carmen tried to get to know them as people not just as students and commented that this action made them feel respected compared to what they had communicated earlier in the academic year.

Meaningful Connections "OK, so you know they hated it"

> Ok, so you know they hated the book, but they hated the book (CITR) and didn't read it… [They] cannot understand why anyone would like it. (Carmen/1-9/March 23, 2010)

> They hated *The Crucible*; they thought *A Lesson before Dying* was mediocre… (Carmen/Interview/64/March 23, 2010)

These comments point to Carmen's frustration with the lack of meaningful connections the students were making during the fall and at the beginning of the spring 2010 semester. Carmen said she wished she had not waited until the end of *The Catcher* unit to gauge her students' interest, she asserted this would change with the next instructional unit.

> [I've decided to] read *The Hunger Games* so that they can see you can actually get into a book. (Carmen/Interview/64/March 23, 2010)

From this point forward, Carmen often made connections between curricular content and personal interests. She conducted more informal talks to gauge whether the activities were meaningful. Students were often provided choices about what books to read, how to present their learning, and the structure of the classroom. As a result, students saw connections between what they were reading in class and their lives outside of school. As the excerpts make public, Carmen adapted the practices she had previously used with middle school students to mediate the needs of the high school students.

Authentic Tasks "I'll show them that we can learn and have fun too"

> I've decided to choose a book that they will select and enjoy. (Carmen/Interview/65/March 23, 2010)

Carmen's actions and tasks changed right before the end of *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) unit. When she noticed her students' dissatisfaction with the book, she attended to her concerns by allowing students to create a music soundtrack, which connected to her students' love for music. Each student presented their soundtrack to the class and talked about where each song would fit in the narrative. Students joked, laughed, and made direct connections to the book. This action provided the students a chance to read the book with lenses that were authentic for them.

During *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), Carmen asked students to create a 3-5 minute group documentary about a topic (e.g., war, hunger, adolescence) of their choice and an individual research presentation (e.g., bulimia, violence on television) that related to the theme. These two authentic tasks allowed students to inquire about what they were interested in and at the same time insured that the students read the book.

Inquiry Stance "Go out and explore"

> Your movie should be well-researched and should include *your opinion* and discuss how it pertains to *The Hunger Games*. (Carmen/Assignment Sheet Directions/April 2010)

At the start of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) the class engaged in activities that asked them to discuss what they were learning with Carmen. Seldom, were students asked to go out and explore. This changed when Carmen asked her students to make the documentary. The students self-selected teams of 2 and 3, selected a theme, wrote a script, borrowed a flip camera, and went out to explore. For a week, students interviewed students, teachers, security personnel, and administrators for their documentary.

The students seemed excited and competitive as they presented their videos to the rest of the class. Many of the groups expressed how much they had worked on their videos "outside of school" and seemed very pleased with the final products. Many of the groups asked Carmen to play them for the other classes.

Carmen noticed that students enjoyed this activity, so she asked for each student to go out and explore "on their own" one topic of their choice and present their findings to the rest of the class for a final grade. The enthusiasm continued to the end of the instructional unit. Taking an inquiry stance for both Carmen and the students changed the dynamics in the classroom. Students felt empowered and saw their questions as meaningful.

Just Enough Support "I am here, if you need me"

Carmen stepped aside more often after *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). Before, Carmen "walked around" asking students if they needed help. Often, students said they did not need it, and then would ask their neighbor, "What does she want us to do?" After *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) Carmen "walked around" and also waited for students to ask for help.

What Carmen found was that just-enough support for her students was providing a general overview of the activity, providing ways of using the tools at their disposal, answering questions about ways of presenting the data, and sometimes becoming the subject of their projects.

Carmen provided just-enough support by stepping aside more often than she had previously done. The conversations with students turned from "I don't have any questions" to "Ms. what do you think about…"

Finding: CMWI Patterns in Carmen's Classroom

While Carmen was not deliberately using CMWI's principles and practices, she was thinking of ways to create an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and prolonged engagement through authentic and meaningful tasks. Taking an inquiry stance and allowing students to ask for help when they needed it changed the dynamics of how the students felt about what they were learning. These actions allowed students to learn at their own pace.

The Role of Resources and Affordances in Carmen's Classroom

Carmen initially did not take advantage of the resources (i.e., context, student, teacher, and text) at her disposal. Her focus was on the academic content of the text. As the study progressed, she became more comfortable using the context and the students' resources as affordances to mediate learning. This change was prompted because of the lack of engagement and effort she saw from her students at the beginning of the spring semester.

Context Affordances "Let's try something new"

Carmen took advantage of the district, school, and classroom resources. In general, the district she works for is very supportive of teachers and innovative ways of supporting student learning. At the school, Carmen felt empowered by her administration (Carmen/Initial Walkthrough/February 23, 2010) and sensed she had the freedom to modify the curriculum to meet the students' needs. At the classroom level, she shared her classroom with another teacher; however, they had been working together for a year so they had an established relationship. Carmen felt free to shift desks, use the technology, and write on the board, et cetera, as long as everything was back in its place at the end of the class period.

Instructionally, Carmen used several combinations of the workshop approach throughout the observation. In this approach,

Carmen initially conducted a mini-lesson pertaining to a new topic, met individually or in small groups during a large block of time to apply the new learning, and then gathered as a whole class to discuss and engage in conversations about what they learned that day. When students were not working on ***The Hunger Games*** (Collins, 2008) activities they normally read their self-selected books, then Carmen conducted a mini-lesson (i.e., Satires, Authors Craft, Point of View) and walked around the class asking students about the status of their writing for either short or long-term pieces. For the next twenty minutes students wrote, then shared their writing the rest of the class (i.e., Dear Abby Letters, Write a Satire Comic Strip). While the students had to show understanding of the concept, they knew mastery was developmental. Taking this approach allowed them to build self-confidence and risk taking. "Let's try something" was a phrase I often heard.

> I love this class, not because it was easy to make a passing grade, but because of the atmosphere. I feel like I can relax in this classroom, just as long as I pay attention, participate, and write a little bit. From ***The Crucible*** all the way to ***The Hunger Games*** (Collins, 2008), we have read it all and it's been fun. (Student/Final Essay/May 24, 2010)

Carmen's style and manner for communicating with students depended on what she noticed from them. She provided directions orally to the whole class, and then walked around to answer students' individual questions about the task. Each task or

assignment had a paper trail with explicit directions about the expectations. Carmen always posted the daily agenda on the white board so that students knew the expectations from the beginning of class. Outside class, students often emailed their questions and assignments directly to her school email. The school grading system facilitated ongoing access to student grades, so they knew where they stood in terms of their academic performance.

The classroom climate was changing at the beginning of the study. This was evident in the ongoing rearrangement of seating, the shifting of work on the walls, the dialogue about the books on the desks, the conversations in the halls between students, and the overt and covert ways students communicated with each other.

Carmen's actions influenced community building. During the introductory walk-through she said "I am really enjoying my time with these students". The classroom arrangements were dynamic depending on the assignment and the amount of interaction. At times the class was set up in groups of 4 (Carmen/Notes/February 23, 2010), sometimes the class was set up in a U-shape, and other times the class was arranged in inside and outside groups.

Carmen's language always took the collective approach. This allowed students to get a variety of opinions, thoughts, and interactions.

> I like how most times we could speak our thoughts over a subject; it never failed to get the job done. (Student/Final Essay/May 24, 2010)

Carmen used technology as an integral part of her classroom instruction. Whenever possible the class utilized technology to write, record a video, create a soundtrack, use PowerPoint, watch a video, or conduct academic research. Because Carmen had a high comfort level with technology and its applications to student literacy learning, digital writing was a primary part of Carmen's classroom. Carmen's class engaged in several daily and project-based time-sensitive learning opportunities. The daily assignments were directly connected to the day's mini-lesson; daily assignments included author's style, satire writing, and American poetry. Projects included *The Hunger Games* research project and *Catcher in the Rye* soundtrack.

Teacher Affordances "I need them to be engaged first"

Carmen has four years of middle school experience in a suburban school and 1 and half years of high school experience in an affluent suburban setting (Carmen/Questionnaire/Summer 2007). At the middle school, her students were most often linguistically and culturally diverse (Carmen/Questionnaire/Summer 2007). At Carmen's High School, the majority of the students (90%, Texas Education Agency 2008) are English only and gifted and talented students. During the beginning of the study it was apparent that most of the students

were not connecting to the texts, assignments, or conversations. Carmen felt her job for the spring semester was to keep them engaged in the work.

> Carmen: I need to get them to read the book first, before they can do anything else. I need to get them engaged first.
>
> Juan: So it's about engagement?
>
> Carmen: Yes, I think so, right now it is. (Carmen/Interview/23-26/March 23, 2010)

Instead of seeing her students' lack of engagement as a way to give up, Carmen saw it as a professional challenge. To address this challenge, she changed her teaching approach from curriculum-centered to a student-choice-curriculum-meeting approach. This change allowed her the flexibility to meet the students' needs and curricular demands simultaneously.

Student Affordances "Miss, we didn't get to see this side of you in 9th grade"

At Carmen's High School, just a few students came from different sociocultural backgrounds. Two students possessed a native language other than English. The makeup of the class in percentages was 70% White, 15% African American, 10% Mexican American, and 5% Puerto Rican. Carmen reported during the first walkthrough that this was typical.

Carmen provided meta-linguistic support by helping students transact everyday/playground languages with school language.

This support was particularly helpful for many of her struggling students who were frequently absent.

In an effort to learn what worked Carmen asked students to write about their experience in English III as part of an end of the year essay. Using the students' self-reported experiences from this year might help her capitalize on her students resources earlier the following academic year. She felt that she had missed many opportunities this year so she wanted to improve for next year.

Next are seven students' excerpts that capture what they thought about Carmen's teaching. The students' responses suggest that they appreciated the effort Carmen had put at the end, but acknowledged that there were some concerns about the constant testing. Many of the students agreed with Mandy's response—they appreciated how Carmen had shared a lot of herself with them.

> Miss. Carmen being yourself made me enjoy this class a lot more. (Mandy/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)
>
> I think you tried to take our suggestions and tried to make the class what we wanted. (Mandy/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)
>
> This has been my best English class in high School. (Carol/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)
>
> [At the beginning] I didn't like the feel that we had a test about everything. (Jackie/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)
>
> We appreciate that you can take our sense of humor. (Sam/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)

> Learning didn't feel all too bad. (Sid/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)

> I saw you try to persuade your students into doing their work, and turning it in on time, like we were supposed to, but what can you do we are teenagers!...I enjoyed the fact that you tried to come to terms after break, you tried to build relationships with us, which a lot of the teachers don't do. I didn't experience this kind of relationship with you in 9th grade. (John/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)

> In the beginning of the year we read books which I had some trouble with because of its contents, but in the end the Hunger games made up for it… (Jim/Final Lit Test/May 24, 2010)

Text Affordances "This book is so easy!"

> This book is so easy, it's like a middle school reader. (Carmen/Observation/33/April 21, 2010)

Carmen felt that *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) was not as academically challenging as the other books she had assigned: *The Crucible* (Miller, 1951), *As I Lay Dying* (Faulkner, 1930), and *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). However, most of the students had not read the "academically challenging" books anyway. Instead, Carmen thought that the students were skimming them the night before or just reading Spark Notes to pass the test. During the debriefing sessions Carmen was very concerned about the lack of reading.

While *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) was not yet seen as a classic it provided Carmen with many resources. Its themes and characters directly connected to the students' lives and out of school experiences.

Finding: Affordances in Carmen's Classroom

Finding how to take advantage of all the resources takes time. It was clear that Carmen knew the resources the school and district provided and was using them as affordances when appropriate. This was evident as she spoke to students and other faculty. At the onset, it was less clear how she used the resources the students and the text provided. As the study went along, she recognized the students' and texts' resources and worked diligently to mediate them into affordances.

The Role of Decision-making to Support Students in Carmen's Classroom

Carmen's initial decisions focused on meeting the curriculum demands. As she became more familiar with the students, her decisions integrated more of the students' suggestions while still keeping in mind the district's curriculum. She no longer just thought about meeting the curriculum, rather, her decisions focused on how she could use the students sociocultural, linguistic, and thinking resources to meet the curricular demands. The students noticed this shift; in response, they too increased their level of contribution. A class that at first seemed fragmented shifted to one where transactive learning took place.

Decision-Making: The Role of the Students' Sociocultural Resources "They've talked me into it"

> They've talked me into [reading] it [*The Hunger Games*]. (Carmen/Interview/April 23, 2010)

Carmen was beginning to incorporate the students' ideas about what to read as the class book when the study began. As the study continued she drew her last lessons and instructional support more from her students' cultural background, knowledge and expertise than from just the district curriculum. *Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) and *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) were two student-selected books. *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) was especially apt for Carmen's students because of its characters, setting, and themes. Two students read the second book on their own and were excited about the third installment and the movie opening in the summer.

> I am not really a good writer, but have enjoyed some of the writing assignments you have given us. The fairy-tale one was my favorite. I like how you let us write it in slang that was fun. The only book I liked this year was *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). I don't know why, but maybe it was because the kids were kind of like us, the kids have a little rebel in all of them. (Jeff/Final Essay/May 24, 2010)

Above Jeff validates Carmen's decision to read a book that was similar to the students' sociocultural experiences.

> Carmen: I read this one article that our kids now, our society now shares everything with everybody, they put everything on Facebook, If they have a problem they say, "Guys I don't know what to do?" and *Catcher in the Rye* is

> so different than that. Holden is so different than that. I think all generations before [Facebook] understand that because we have not been able to do that.
> (Carmen/Interview/81-84/March 23, 2010)

After the disappointing result of *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951), Carmen wanted to understand why students did not connect to the book. In searching for answers Carmen asked colleagues, teachers, former professors, and read extensively to find reasons why students did not connect to the book. The decision to search for answers about why students did not connect to *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) informed Carmen as to how to choose the next class book.

Decision-Making: The Role of the Students' Linguistic Knowledge "Transmogrify"

Concept and vocabulary development was central to Carmen's teaching. As she introduced a new concept or word she used teaching tools students were familiar with like wikis, online videos, newspaper videos and magazine articles.

> This book [*The Hunger Games*] is so [linguistically] easy; it's like a middle school reader.
>
> But the thing about it is that all students are contributing.
> (Carmen/Observation/33-37/April 21, 2010)

Carmen decided to provide students' mini-lessons to introduce new vocabulary like "transmogrify," "invariable," "shrewd," and "frivolous" to prepare them for the many college entrance exams students were expecting to take during the spring

(Carmen/observation/12-19/March 23, 2010). Analyzing an Author's Style (Carmen/Handout#3) was a mini-lesson that provided students with terms they might use when writing about the author's purpose, diction, imagery, narrative structure, figurative language, syntax, and fluency. The grammar activities were done aloud as a class activity.

Carmen used the students' linguistic knowledge to write. Students enjoyed writing Dear Abby columns as if they were a character in *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). They also wrote comic strips about a make believe event, where they were encouraged to use their out of school language.

Decision-Making: The Role of the Students' Thinking Strategies "Why do you think?"

Carmen introduced thinking strategies to support the students' ability to pass the Texas state assessment—*Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills* (TAKS). However, she only made explicit references to the exam and strategies for answering questions two weeks prior to the assessment.

Decision-Making: The Role of the Students' Academic Content "The district but"

Carmen conveyed that the district provided her a list of 10 possible books but then it was her choice about which book to read with students.

The district provided Carmen a class textbook. However, she decided when and how to use it with students. During the study, she used it to cover information she believed *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) was missing (e.g., poetry).

> Today, we are going to compare and contrast the similarities and differences between Walt Whitman and Emily Dickenson using our class book.
> (Carmen/Observation/42-45/April 21, 2010)

Finding: Decision-Making in Carmen's Classroom

The hierarchy of importance in Carmen's decision-making changed during the study because of what she noticed from the students. At first, her decisions centered on how to best deliver and assess the academic content, however, as the year progressed she thought more about how to incorporate the students' sociocultural resources to keep them engaged. This action resulted in the students seeing learning as meaningful and meeting to their needs.

CMWI in an English as a Second Language Classroom

Janet possesses 11 years of experience as an English language arts teacher. She lives about 10 minutes north of Janet's High School with husband John. Janet describes herself as a compassionate person who sees her students as extended family members. Currently, she is pursuing a Master of Education at a local university. She is due to graduate in May 2011.

Janet hopes to become an adjunct university instructor when she retires. She says she wants to work with undergraduate students to share her 10 years of experience working with English language learners.

Janet is the only ESL teacher in the school. Her teaching assignment includes courses, "English Speakers of Other Languages I" and "English Speakers of Other Languages II." The purpose of the two courses is to transition Limited English Proficient students to mainstream classrooms in two years. Students' language proficiency varies from conversational to intermediate English. One of Janet's purposes for students is for them to embrace their heritages and use the literature they encounter in school to mediate their worlds.

> School does not have to be boring. I look at [my students] sense of discovery; I want them to have that, even if it's in high school. I want to create a classroom where they can ask questions. Literature can be used to make sense of their worlds. (Janet/Interview/4-6/February 9, 2010)

> My goal for this class, as it is the goal for all education, is to help you [students] learn how to become better thinkers. Literature (the reading and writing we do in class) is merely a tool we use to help reach that goal. If you leave this class and you are able to understand how literature helps you to make your world a better place, then I have succeeded magnificently in reaching the goal. (Janet/Midterm Exam Opening Statement/1-5/April 23, 2010)

Like Carmen, Janet too is a professional development junkie. Janet says that since she does not share the students' heritages and background she attends various state and national

conferences, reads widely, and enrolls in graduate education courses. In the spring 2007, a local university sent out a flyer to recruit teachers who wanted to join a 3-day professional development institute called CMWI. She decided to join this community of learners to hear what other teachers were doing to help ESL students.

During this 3-day institute she met 9 teachers who became listening ears for questions about how to address difficult situations, curriculum implementations, or simply someone who understood her situation. Janet reports that the ongoing CMWI support and mutual conversations allow Janet to identify with a group of educators who are in the same situation. This realization provides Janet a sense of agency because other teachers recognize her expertise. She says she no longer feels alone.

After the 2007 CMWI institute, Janet felt reaffirmed about the instructional risk-taking she was doing to meet the students' needs. Instead of delivering content knowledge to students and then asking them to show what they learn through formal assessments, Janet provides opportunities for students to frame their learning in an authentic way so they can present it for real audiences. For example, one of the culminating projects students engaged in after the institute was about immigration. With this project students were able to "show" their expertise

about the issue and make evident and explicit their findings to the principal using digital storytelling. The inquiry cycles students immerse in are:

1. Do the characters in *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 2008) take or give their power?
2. How does literature help you become a better thinker?
3. How do you define heroes?
4. Why is learning English hard?

Janet wants to incorporate more inquiry-based approaches. However, she is finding it difficult to find appropriate academic resources that incorporate the students' knowledge and the mandated objectives.

> If it were up to me, I would not be teaching *The Odyssey (Homer, trans. 1996)*, I would be teaching something else the last eight weeks of school and we would do some kind of inquiry project where they would come up with the question. (Janet/Interview/36-38/April 23, 2010)

Additionally, she finds it difficult to do because of the curricular, resources, and time constraints. Janet feels trapped by the local and state mandates. For example, during three of the observations her instructional units focused on completing writing tasks to submit to the state for proof about the students' English proficiency.

Janet says she knows this is part of the students' curriculum and her job responsibilities. Her fear is that completing these state requirements takes more and more time out

of instructional time. To mediate the state requirements and instructional time, she assigns reading and writing that tie in the demands of the state with the students' personal and academic goals.

Janet prepares ESL students for mainstream classes through instructional conversations by providing just enough support. Throughout the study, Janet told students that the reading assignments were similar to the mainstream classroom. She wants to provide students with an opportunity to have concrete experiences with academic thinking so that they can have something to hang on to when they transition to the regular English language arts classroom.

Janet and the students display empathy and caring. For Janet this is an essential element for successful teaching. Relationships set the conditions for effective learning. She often says, "It's all about the relationships." Students from previous years often visit her for advice about academic and non-academic issues. A few times during the study, I saw one student sleeping on the floor. Janet says that it is typical for one or two students to visit daily and say how much they miss her and wish she taught mainstream English classes.

Janet's long-term goal for students is for them to use what they read in school to make sense of their worlds. She hopes to provide students an atmosphere where their backgrounds are

integral to daily activities. Janet says she is frequently reminded of the need for students to self-inquire when she plays with her grand-daughter. In her eyes, the sense of discovery is lost somewhere between elementary school and high school. She says her job is to bring discovery and inquiry back for students.

> I get so sad that their [my students'] sense of discovery is lost in high school. (Janet/Interview/7-8/February 9, 2010)

> We are not letting our kids wonder in high school [I want to change that] (Janet/Interview/33-34/April 23, 2010)

Janet prepares students for college, career and life. She acknowledges that parents worry about how long students remain enrolled in ESL classes. She believes, in the long run students' academic successes will be complemented by strategically mediating their academic needs *not* rushing them through to the mainstream English language arts curriculum. This was evident with *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996). At first, students appeared confused and resistant; however, as Janet strategically introduced new resources (i.e., movie, website and expert groups) the themes became explicit for students.

Janet is successful with students because *she knows* them. She knows their strengths, areas for growth, family tensions, food likes, and their perspectives. She knows when to step in to help and when to provide additional support. For example, during

The Odyssey (Homer, trans. 1996) Janet was quiet and made comments to help continue the conversations. The students led the discussions. Janet's comments made explicit connections between the text and current events. Other times Janet steps in to provide explicit support. For example, in one of the writing exercises students were learning how to appropriately quote and cite sources.

> See you put that in quotation marks, but that is not what the book says! It has to be word for word. Write it word for word, don't edit. You put in parentheses what you want to say. Therefore it tells the reader what YOU want to say. That's a little trick you can use. Don't put what you infer, write it directly from the story. We are truly playing a game here, when you change it, even if it's minor, it can tip the scale. Don't add anything that is not in the text. (Janet/Observation/69-73/February 25, 2010)

The Role of CMWI in Janet's Classroom "I wish I could do more"

> If it were up to me, I would not be teaching *The Odyssey*, I would be teaching something else the last eight weeks of school and we would do some kind of inquiry project where they would come up with the question. (Janet/Interview/36-38/April 23, 2010)

For Janet, CMWI was a stance, not a program to implement. Janet's decisions focused on building relationships, allowing students to make connections to something they were already familiar with, and then navigating within the ZPD to build academic and non-academic proficiency.

At the beginning of the study Janet focused on texts that took advantage of the students' adolescent, immigrant, and family experiences with *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros,

1984). She read aloud and had students write about their similarities and differences with other family members. Most of the students connected to the themes, characters, and setting.

As the semester went along, the reading and assignments became more academically challenging as she explored the boundaries of the students' learning zones. This was evident during the conversations of *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996). Once Janet realized that the themes, characters, and setting were beyond the students' learning zone she mediated their learning by arranging study groups, showing bits of a movie after they read, and allowed for instructional conversations (Goldenberg, 1993; Mohr, 2004) about their own questions pertaining to their assigned chapter.

Of importance to this study were the ways Janet used the students' background knowledge as temporary scaffolds, her focus on the value of teacher/student relationships, and the way she stepped in to mediate student learning from the beginning of the study.

Empathy and Caring "It's all about the relationships!"

Janet believed learning could not take place in class without first building relationships with the students. Janet said, "It's all about the relationship [between the students and me]." To do this, Janet often inquired beyond the curriculum. She asked students about their home lives, content area classes,

and their previous lives outside of the United States. She shared personal information about her family, her schoolwork, and her own struggles with school.

Janet held high expectations for every student. The "Pobresito" Syndrome (Garcia, 1987) was not seen in her class. Teachers who take this perspective believe that English language learners have it tough enough so they do not push them to their potential. Janet expected high academic achievement from her students, at the same time, wanted to make sure that their sense of discovery was not lost.

> School does not have to be boring. I look at [my students] sense of discovery; I want them to have that, even if it's in high school. I want to create a classroom where they can ask questions. Literature can be used to make sense of their worlds. (Janet/Interview/4-6/February 9, 2010)

Janet exhibited empathy and caring in many ways. At times, she decided to change activities based on the mood of the students and the time of the year. For example, she did this before spring break when she said, "The students will be squirrely today [so I've decided to change the activity]." Janet allowed students to work on their individual projects instead of conducting a mini-lesson. Nevertheless, she was adamant about her students finishing the work they were responsible for. In one instance she decided to change the day's lesson to emphasize the importance of homework.

> Students who did not finish their homework will get a zero, students who did their homework, thank you. We won't be able to do what I had planned today.(Janet/Observation/14-20/February 2, 2010)

Meaningful Connections "Literature can be used to make sense of their worlds"

> School does not have to be boring. I look at [my students] sense of discovery; I want them to have that, even if it's in high school. I want to create a classroom where they can ask questions. Literature can be used to make sense of their worlds. (Janet/Interview/4-6/February 9, 2010)

Janet chose literacy assignments to meet the district's standards and connect to students' familiarity with the content. In January, Janet chose to read *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). This realistic fiction instructional unit allowed students to make meaningful connections that allowed them to feel that they were not alone, learn to reflect on choices about their own lives, see life experiences beyond themselves, and take a humorous approach to their individual situations (Hancock, 2008).

> Juan: Why did you decide to read House?

> Janet: It's my all-time favorite book. It is also in the district curriculum. It's so rich and thick of ideas. And I have had at least five past students that said, when we read *House* it changed my life. I've watched these students say, this is so boring: and by the time we get to the end they are hooked. You could see the thinking going. There is so much you can teach from. You see and use the figurative language and so much more. (Janet/Post Interview/February 9, 2010)

Janet wanted students to see a purpose for what they were reading. During *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) students often connected to Esperanza's experiences at home and at school. As the semester went along, however, students found it more difficult to use their experiences (e.g., background knowledge, personal experiences) as they encountered less familiar texts like the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills practice exam sheets and *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996). To mediate meaningful connections, Janet decided to provide tools beyond the text like online searches and movies.

Janet suggested that creating meaningful connections became problematic in two ways as the observation went along. First, choosing appropriate academic texts posed real challenges because of the students' linguistic diversity. While there were several students who were ready to read academically challenging materials, others were still at the emergent stages of language acquisition. Carmen often felt that she lost one of the groups. Second, finding appropriate materials that were academically challenging *and* were written from her students' perspectives was difficult. So, she often lost the sociocultural connections as she moved to the mainstream curriculum.

Authentic Tasks "It is not just a requirement"

Janet deliberately chose tasks that capitalized on students' background interests and funds of knowledge. In one

instance, Janet asked students to write a letter to a friend explaining why learning English was hard. Students wrote about their fears, triumphs, challenges, and educational trajectories. This assignment allowed students to take advantage of their personal experience and at the same time improve their academic writing. Students looked forward to rewriting and editing their work, compared to other assignments when they simply handed in their first drafts.

Janet used what she had learned from the National Writing Project Summer Institute and incorporated it directly to her instruction. During *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) unit she asked students to write about the similarities and differences of features between their parents and themselves.

> Today we are going to start with Author's Chair, yesterday everyone but Maria shared their stories. (Janet/Observation/1/February 9, 2010)

The Author's Chair, a strategy Janet learned through the National Writing Project, provided students a way to share their writing in a safe environment where they could learn from one another. This activity encouraged academic conversations with parents that added a level of individuality.

Inquiry Stance "I want to bring a sense of discovery"

> I get so sad that their [my students'] sense of discovery is lost in high school. (Janet/Interview/7-8/February 9, 2010)

> We are not letting our kids wonder in high school [I want to change that]. (Janet/Interview/33-34/April 23, 2010)

Janet encouraged students to explore on their own. She said that in her experience many students were simply regurgitating what the teacher said, not what they had learned about the topic. In her class she wanted to create environments where students are free to question and wonder about what they were reading and writing about, particularly with *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996). For example, she asked students to explore: What are the characteristics of a hero? As students reported back, Janet added to a tally sheet she kept in front of the room for everyone to refer as they read the book. Students, often referred back to see if Odysseus fit within these characteristics. At the end of the instructional unit, Janet suggested that students' ideas of a hero had changed because of what they had noticed from the characters in the book.

Below is a list of the four essential questions Janet focused on during the observation. These questions allowed students to think about what they were reading and make connections to their personal experiences.

1. Do the characters in *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) take or give their power?
2. How does literature help you become a better thinker?
3. How do you define heroes?

4. Why is learning English hard?

Just Enough Support "Looking for something the kids can hang on to"

> Janet knew when to step in and when to back away.
>
> I don't think they have any prior knowledge [of Greek Mythology] so, I don't think they have something to hang on to [so it is very difficult to accomplish anything with *The Odyssey*]. (Janet/Interview/15-16/April 23, 2010)

Janet was concerned with appropriately addressing the levels of English proficiency in the class. She had success finding topics, themes, and characters students could make meaningful connections within *The House on Mango Street*. However, finding something that students knew about Greek methodology was difficult.

To mediate *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) she created expert groups where students led discussions about their assigned chapters. These instructional conversations gave students an opportunity to share what they had learned; and it allowed Janet to hold engaging, just-in-time conversations about complex academic topics. Below are two examples that show the ways Janet provided support for students as they engaged in academic talk. In both instances she start with the known and moves to the unknown.

> Anna: I wrote down Odysseus and the thought of the wind. She kicked them out.

> Janet: She [The God of Wind] kicked them out, but there was something else that happened.
>
> Anna: (blank stare)
>
> Janet: Who got kicked out of the island by the God of Wind? Did he [Odysseus] take something though?
>
> Kyle: A sack?
>
> Janet: OK, what's in the sack?
>
> Anna: A sack of wind!
>
> Janet: You see you knew it!
> (Janet/Observation/75-83/April 22, 2010)

During another observation a student was improperly using quotation marks.

> See you put that in quotation marks, but that is not what the book says! It has to be word for word. Write it word for word, don't edit. You put in parentheses what you want to say. Therefore it tells the reader what YOU want to say. That's a little trick you can use. Don't put what you infer, write it directly from the story. We are truly playing a game here, when you change it, even if it's minor, it can tip the scale. Don't add anything that is not in the text. (Janet/Observation/69-73/February 25, 2010)

Finding: CMWI Patterns in Janet's Classroom

Janet embraced CMWI's principles and practices. The most noticeable patterns of implementation in the classroom were the ways she built relationships, allowed students to make significant connections to their cultures, and invited students to wonder. At times, though, this stance made her feel as though she was not doing enough for her students. She often commented that her students should be "doing more inquiry projects." This

perception of feeling that she was never doing enough drove her to seek out more professional development, talk to other faculty and obtain a Master of Education.

The Role of Resources and Affordances in Janet's Classroom Context

Janet was familiar with the curriculum, district and national mandates. She took advantage of the resources they provided to help students navigate school. Janet explained daily classroom and campus expectations, practices, and routines to students.

Janet's instructional decisions and actions set the learning contexts and tasks daily. Modeling and time for practice were essential to set the context for learning. Students were familiar with the daily class structure that added to the student's level of comfort. This was evident in the way the class progressed from activity to activity.

This is the schedule of a typical day:

8:30	Read Self-Selected Book
8:40	Announcements
8:45	Journal Writing
8:50	Mini-Lesson (Read/Writing)
9:20	Writing/Reading Workshop (Conferencing)
10:00	Debriefing

While parts of the day appeared structured, the writing workshop time was messy. That is to say, that there "appeared" to be no

order as students wrote. Students were often moving in and out of drafting, composing, and editing. After one of the observations the following exchange took place.

> Juan: Do you think writing is a messy process?
>
> Janet: Yeah! That's a very accurate statement. But, it's really interesting; it takes a lot of effort to get the kids to be messy. They really think that they have to put it down perfectly the first time (Janet/Interview/22-27/March 1, 2010).

Janet combined reading and writing workshop approaches daily. There were short and long-term writing assignments. For example, students wrote about their readings daily. In addition, they wrote about heroes, courage, and power. Janet's students set their own pace when it came to drafting, editing, and publishing. Their writing was constant artifacts-in-activity (Prior, 2005).

Janet prioritized positive, trusting relationships. During her first interview she said that her professional success came from the relationships she built with her students (Janet, February 3, 2010). Most of the assignments including *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) and *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) all had relationship building components. While most of the readings were read aloud to the whole class, the conversations and discussions took place in groups of 3.

She deliberately and overtly facilitated social and academic interaction between students. Everyday students began

the day by reading and sharing their self-selected books that they chose from the class library. They also recommended books to each other and discussed the benefits of reading their selection.

Janet shared personal information. She did this purposefully to show students the similarities she had with them. For example, she often spoke about difficulty completing writing assignments for her graduate classes. She used to tell them about the stops and starts and how often she was "stumped" when she wrote.

Janet mediated more than the curriculum. For instance, students normally chose and registered for next semester's classes on their own. Janet decided that the students would benefit from one-on-one support for this process, so a few days before registration was due, the counselor walked around the classroom answering questions about choosing appropriate courses for the following semester.

Teacher Affordances "Let's Rock and Roll"

> My goal for this class, as it is the goal for all education, is to help you [students] learn how to become better thinkers. Literature (the reading and writing we do in class) is merely a tool we use to help reach that goal. If you leave this class and you are able to understand how literature helps you to make your world a better place, then I have succeeded magnificently in reaching the goal (Janet/Midterm Exam Opening Statement/1-5/April 23, 2010).

Janet used her personal and professional experiences as resources to inform the decision she made about supporting students. For the past three years she has worked with students from Korea, Cuba, Mexico, and India. The aim of her class is to prepare her students for mainstream curriculum; however, she focuses on also preparing them for college, career, and life. After two years students typically are exited to regular English language arts classes.

Janet earned a bachelor's degree from a university in the northwest in English literature. Before joining Janet's High School, she taught for eight academic years to predominantly recent Mexican American adolescent immigrants. She joined the faculty at Janet's High School in 2007 to open a high school program to support their growing ESL population. Janet's High School was proactively seeking to enact a literacy program to aid the small number of immigrants beginning to attend the school.

Student Affordances "You're such a good thinker"

> Dear Ms. Janet,
>
> I am reading the best book called "The Zack file. Dr. Jekyll, Orthodontist" by: Dan Greenburg.
>
> I love the character Zack! He is realy funny.
>
> This character is kind of like me because we both want perfect straight teeth. A we are diferent is he lives with his dad.
>
> I choose this book because the title said Dr. Jekyll, and I remember when I read a book called "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Thats a good book also.
>
> Sincerely, Anna

Dear Anna,

Thank you so much for sharing this book with me. Are your teeth straight or crooked? I've never noticed because you have such a beautiful smile.

I am glad you made a connection to another book you have read. Were they anything alike? Did the other Dr. Jekyll book help you understand this one better?

I look forward to your next letter. You're such a good thinker and I'd love it if you could share some of your ideas on why you think a character did something or why you think the author did to write well or poorly.

I hope you find another book you like as much!

Ms. Janet

(Anna & Janet/Writing Packet Journal pp. 83-84/May 2010)

Janet provided personal and interpersonal support to her present and past students. It was common to see several of last year's students asking Janet for advice about another teacher's class assignment or asking for advice about family issues.

Janet helped students through difficult situations. Janet said, "At home Carla has to meet certain expectations because of her gender" (Janet/Post interview/March 2010). In class, Carla excelled academically. At home she was a homemaker, caretaker, sister, and daughter; academics came last. Janet said that Carla once confessed that she had to do her homework in secret so that no one would make fun of her (Janet/Informal Conversation/March 2010).

One day only a few students had done the chapter reading for *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). Janet decided that she needed to address it right away. She said, "Guys you

got to do your reading, I swear to God, if you guys don't do your reading, I will go to your house and read to you," Carla replied, "For real miss," "Yes, for real!" replied Janet (Janet/Observation/ February 2, 2010).

Janet was attentive to language development in the first language. Although she does not speak Korean, Vietnamese or Spanish, Janet respected and frequently acknowledged the contributions of the students' first language. It was common to hear Korean and Spanish spoken in the classroom before and after instruction. Students felt at ease using their native language to communicate with each other for social and academic purposes. However, during daily instruction it was commonplace for students to only speak English.

Janet used the students' personal interests, knowledge and expertise to mediate the students learning. More specifically, the students' and their families' needs and expectations informed the instructional goals and decisions. For example, Kyle was interested in becoming an accountant (Janet/Observation/February 25). He wanted to attend Texas A & M, but felt that if he continued to be enrolled in ESOL classes he would not be ready in time. He was determined to enroll in mainstream English II classes. To measure his readiness, Janet adapted the assignments to make them similar to the mainstream

English I classroom. In part, this was one of the reasons why Janet decided to read *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996).

Text Affordances "It's so rich and thick of ideas"

Janet used two instructional texts: *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) and *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996).

Although there were some differences (e.g., Korean versus Hispanic) between the students and *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) its characters like Esperanza and experiences learning to speak English connected with students.

> [*The House on Mango Street*] is so rich and thick of ideas. [Janet was referring to the themes (immigration/adolescence/power) that students could connect to as they read]. (Janet/Interview/13-14/February 9, 2010)

Janet's enthusiasm, experience and knowledge about *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) translated directly to the activities she engaged in with students. She had successfully taught this unit for the past three years and had seen and heard her students enjoy and learn from reading and discussing the themes of this book. This book's themes, readability, and characters provided Janet a range of activities students could engage in which took advantage of their adolescent, family, and immigrant experience.

The Odyssey's (Homer, 8th Century B. C.) characters and themes were academically challenging for students. It did not provide the students many resources "that they could hang on

to.” To mediate this, Janet asked students to do web searches, form expert groups and watch a movie. Janet commented that for many of the students this was the first time students had heard about Greek methodology.

During *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) unit students shared their questions and experiences without prodding from Janet. However, during *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) students remained silent because they were afraid to be wrong. The expert groups facilitated conversation between students and allowed them to practice what they wanted to share with the rest of the class. It gave them a focus, instead of worrying about leading all discussions; they were limited to specific chapters. This instructional decision allowed for students to prepare ahead.

Finding: Affordances in Janet’s Classroom

How Janet took advantage of the context, student, and text resources depended on the available time, student background with the content, the level of proficiency required to read the text, and the perceived amount of freedom she felt to do what students’ needed.

The Role of Decision-making in Janet’s Classroom

Janet’s decisions took advantage of the students’ sociocultural resources. As the spring semester progressed Janet’s decisions focused more on alignment with mainstream

curriculum as a way to gauge her students' readiness for regular English language arts classrooms.

Janet made decisions based on what she noticed from her students, then stepped in to assist and mediate. She commented that the best decisions she made were those that "came from her gut," from what she thought her students needed.

Decision-making: The Role of the Students' Sociocultural (DMSC) Resources "Learning English [and teaching] is hard!"

Janet purposefully decided to help make the students' sociocultural resources into affordances. She said that it was important for students to use their background knowledge as they read, discussed, and wrote. This perspective allowed students to make meaningful connections and see the value of their knowledge.

Janet promoted collective learning. This stance was particularly beneficial when the academic activities became challenging for students whose academic English was at the emerging stage.

> [We are going to work together to study the characteristics of Greek Heroes] Each group will be the expert for the rest of the class. (Janet/Observation/37-38/April 16, 2010)

Decision-Making: The Role of the Students' Linguistic Knowledge Resources "I am glad I have some flexibility"

> I am so happy that I have the flexibility to modify the content I can only imagine if I had to follow through with what I started yesterday! [After reading *The Odyssey* for

> the first time Janet realized that the book was linguistically challenging for the students' and had to modify her lesson]. (Janet/Observation/10-11/March 23, 2010)

Janet used the students' linguistic resources; as the semester progressed and the texts became less familiar it became more difficult. To mediate this, Janet changed lessons to aid students.

Janet mediated vocabulary definitions. This activity allowed students to explore the definition in their own words to help grasp the concept. Janet decided to use this activity as students engaged in Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills practice.

> Janet: Does anybody know what foreshadow means?
>
> Kyle: He is getting ready to say something. (Janet/Observation/57/March 2, 2010)

Decision-Making: The Role of the Students' Thinking Strategies Resources "Readers just don't read, they think, it's more than filling in blanks"

Janet mediated students to use literature to make sense of their worlds. To do this, she introduced thinking tools (SOAPS, Summarizing, and Visualization), engaged in conversations about the personal connections students where making to the texts, and allowed time for journal reflections.

> This is what good readers do, [they use thinking strategies], they don't just read, they think about what they are reading.

(Janet/Observation/27-31/February 25, 2011)

The excerpt illustrates Janet's approach to literacy. Students in her class were expected to go beyond decoding the text; they were expected to explore local and global issues. In this instance, her students were exploring the difficulty recent immigrants had learning English; particularly, the similarities and differences between Esperanza and themselves.

To provide students options about how to use literature to make sense of their worlds, Janet provided students thinking tools they could use as they read to make connections.

> Ok this is just a tool, we get to use different [thinking] tools, OK, somebody might use a plier to get a nail out others might use a hammer.

For students, these thinking tools were especially helpful when the students took the Texas state assessment tests. Janet reported that 100% of the students had successfully met the state criteria in the English language arts portion.

Janet used visual thinking tools such as charts, writing journals, graphic organizers, and digital storytelling to mediate student learning. These tools were often used as scaffolds to connect to new learning. One thinking tool Janet referred to often is Figure 3; she used this tool as reference to critical thinking. At times she would refer to the tool and tell students, "This activity requires you to think on the top of the [Bloom's Taxonomy] pyramid" (Janet/Observation/March 1,

2010). When she referred to the pyramid Janet was asking students to synthesize and evaluate. For example, in some cases students had to formulate a response to a question she posed (i.e., How do you hold your power?) or they had to support their thinking with evidence from their explorations (i.e., What are the characteristics of a hero?).

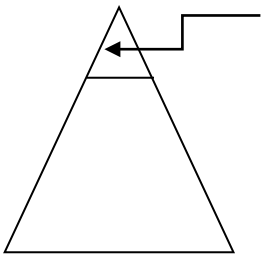


Figure 3. Critical thinking pyramid.

Decision-Making: The Role of the Students' Academic Content Resources "This year, I've been sucked into the black hole. If it were up to me…"

> This year, I've been sucked into the black hole! (Janet/Interview/May 5, 2010)

When Janet made an attempt to follow the district mainstream curriculum she noticed students struggled to keep pace. Nevertheless, she moved forward because she felt a duty to follow the curriculum because she had been part of the team who had developed this plan in the summer.

At times, the realization that her students were not keeping pace made her feel she needed to do something different. She frequently debated whether it was better to continue with an

activity until the students mastered it or move on to the next activity. The reality for Janet was that it took longer for her students to grasp a concept compared to mainstream learners. However, she was expected to complete the units in the same amount of time as her regular education counterparts.

Still, Janet provided students appropriate practice time and just enough instructional support to get ready for the end of the course assessments. Janet's decisions focused on building confidence by carefully planning brief sessions with practice materials. The class spent two class periods taking and discussing a practice criterion-referenced test. As the students responded to the test she followed the real world protocols pertaining to time, answering questions, and working independently. However, once the students had finished taking the tests, she met with them for 40 minutes to provide explicit ideas about what to do when they encountered difficult questions.

> [In the next examples students are getting ready for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Test]
> If they ask you to focus on paragraph 5/6 focuses on paragraphs 5/6 do not think about [the overall] story.
>
> Victor do not over think, focus on what's in the story! [Do not infer, stop using your background knowledge]

Finding: Decision-Making in Janet's Classroom

Decision-making in Janet's classroom early in the study depended on the students' funds of knowledge and the district

mandates. While the campus and district provided Janet resources including a flexible curriculum, smaller class size, extended time with students, late in the study it became more difficult to make the resources affordances when she found it necessary to align to the mainstream curriculum to gauge students' readiness for the regular curriculum.

Table 20 provides summaries of the case studies.

Table 20

Side-by-Side Summaries

CMWI Instructional Patterns	Carmen's Mainstream Concept	Janet's ESL Concept
Empathy and Caring (EC)	I am going to try the middle ground thing.	It's all about the relationships.
Meaningful Connections (MC)	Ok. So you know they hated it.	Literature can be used to make sense of their worlds
Inquiry Stance (IS)	Go out and explore.	I want to bring a sense of discovery.
Authentic Tasks (AT)	I'll show them that we can learn and have fun too.	It's not just a requirement.
Just Enough Support (JES)	I am here if you need me.	I am looking for something kids can hang on to.

(*table continues*)

Table 20 (*continued*)

Resources in Use (Affordances)	Carmen's Mainstream Concept	Janet's ESL Concept
Context (CAFDS)	Let's try something new.	An extended family atmosphere.
Teacher (TAFDS)	I need them to be engaged first.	Let's rock and roll.
Student (SAFDS)	Miss we didn't see that side of you in 9th grade.	You're such a good thinker.
Text (TXAFDS)	This book is so easy!	It's so rich and thick of ideas.
Decisions about Student's Language and Literacy Resources	**Carmen's Mainstream Concept**	**Janet's ESL Concept**
Social and Cultural Resource (DMSC)		They've talked me into it.
Linguistic Knowledge (DMLG)	Transmogrify	Learning English is so hard.
Thinking Strategies (DMTS)	Why do you think?	I am glad I have some flexibility.
Academic Content Knowledge (DMAC)	The district but.	Readers just don't read, they think, it's more than filling in blanks

So, how do Carmen and Janet enact the instructional patterns of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) to mediate student learning? What themes emerged from CMWI's enactment?

Carmen and Janet adopted, adapted, and internalized CMWI's principles to inform their pedagogical stance and teaching style. When suitable, Carmen and Janet:

- Embraced the students' sociocultural resources to mediate learning.
- Used relevant and appropriate language and materials to mediate learning.
- Focused on using and building students' thinking strategies to help make difficult problems more comprehensible.
- Provided authentic learning opportunities for students regardless of language and literacy proficiency.
- Invited, guided, and supported students through difficult academic and non-academic content.
- Used on-going formative assessments as instructional guides.

Embracing the Students' Sociocultural Resources

Carmen and Janet used the social and cultural resources at their disposal to mediate learning. Carmen and Janet were able to do this because *they knew* their students. To continue learning about their students, Carmen and Janet read peer-

reviewed journals, spoke to university professors, and asked for students to share their perspectives, then validated and affirmed their points of view with praise and support.

Taking Advantage of the Students' Linguistic Knowledge

Carmen and Janet used the students' linguistic knowledge to mediate learning. When appropriate, Janet used the students' first language as a tool to improve comprehension. One way this happened in class was with the use of electronic dictionaries.

Thinking Strategies and Guidance

The Teacher Consultants used thinking strategies as a tool to help students grasp difficult material. In Janet's case, she explained, demonstrated, and guided the students through difficult materials often during the observation by conducting think aloud sessions and sharing personal examples. In Carmen's case, she provided thinking strategies to improve their author's craft (e.g. how to incorporate humor, poetry, stance, originality).

Authentic Learning Opportunities

Carmen and Janet provided authentic, meaningful learning opportunities for students regardless of language and literacy proficiency. The intent of the activities was to provide experiences that connected directly to classroom instruction in meaningful ways and took advantage of the students' available resources.

In Janet's classroom one of the assignments asked students to write about how their body features compared to their parents. Students read their essays aloud to each other. Janet's assessments for *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) consisted of two questions that asked them to connect to the book.

> Maria reads a story comparing her family. She writes about their feet and hands, comparing her features to mom, dad, and brother. She starts by reading how she compares to dad! She follows the story by comparing to mom.
>
> (Janet is sitting next to Maria; leans forward as if she is listening intently, patting her back as student reads)
>
> Janet: We have finished *House on Mango Street;* I have come up with two questions, which you have to answer in an essay form. These questions deal with the class's essential questions.
>
> Janet (writing on the board): Tell me something that you have in common with the book? How do people keep their own power (Janet/Observation/February 9, 2010)?

During the debriefing session, I asked Janet about the assignment. She said that she is not so much interested in the students finding a right answer connected to facts, rather, she is interested to see if they are making connections and thinking critically between what their reading and writing about and their individual situation (Janet/Observation/February 9, 2010).

> Juan: How do you think they did?
>
> Janet: It's hard for them. I try not use a test; I don't want them to think that there is the right answer. I want them to see if they can use literature to help them understand their life. I am not looking for the right

answer. I am looking for their thinking.
(Janet/Interview/21-24/February 9, 2010)

Janet wanted to change the perception about the purpose of high school and the use of literature. For Janet, the purpose of literature is to help students connect to the world and answer their burning questions. It was not simply an act of memorizing and regurgitating facts about the story. She was adamant about creating a classroom where students felt free to inquire. Below is an excerpt from a conversation early in the semester.

Just in Time Academic and Nonacademic Support

Carmen and Janet provided student just in time academic support by inviting, guiding, and supporting meaning making.

Carmen provided just in time academic support daily for students. They would ask questions like, "How do you make something stand out?" "How can I say this, a different way?" or "Can I interview you for my project." At first, it was less common to see Carmen provide nonacademic support until one day when she thought a student was high on drugs.

Frequently, Janet activated and connected to the students' background knowledge. They frequently encouraged inter-textual connections to improve academic connections. Through a shared construction of knowledge students were able to improve meaning making. Students often engaged in paired and shared reading, writing workshop, and ongoing meaningful conversations.

When appropriate, Janet listened and provided support when students encountered difficulties. During the study, counselors visited the classroom to help students plan the following semester's courses and students slept on the floor when they were tired. For the students, Janet was seen as an extended family member.

Using Authentic and Formative Assessments

Carmen and Janet used authentic and formative assessments as a vital resource when they were making decisions about what to do next. Carmen and Janet used multiple points of view to determine what students had mastered and what needed additional instruction. In part, they used observations, discussions, oral and written quizzes, reflective journals, informal reading inventories, and conversations to gauge learning.

Summary of Findings

In response to Research Question 1, the findings suggest that, although there were similarities in the instructional patterns, the affordances, and the sources of information for decision-making in the two classrooms, a clear and distinct overall focus emerges in the work of each teacher. Carmen (the English language arts teacher) provides students authentic assignments that take into consideration their individual expertise. Her focus is on keeping the students engaged and interested in what they are learning. Janet (the ESL teacher)

focuses on building empathetic and caring relationships with students to forge partnerships as they encounter difficult materials. Janet searches for concrete ways students can make meaning through the use of their background experiences. In the future, Janet plans to do more inquiry projects. She says that they help students stretch their thinking.

Carmen's and Janet's actions suggest that students' language and literacy learning depends on more than the teacher's curricular expertise or academic knowledge. Rather, it's a complex system of actions, reactions, and transactions teachers engage in to try to find the right balance to maximize the conditions for learning. Culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) instructional patterns (i.e., empathy and caring relationships, meaningful connections, authentic tasks, and just enough support) provide Carmen and Janet coherence and ideas about how to answer the "What should I do?" questions they think about as they plan, deliver and assess language and literacy for 21st century learners.

In the next chapter, I will present more information about the findings for the study pertaining to Research Questions 1 and 2.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

The purpose of this naturalistic study was to compare the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) and describe the instructional decisions of two high school teachers during English language arts instruction in a mainstream and English as a Second Language classroom. The following two questions guided this study:

(1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom?

(2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in these high school classrooms during English language arts instruction?

The patterns that emerged support the sociocultural perspective: Embracing the available sociocultural and linguistic resources, building on thinking strategies to navigate difficult materials, providing authentic learning opportunities to make meaningful connections, delivering just in time support, and using formative assessments as instructional guides. The two cases reported in Chapter 4 provide some clarity to the decision-making process teachers go through as they provide instruction to high school ESL and mainstream students.

The findings section begun with Carmen’s and Janet’s case studies presented in Chapter 4 in the context of CMWI with a

focus on the themes, affordances, and decision-making they engaged in during the study. The findings continue with a discussion pertaining to the first question (1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom? And (2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in these high school classrooms during English language arts instruction?

Research Questions

(1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom?

- Carmen was familiar with CMWI's instructional practices. The enactment of empathy and caring, meaningful connections, inquiry stance, authentic work, and just enough support increased during the second instructional unit. Seeing the students as instructional partners in the learning process improved the engagement and participation.
- Janet was cognizant of CMWI's instructional practices. She overtly and deliberately embedded CMWI during instruction. As the curriculum became more academically challenging it became problematic to enact an inquiry stance and meaningful connections because it was difficult to find

appropriate materials that took advantage of the cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom.

The enactment of CMWI in Carmen's class compared to Janet's class varied because of the differences in text selections. In Carmen's class CMWI's instructional patterns were minimally seen during *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951), then became routines with *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). In Janet's class CMWI was an organizing framework during *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984), then became more difficult to implement during *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996).

For the first instructional unit Carmen chose to read *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). When she asked the students if they were interested, only one student was interested in reading it. In the 1950s and 1960s, *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) was a contemporary to student lives and the social challenges they were facing. Teachers chose to use this text because it matched well with the objectives (themes) they wanted students to discuss. The students faced similar problems and questions, so the context, characters, and themes were appealing for them. Because of this, the themes were left implicit.

The students in Carmen's class found it very difficult to connect to *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) because the setting, characters, and themes were so different than their

background knowledge or personal experiences At first, Carmen did not make the themes explicit, so it was difficult for the students to see a purpose (e.g., loneliness, depression, adolescence). After several weeks of student resistance Carmen realized that she needed to step back to think about the objectives she wanted students to learn. So, before she assessed the unit, she had a heart to heart conversation with the students about her initial expectations and explicitly discussed the themes of the book.

For the next instructional unit, instead of thinking first about the text, Carmen thought about what *she knew* about the students. Then she thought of an appropriate way to select a book which honored the students' suggestions and met the districts expectations. She asked students to sell a text of their choice to the rest of the class. With help from the students, Carmen decided to read *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), which was a contemporary book about themes students were interested in (e.g., reality television, love, and war). This allowed students to inquire about a book of their choice for which they had a meaningful connection. During this instructional unit Carmen successfully incorporated the students' social and cultural resources, linguistic knowledge and thinking strategies. Students commented that Carmen's actions showed them that she really cared about them.

For the first text instructional unit Janet chose to read *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984), a book she had taught for the past two years. She chose it because it captured the immigrant experience for adolescents and was written in language for beginning English speakers. While she had chosen this book on her own, all students were familiar with it. During this unit, Janet took advantage of the context, student, and text resources to mediate learning. Every student felt successful, often participating in all the activities.

For the next text instructional unit Janet chose *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996). She knew the students were going to struggle, but wanted to capture the students' academic ability to determine if they were ready for English only classes. No student was familiar with this book. The text did not coincide with any of the students' sociocultural resources, linguistic knowledge, thinking strategies or cultural resource, so most students appeared lost and often remained quiet. To help students, Janet tapped into her professional experience and professional development to determine what to do next. She implemented activities that she learned in graduate classes and conferences she had recently attended. She asked for advice from university faculty and colleagues about what to do. In the end, she wished she had done something different, but was excited

about the progress students had shown as they problem-solved their difficulties.

At the end of observations it was clear that Carmen and Janet believed that it was okay for students to have fun. The "old" assumptions about how to deliver and assess academic materials were constantly challenged by what they noticed from the students. They frequently needed to think of "innovative" ways to maintain students' interest. At times, they felt trapped by the available resources and state-mandated assessments.

Table 21 displays a comparison of instructional patterns, affordances, and decision-making of language and literacy resources between a Carmen and Janet's classroom. The levels were devised directly from interviews, conversations with teachers, and actions taken during the observations. For example if teacher spoke about caring for their students and that action was observed during instruction at least once then it was minimal use (+). If the action was spoken about and seen more than three times in consecutive observations then it was a routine. If the action was spoken and seen in three consecutive visits then it was an organizing framework. See Legend for symbol details.

Legend:

+++	Evidence as organizing framework for instruction
++	Evidence of routine use
+	Evidence of minimal use
+ --> +	No change
++ --> +	Evidence of decreasing use during study
+ --> ++	Evidence of increasing use during study
0 --> +	Evidence of initial use during study

Table 21

Mainstream and ESL Classroom Comparison

CMWI Instructional Patterns	Mainstream	ESL
Empathy and Caring (EC)	+ ---> ++	+++
Meaningful Connections (MC)	+ ---> ++	+++ ---> +
Inquiry Stance (IS)	+ ---> ++	++ ---> ++
Authentic Tasks (AT)	+ ---> ++	++
Just Enough Support (JES)	+ ---> ++	++ ---> ++
Resources in Use (Affordances)		
Context (CAFDS)	+++	+++
Teacher (TAFDS)	+ ---> ++	+ ---> ++
Student (SAFDS)	+ ---> ++	++
Text (TXAFDS)	+ ---> ++	+ ---> ++
Decisions about Student's Language and Literacy Resources		
Social and Cultural Resources (DMSC)	+ ---> ++	+++
Linguistic Knowledge (DMLG)	++	++ ---> +
Thinking Strategies (DMTS)	++	++ ---> +++
Academic Content Knowledge (DMAC)	+++ ---> ++	+ ---> ++

CMWI Instructional Patterns

In the mainstream classroom some of the instructional patterns of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) moved from minimal use to daily routines during the study.

In the English as a second language classroom the instructional patterns were more complex to identify. While the empathy and caring, inquiry stance, and authentic components remained steady throughout the study, the meaningful connections component decreased as the texts and linguistic expectations became more unfamiliar for the students. As stated earlier, it was difficult for Janet to find appropriate texts that addressed the linguistic diversity in the class and that portrayed the students' sociocultural perspectives. To mediate this, Carmen found concrete examples students could "hang on to."

Resources in Use (Affordances)

In the mainstream classroom there was some evidence that Carmen used the classroom, school, and district resources as a framework whenever possible. At first, the students' comments revealed that Carmen was minimally using the students, text, and herself during instruction. As she became more familiar with the students and texts (and the similarities between the students and her) she routinely thought of ways to incorporate other resources to improve instruction.

In the English as a second language classroom the case study shows that Janet knew and used the context resources. Janet frequently shared personal information with students to help students see that others had similar experiences. As the semester went along Janet incorporated what she was learning in the graduate classes routinely. As shown in the case study, Janet knew the students; she explicitly used the students "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2001) as resources during instruction.

Both Carmen and Janet realized that *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) and *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) both needed different teaching approaches than had worked in the past. Their students' resources no longer matched that of 20th century students. To properly address this, both had to be innovative about the ways to mediate the content.

Decisions about Students' Language and Literacy Resources

In the mainstream classroom there was evidence that Carmen increasingly used the language and literacy resources around her to inform the decisions she made about how to support the students. At first, many of the decisions Carmen made were based on how to best provide the academic content for her students. However, as she noticed the disengagement from her students, she responded by thinking more about the implications of the

students' sociocultural needs. This action improved the level of engagement from the students.

In the English as a second language classroom the case study provides some evidence that Janet initially based her decisions on the use of the students' sociocultural resources, then increasingly made decisions based on meeting the districts academic content requirements to improve preparation for the state assessment and the mainstream classroom.

Conclusion

The findings support the sociocultural pedagogical stance: (1) Learning is developmental; (2) socially constructed; and (3) mediated by the tools around us (Vygotsky, 1978). As stated in Chapter 4, decision-making is a complex system of a actions, reactions, and transactions teachers (and students) engage in as they try to maximize the conditions for language and literacy learning.

In Carmen's case, the instructional patterns suggest that when she became more empathetic, made meaningful connections, took on an inquiry stance, and provided authentic assignments the students reached higher academic achievements. As she became more knowledgeable of the resources available she made decisions that addressed the needs she noticed from the students. The observations also suggest that during the first instructional unit that although the students' possessed many of the academic

and linguistic resources to be successful, the teaching/learning expectations were outside of the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). However, during the second instructional unit Carmen had chosen a text and had planned assignments that met most of the students' needs and were within the students' learning zone.

In Janet's case, the instructional patterns suggest that initially she was concerned with connecting the curriculum to students' background knowledge. However, as the texts and instruction became more academic, it became difficult to connect to the students' social life because of the wide range of students' linguistic proficiency and lack of appropriate resources. The data suggests that as the study progressed the texts and assignments deliberately became more academically challenging. Once Janet noticed that her students were becoming increasingly frustrated with the unknown she deliberately stepped in to provide them with mediating tools.

(2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in high school during English language arts instruction?

- Multiple resources including knowledge, students' sociocultural resources, text, and district mandates guided the instructional decisions the teacher participants made. The case-by-case, moment-by-moment, decisions they made deliberately focused on what they

could change. They made decisions that adapted instruction, mediated learning, and gave students the ability to self-evaluate.

The nature of decision-making in Carmen's and Janet's classrooms was influenced by what they noticed from their students, contextual resources, text resources, and personal/professional preparation. When appropriate, their decisions focused on utilizing the students' available resources (e.g., sociocultural, linguistic, thinking strategies, and academic content) to mediate language and literacy learning.

During the first instructional unit, Carmen's decisions focused on delivering the academic content, improving linguistic knowledge and synthesizing the themes of *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). Initially, she decided to deliver the content using question and answer techniques. She also asked students to read in pairs and aloud to the rest of the class. During the final interview, Carmen remarked that the students hated the book and had not read it. Instead, the students used Spark notes to answer Carmen's questions. To ensure students read the book Carmen decided to ask them to create a music soundtrack to highlight the book. To assess learning she created a final exam with multiple choice and short answer questions. She said that she no longer would wait that long to gauge the students' interest in the book.

During the second instructional unit, Carmen's decisions focused on the students sociocultural connections to *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). She decided to read this book as a way to engage the students in a meaningful activity. The students responded by frequently inquiring about the characters and discussing their personal connections. To facilitate learning Carmen provided students authentic tasks (e.g., *The Hunger Games* research project, Dear Abby Letters, and Group Documentaries). She found that students' learned best when she stepped aside more often and waited for them to ask questions. To assess learning she asked the students to choose a research topic from a list (e.g., hunger, reality television, and bulimia) and present it to the rest of the class.

To address the linguistic, academic, and thinking needs Carmen decided to do mini-lessons using the American Literature book. She also introduced students to new vocabulary words and spoke about improving author's craft.

During Janet's first instructional unit, decisions were focused on having students use their backgrounds and culture as they read *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). She decided to explore as a class the students' linguistic knowledge and academic content. To facilitate learning, Janet often stopped reading and asked students to think about how the characters connected to their lives. She also asked parents to

participate. To assess their learning Carmen posed several essential questions which were authentic for students: (1) How do you hold your power and (2) What similarities do you have with the characters?

During the second instructional unit, Janet's decision focused on preparing the students for the Texas high stakes assessments. She asserted that the students were prepared to pass the exams. Her goal was to provide some practice with the procedures and make some suggestions about what to do when they encountered difficulties. She wanted to keep their confidence high. At the end of the year, Janet reported that all the students had met or exceeded the requirements for a passing grade.

During the third instructional unit, Janet's decisions purposefully focused on meeting the district and campus curriculum. Her decisions were guided by the academic content. She took this course of action because she wanted to make informed decisions about students' academic placements for the following school year. As the unit progressed, she found that only one student was successfully navigating the academic content. The other students were having difficulty because of the lack of sociocultural connections and the required linguistic knowledge to read *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996). To help them make significant connections she provided them a

website to navigate (i.e., www.mythweb.com) and showed *The Odyssey* movie (2008). During this unit, Janet wished she could be doing something else with the students, but said that she felt a responsibility to follow the curriculum. In the end, many students connected to the book, but still a few remained skeptical about what they had learned from reading such a difficult text.

Carmen's and Janet's decisions provide some insights about how they decide between the resources at their disposal. In Carmen's case, her initial decisions focused mostly on the academic content because that is what she knew. It took time for her to become familiar with the students' resources and their needs. However, once she knew her students it guided the actions she made to deliver instruction. In Janet's case, she knew the curriculum and the students, but felt compelled to cover the same materials as the mainstream classrooms. She was aware of the consequences, but felt it was necessary to do to gauge their academic progress.

When Carmen and Janet recognized all the resources (i.e., students, context, text, and themselves) and used them accordingly to mediate learning, students were able to make meaningful connections. When Carmen and Janet knew the resources and needs the students' possessed, then acted accordingly to mediate them, students made academic connections as shown with

The Hunger Games (Collins 2008) and *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984).

Carmen and Janet made instructional decisions that provided students with meaningful, authentic ways of listening, speaking, reading, and writing about the text. In Carmen's case her students read aloud, listened to music, made music soundtracks, watched movie clips, used the flip camera to make documentaries, and wrote Dear Abby columns. In Janet's case her students interviewed parents, explored online, dialogued about significant topics, played, used the Author's Chair, and presented their findings to the rest of the class.

Carmen and Janet used performance and summative assessments to inform their instruction. In Carmen's case she adapted her assessment techniques after recognizing the unhappiness students felt about reading *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) and the realization that her students were not reading the book, rather, they were reading Spark Notes. She realized that she could no longer wait until the end of the unit to see how the students were doing. In Janet's case her assessment techniques involved ongoing observations, question and answer sessions, journaling, and inquiry-based response writing assignments.

Instructional decision-making was guided by teacher knowledge about the topic and text. In the following excerpts Janet seems knowledgeable about the text; on the other hand, it

was the first time Carmen provided instructional support for *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). In part, the teacher's knowledge guided the instructional moves they made.

> Juan: Why did you choose *House on Mango Street*?
>
> Janet: I have had at least five [of last's years] students say, when we read House it changed my life. I've watched these students say "this is so boring" and by the time we get to the end of the book they're hooked. You can see thinking going on.
>
> Juan: Who decided on reading *The Catcher in the Rye*?
>
> Carmen: [also] I had this student who wanted to read the book, so, I decided to read it. I thought they'd like it, because I knew so many people who liked it. I didn't think they'd hate it. I was surprised. I think it's a generational thing, I think people from my generation liked it and generations before that.

The teacher participants' instructional decisions were guided by the text. In Carmen's case, *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) text provided relevant, rich resources and themes students connected to. On the other hand, *Catcher in the Rye* (1951) was instructionally unfamiliar to Carmen, so at first, she was guided by what other teachers said worked for them. In Janet's case, she was familiar with instructional moves pertaining to *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984), but unfamiliar teaching *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) to English language learners. This familiarity/unfamiliarity directly impacted the initial approaches they took when planning, delivering, and assessing instruction.

The observations, interviews, student writing, and informal conversations also reveal that Janet and Carmen navigated within and took advantage of the resources of their particular situation, to meet their students' needs and focused on building on the knowledge of their students' resources.

Table 22 displays the instructional units this study will present to discuss Carmen's and Janet's decision-making.

Table 22

Instructional Units

Instructional Unit	Class	District Chosen	Takes Advantage of Affordances
The Catcher in the Rye	Mainstream	Yes	No
The Hunger Games	Mainstream	No	Yes
The House on Mango Street	ESL	Yes	Yes
Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills	ESL	No	No
The Odyssey	ESL	Yes	No

Within each instructional unit this study provides a short background; describes the readers and context affordances; and explains the decisions the teachers made about when to read the text, how to assess learning, and when and how to mediate learning.

The Decision-Making Conceptual Mediation Framework

Figure 4 illustrates a way to think about the transaction and mediation among the students' resources, teacher resources, text resources, and the context resources. This decision-making conceptual framework is a heuristic that attempts to illustrate how teachers use the resources at their disposal to mediate the learning process.

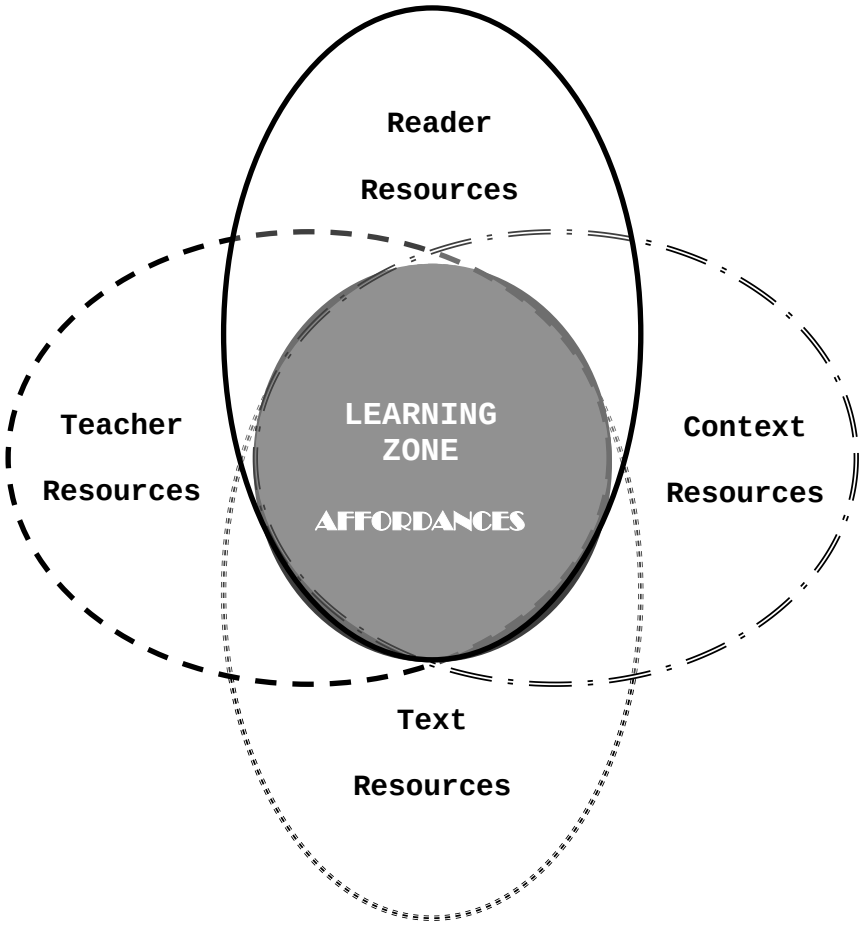


Figure 4. The Decision-Making Conceptual Mediation Framework.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Kappa Delta Pi.

Rosenblatt, L.M. (1978). *The reader, the text, and the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press.

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

Teachers put resources "into action or in use;" as they transact with one another, these resources become affordances; taken together these affordances create a learning zone. The teacher can impact the size of the learning zone with the way

they use the resources at their disposal. Table 23 provides examples for each category of resources.

Table 23

Resource Examples

Teacher Resources	Reader Resources	Text Resources	Context Resources
Personal Experiences Professional Experiences (CMWI) Business Experiences School Experiences Professional Contacts Professional books Learning Stance Common Language	Sociocultural Linguistic knowledge Academic Knowledge Thinking Strategies Parents Friends Siblings Work Funds of Knowledge	Genre Theme Characters Settings Plot Readability Length Media Type	Curriculum School/District Mandates Technology Class period Students Collegiality

The learning zone is similar to the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which Janet called “the sweet spot” (Carmen/Interview/101/April 23, 2010). The zone varies by the way the teacher and student put these resources in action. These actions are not merely interactions, rather they are transactions (Rosenblatt, 1978) where students are not simple “onlookers” but “stakeholders” in the learning process. The

figure above displays a zone where the reader brings in many affordances; the text provides familiar themes, structure, and content; the surrounding (i.e., classroom/school/community) enhances the assignment; and the teacher is familiar with the assignment, text, and its content and can therefore provide appropriate mediation for the student.

The teachers' decisions directly impacted the students' learning zone. When the teachers took into account the students, context, and text resources [i.e., *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) and *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 2008)] the learning zone expanded. However, when the teachers focused only on the academic content [*The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) and *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996)], the learning zone contracted and provided less of what they students needed. Knowing the curriculum is not sufficient to make decisions. Teachers' familiarity with their students and the resources around them can aid them in making good decisions for their students.

The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger, 1951)

Carmen selected to read *The Cather in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). She decided to read it because of the positive comments she had heard from her colleagues, text availability, and she wanted to be in line with the scope and sequence. On a personal note, she confessed she had not enjoyed reading the book when

she was a high school student. However, many of her colleagues had convinced her that their students had enjoyed the book. As the unit progressed, she found that most of the students in her class were not enjoying or making meaningful connections to the book.

During a debriefing session Carmen explained that the characters portrayed no longer matched today's reality. She had to think of ways to get its content across in different ways.

> Juan: Why do you think the students did not connect to this book?
>
> Carmen: Huh, because now I don't know, I read in this one article that our kids now, our society now share everything with everyone, they put everything on Facebook. If they have a problem they say, "Guys I don't know what to do" and this book is so different than that. I think Holden is so different than that. I think all generations before [Facebook] understand that because we have not been able to do that.

For example, the theme of Holden's personal, social and mental isolation from the rest of the world was a subject Carmen's students could not comprehend. Today's youth are so accustomed to asking for advice through social media like Facebook and Twitter that they could not comprehend why Holden was continuously depressed and did not ask for help. While students connected to some of the themes (i.e., innocence, mortality, youth, wisdom and knowledge) they did not connect with others (i.e., Isolation, sadness, lies and deceit, madness), which made their experience less rewarding.

Reader Resources

The students possessed appropriate linguistic skills, thinking strategies, and academic knowledge. However, the students did not connect to the necessary sociocultural lenses to see the book from the author's perspective. Table 24 displays the possible affordances the students had available compared to what they possessed.

Table 24

Carmen Students' Resources for First Instructional Unit

Resource	Possess	Mediation Needs
Sociocultural Knowledge		Could not relate to Holden's dilemma and general themes of the book
Linguistic Knowledge	√	
Thinking Strategies	√	
Academic Knowledge	√	

The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger, 1951) Resources

While the book provided students with a familiar genre, structure, academic language, and age group, the themes did not appeal to Carmen's students. This book pertained to adolescent issues, the setting (i.e., New York), plot (i.e., Student in private school), theme (i.e., Loneliness) and characters (i.e., Holden) were not familiar to the students.

Teacher's Resources

Carmen was familiar with the text but had not read it since high school. Like the students, she had not connected to it when she read it in high school. She said she learned to "appreciate it" after she reread it when she went to college.

Context Resources

Initially, Carmen did not take advantage of the context. Nevertheless, when she realized how little students were connecting to the book, she used the technology around her to help students connect to the book.

Initial Learning Zone

Figure 5 displays a representation of the possible resources brought into the learning experience by the reader, the text, the social context, and the ability for Carmen to mediate. At the onset of this instructional unit the students possessed the linguistic and academic content knowledge to read and comprehend the vocabulary, structure and its themes. These themes did not necessarily connect to the students' interests as discussed in their final evaluation. Moreover, Carmen said that she had not had a positive experience with the book herself. She said that she had learned to appreciate it more as an adult.

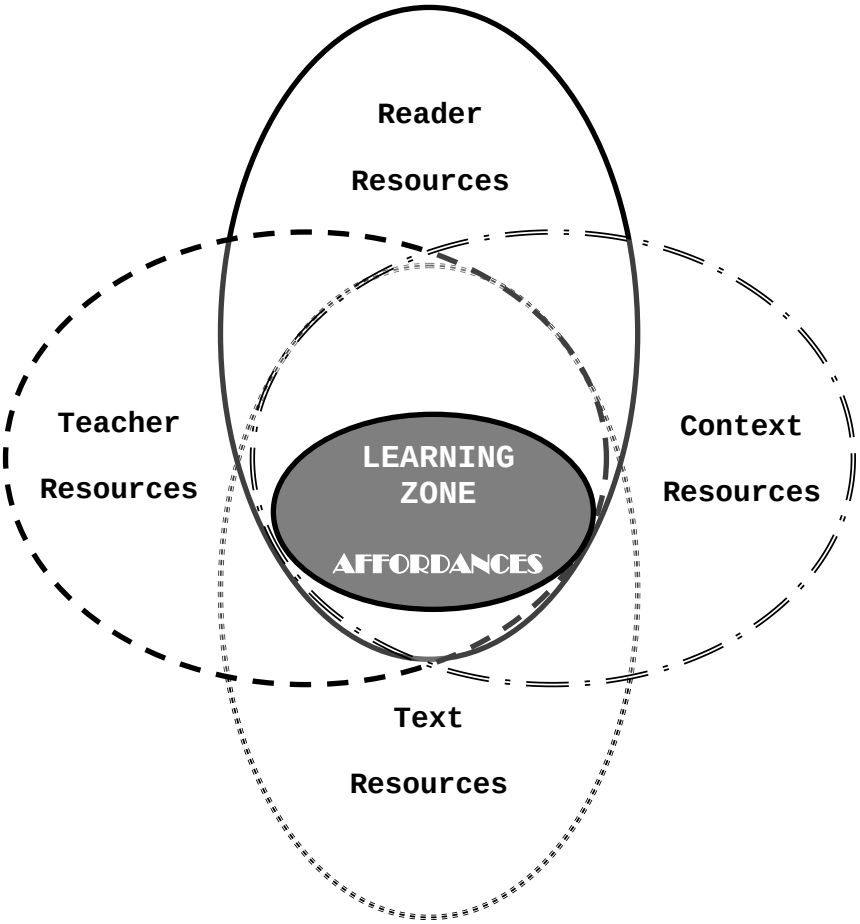


Figure 5. The Catcher in the Rye (Initial).

Deciding to Read The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger, 1951)

> Juan: Who decided on reading *The Catcher in the Rye*?
>
> Carmen: The curriculum. We have ten novels to read from. It depends on what's in the book room since we share the books. My class is supposed to be American Literature and I have to follow a historical timeline.
>
> Carmen: [also] I had this student who wanted to read the book, so, I decided to read it. I thought they'd like it, because I knew so many people who liked it. I didn't think they'd hate it. I was surprised. I think it's a generational thing, I think people from my generation liked it and generations before that.

Three reasons guided Carmen to read *The Catcher in the Rye*

(Salinger, 1951). First, Carmen said that the book was available

in the storage shelf and followed the scope and sequence she had avoided all year. Second, she had heard from other teachers who said what a wonderful experiences they had reading the book and teaching it to their students. And finally one student said he wanted to read it. At the end of the unit, Carmen believed that the students "hated" the book and was surprised that the students made few connections to Holden.

Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning

At first, Carmen mediated just the academic content. Toward the end of the instructional unit she mediated the sociocultural differences between the students and the book.

Table 25

Carmen's Mediated Affordances with First Instructional Unit

Affordance	Mediated	Activity
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Flexible Seating "Music Soundtrack" Audio Recording
Linguistic Knowledge		
Thinking Strategies		
Academic Knowledge	√	"Music Soundtrack" Audio Recording

Flexible Seating

Carmen used a flexible seating arrangement to change the dynamics of the classoom and to encourage academic conversations. The first day of the unit the students appeared engaged, but as the students read on Carmen noticed that students were having less academic conversations about the book and focusing more on after school activities like what they had done the night before, football practice, and parties. To alleviate some of her concerns, Carmen asked students to sit with less familiar students, led and modeled conversations, and stepped in and out of group settings.

Catcher in the Rye Music Soundtrack

Carmen used music to engage students. This assignment expected students to read the book, and then choose ten songs that directly connected to themes. Students were to write about how they chose the song, what the song was about, and where it fit in the book. Below is an excerpt from one of the student's paper.

> Catcher in the Rye Soundtrack (AO, A3)
>
> For the first song *Mr. Lonely* by Akon. I choose [sic] to do this song when he is in the hotel room and feels depressed and lonely because he has no place to go, nothing to do and got kicked out of Pencey.
>
> My motivation for this song is he is feeling depressed so the song explains that he is lonely. That's how Holden feels so it is a good song for that part of the book.

> Nothing on you B.o.b. [Babe] is going into the part of the book when Holden is thinking about Jane when he is going to his hotel room. He can't get her of the brain.
>
> The song is about there isn't anyone who can't compare to the girl. That's how Holden feels, he loves everything about her. The song really relates this.
>
> Ne-Yo, So Sick
> Survivor, Eye of the Tiger
> Roy Orbison, Pretty Woman
> Mord, Only Hope
> Avril Lavigne, Keep Holding On
> Chris Daughtry, Home
>
> (Music Soundtrack/Carmen/1-18/March 2010)

Colleagues Audio Recording

Carmen asked colleagues, coaches, and administrators to audio record a few minutes explaining why they enjoyed reading the book. As she played the interviews, Carmen spoke about the experiences they could have enjoyed together as if everyone in the class would have read the book. Carmen said that doing this would "show" students that there were people who connected to its characters and themes.

> So I was talking to a friend who really enjoyed the book. And I had this idea after everything she told me. I wished my kids could hear this, but, what I realized was that it would still be me telling them, but me telling my students what she is saying is still me telling my students, it is not a very good idea. But what I did decide, I still had not audio recorded her, but, what I did is I emailed the entire staff and that day to ask for an audio interview about why they liked [*Catcher in the Rye*] the book I recorded audio interviews and I am playing them for my students.
>
> Kinda of going into depth, what I am explaining to them and I am telling them this is a conversation we could have had

> if you would have read the book and I could have explained to you instead of me doing all the work and thinking. But I just had that idea that they never hear anyone else talk about reading, they are not around people who read. They don't know how to have discussions about book because they're incapable because they are not reading. So, I think that's really cool to have them hear someone else talk about the book and thinking and saying. All the different people like the book for different reasons.

Learning Zone

Figure 6 displays a visual of the transaction between the reader affordances, text affordances, teacher mediation and contextual affordances during the instructional unit. While the students' in Carmen's class brought in many affordances at the onset, the lack of connection to the characters, themes, and context reduced their use. In fact, as Carmen noted, many of the students refused to read the book. The initial text affordances did not surface during instruction because of its disconnect to issues of today. To mediate this, Carmen had to do much more mediation to allow learning to take place. As stated earlier, she generated engaging assignments, read aloud, and created flexible grouping. As the unit concluded she used the context (i.e., colleagues) to help students' make additional connections to the book.

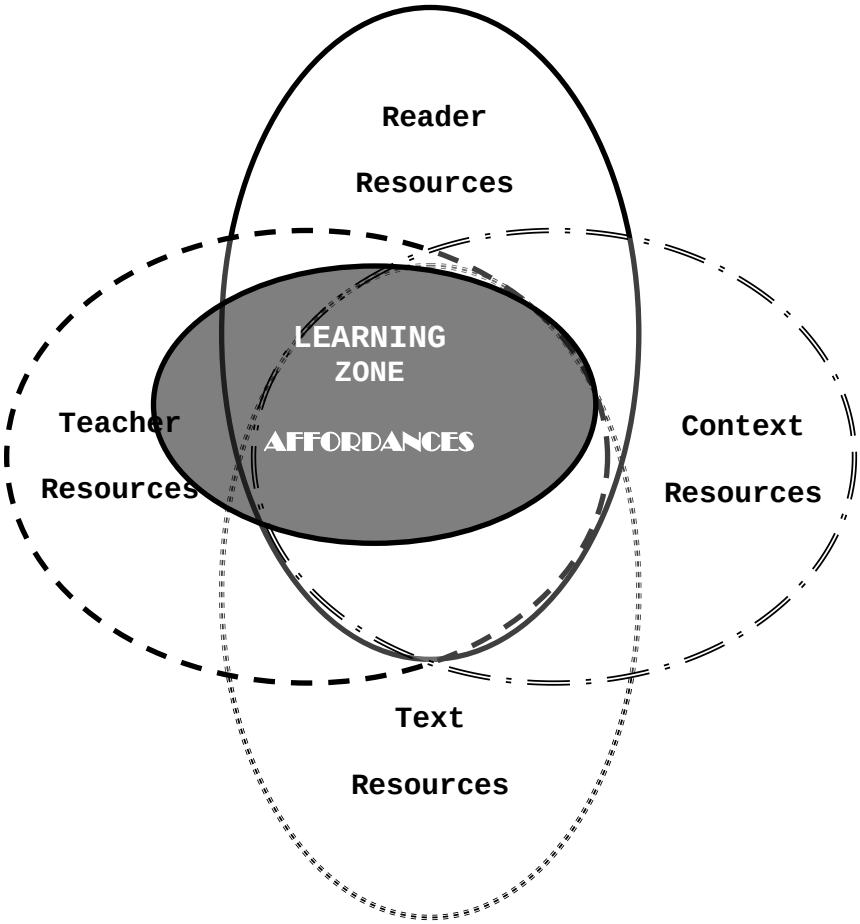


Figure 6. The Catcher in the Rye (during instruction).

The Hunger Games (Collins, 2008)

The Hunger Games (Collins, 2008) was picked by students and then supported by Carmen. During this unit, Carmen saw her students as partners in the learning process. Although Carmen believed that the book and its themes were "too easy," the students' sociocultural resources, linguistic knowledge, thinking strategies and academic content matched well with the text. The students made connections to the characters traits and

themes including rebellion, survival, reality television, relationships, and government control.

Reader Resources

The students possessed appropriate linguistic skills, thinking strategies, sociocultural and academic knowledge. The students connected immediately to the characters, plot, and themes of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008). Table 26 displays the possible resources the students had available compared to what they possessed.

Table 26

Carmen Students' Resources for Second Instructional Unit

Resource	Possess	Mediation Needs
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	
Linguistic Knowledge	√	
Thinking Strategies	√	
Academic Knowledge	√	

The Hunger Games Resources

The characters in the story, like Katniss, had similar characteristics as the students in class. The setting, plot, and themes tackled topics students wanted to learn more about: Socialism, death games, child labor, human rights, survival, terrorism, and rites of passage. Below is a brief description of the book from the author's website (Collins, 2008).

> Twenty-four are forced to enter. Only the winner survives. In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Each year, the districts are forced by

> the Capitol to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), a brutal and terrifying fight to the death – televised for all of Panem to see.
>
> Survival is second nature for sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who struggles to feed her mother and younger sister by secretly hunting and gathering beyond the fences of District 12. When Katniss steps in to take the place of her sister in *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), she knows it may be her death sentence. If she is to survive, she must weigh survival against humanity and life against love.

Teacher's Resources

At first, Carmen was unfamiliar how to use this text in the classroom. Nevertheless, she still decided to go along with the students.

> Carmen: So, I don't know, I am trying to figure out how to do the middle ground thing. They've talked me into reading *The Hunger Games* book, even though I know it's beneath them, reading wise that is. I decided they hated The Crucible, they hate, I mean, they thought A Lesson Before Dying was mediocre, they hate *Catcher in the Rye*, so I decided let's read one book that they select that they will enjoy. So, I told them the trade is I will let you read this, but we will read four stories in class that are more difficult. But, I am gonna read some of it in class, so that they can see that you can actually get into a book. (Carmen/Interview/61-66/March 23, 2010)

Context Resources

The Hunger Games (Collins, 2008) provided Carmen the ability to use the classroom, school, and "out of school" resources which she took advantage of with both research projects.

Initial Learning Zone

Figure 7 displays the initial transaction. From the beginning the students were willing to use the affordances they possessed to learn from this text. *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) provided students many affordances like genre, themes, characters, and issues students could discuss at length. Carmen, at first, possessed some affordances, but felt she needed to learn more.

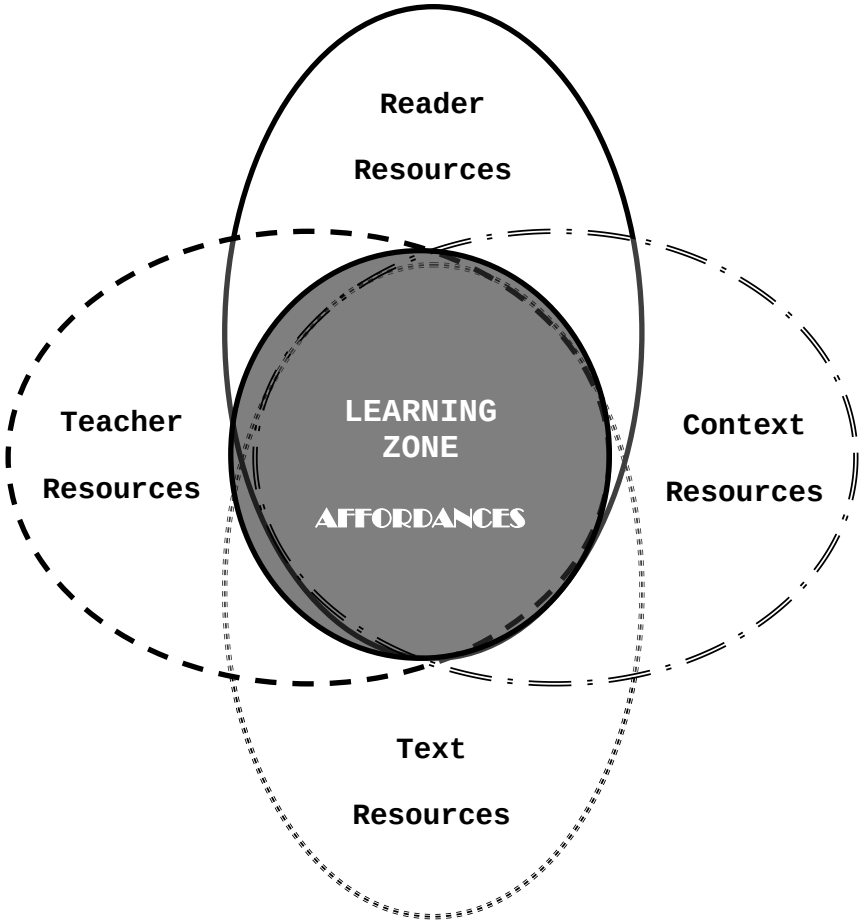


Figure 7. The Hunger Games (initial).

Deciding to Read The Hunger Games

The students talked Carmen "into reading the text." The decision to go along with what students wanted to read improved the atmosphere, relationships, and overall learning in the class. From the students' perspectives this action revealed that Carmen had similar interests and personality.

After the disappointing experience with *The Catcher in The Rye* (Salinger, 1951) Carmen wanted to choose a book students wanted to read. To do this, she gave students a week to find a book, read it, and discuss it with the rest of the class. Amy chose *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) to advocate for. After this initial conversation, he continued asking Carmen to choose it for the class; eventually, he was able to convince Carmen. Previously, Carmen spoke to other teachers who were familiar with the book; they all agreed with the students.

> Carmen: First, we are going to talk about the books we read, then we are going to talk about author style, and finally, we are going to talk about your satire.
>
> Carmen: Alright, you are going to us about your book, how you rated your book.
>
> [Students are given a script to follow as they rate their book.]
>
> Mandy: I read *Bone Chiller;* I gave the book a rating of 9. I gave it this score.
>
> Carmen: What was the book about?
>
> Amy: I read *The Hunger Games*…..It's like the show *Lost*, where you don't know who to trust.

Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning

Unlike during *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) Carmen used and mediated the students' available resources into affordances. To do this, she read aloud and she asked students to do a group and individual presentation about a topic of their choice.

Table 27

Carmen's Mediated Affordances with Second Instructional Unit

Affordance	Mediated	Activity
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Individual research project
Linguistic Knowledge	√	Individual and group research project write up and presentation
Thinking Strategies	√	Essential question
Academic Knowledge	√	Individual and group research project

Read aloud

Carmen read the beginning chapter aloud to the students' parts to the book as a way to start discussions. For example, after reading chapter 6 orally she asked students to discuss the meaning of tribute and asked students to visually imagine and discuss the book's setting as a way to prepare for a quiz. Carmen encouraged group and pair-share reading activities with

her students. Often, students in groups of 3-4 sat together and read aloud to each other.

Final Presentation

Carmen encouraged students to inquiry about their burning questions. To do this using this text she assigned students to do research about topics that interested them. To scaffold their thinking, Carmen provided students a list of 60 possible ideas. Of the 60, below are some of the ideas students chose. Many students chose to make a Flip Camera movie; others used iMovie, while many used a PowerPoint presentation.

Gladiator Games	Survival in the Wilderness
Death Games	Separation of Classes
Child Labor	War
Great Depression	Reality TV
Technology and Society	Violence as Sport
Public Humiliation	Starvation
Child Soldiers	Human Rights

(Carmen/*Hunger Games* research ideas handout/May 1)

During the observations in May students were frequently researching about their topic. Somewhere working on their movies, others were asking Carmen for permission to go out and ask people questions that pertained to their particular topic. During the observations in the month of May there were few teacher led activities.

Learning Zone

Figure 8 displays a visual of the transaction among the reader affordances, text affordances, teacher mediation and the contextual affordances during the instructional unit. Because the students were willing to use the resources at their disposal to learn more about the book and its themes, it helped Carmen identify activities that targeted and widen the learning zone. To do this, she used the schools' technological and human resources at her disposal to create an atmosphere of inquiry.

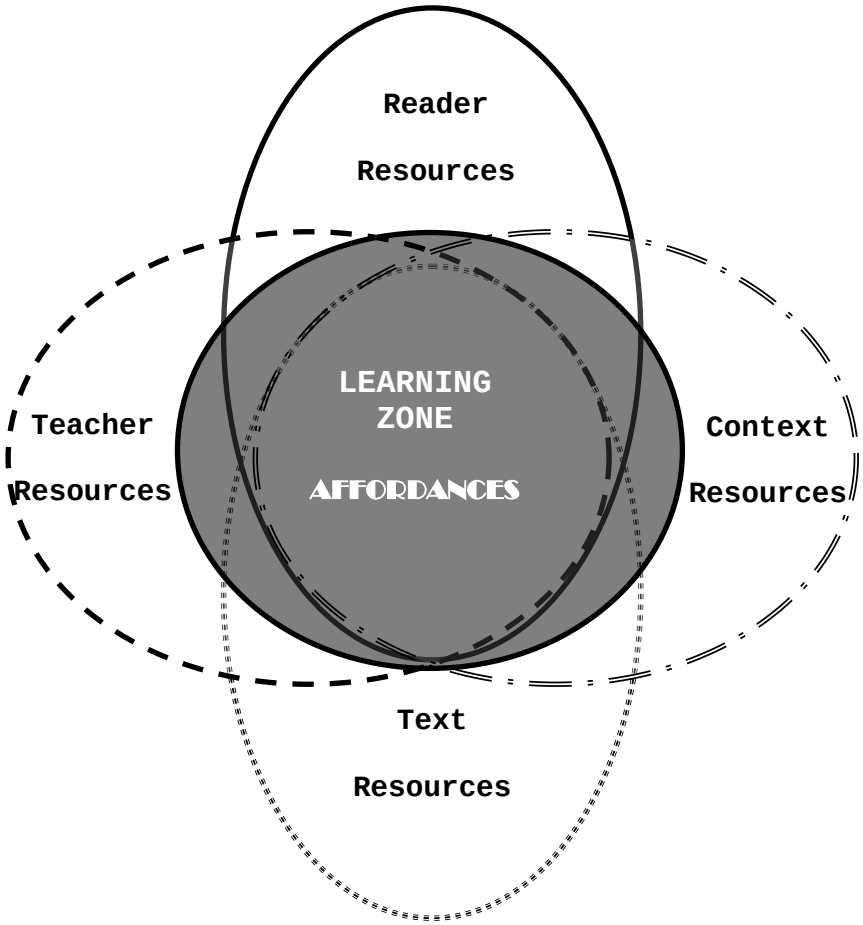


Figure 8. The Hunger Games (during instruction).

The House on Mango Street (Cisneros, 1984)

Even though this text was teacher-selected Janet had thought deeply about the connections (e.g., immigrant experiences) students might make as the unit went along. Janet's class was just beginning to read *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) when the study began. The unit culminated with an authentic writing assessment dealing with the themes and essential questions: (1) Tell me something you have in common with the book, and (2) How do people keep their own power (Janet/Observation/Board/February 19, 2010). Janet had taught this instructional unit for many years. Personally, she felt that all the previous students had enjoyed reading the book.

Reader Resources

The students possessed appropriate sociocultural, linguistic, and academic knowledge resources. Table 28 displays the possible affordances the students had available compared to what they possessed.

Table 28

Janet Students' Resources for First Instructional Unit

Resource	Possess	Mediation Needs
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	
Linguistic Knowledge	√	
Thinking Strategies		Comprehension Tying themes to personal experience.
Academic Knowledge	√	

The House on Mango Street Resources

Because the themes of *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 2008) were family, community, friendship, learning English, and immigration its themes were apt for Janet's students.

> *The House on Mango Street* is a novel of a young girl growing up in a Latino section of Chicago. It tells a story of Esperanza Cordero, whose neighborhood is one of harsh realities and harsh beauty. Esperanza does not want to belong—not to her rundown neighborhood, and not to the low expectations the world has for her. Esperanza's story is that of a young girl coming into her power, and inventing for herself what she will become. (Back cover/ Cisneros, 2008)

Teacher's Resources

Janet had several years of professional experiences teaching *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) to English language learners. During instruction it was apparent from her comments that her activities had been developed over time.

Context Resources

This text provided Janet the possibility to use the classroom and students' home experiences as possible resources.

Learning Zone

Figure 9 displays a representation of the transaction between the initial affordances brought into the learning experience by the reader, the text, the social context, and the ability for Janet to mediate. At the onset of this instructional unit the students possessed the sociocultural, linguistic, and academic content knowledge to read and comprehend the vocabulary, structure and its themes. However, they needed to build on their basic thinking strategies. Janet was familiar with the text since she had taught it for years.

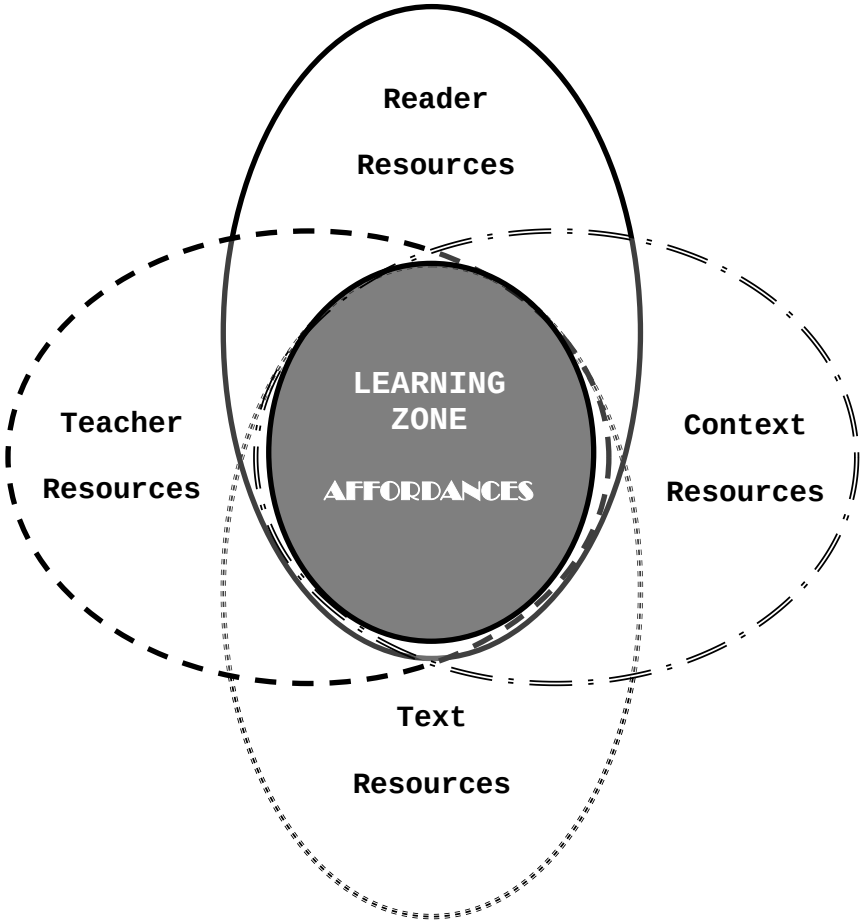


Figure 9. The House on Mango Street (initial).

Deciding to Read The House on Mango Street

There were four reasons why Janet chose to read this text. First, she had had a positive experience with previous immigrant classes. Second, the story is about an immigrant adolescent girl who is going to school (Appendix N) so her students could personally relate. Third, the book was part of the district curriculum and met its requirements. Finally, the book was linguistically and academically appropriate for her students (Janet/Post Interview/10-15/February 9, 2010).

Juan: Why did you choose *House on Mango Street*?

Janet: Because, first of all, it's my all-time favorite book. It's also in the district curriculum. It's so think and rich of ideas. And I've had at least five students that have said, "When we read house it changed my life.

Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning

Janet recognized and used many of the students' resources then mediated them into affordances. Table 29 displays the activities Janet and the students engaged in to mediate learning during *The House on Mango Street*.

Table 29

Janet's Mediated Affordances with First Instructional Unit

Affordance	Mediated	Activity
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Author's Chair
Linguistic Knowledge	√	Read Aloud
Thinking Strategies	√	Time for Dialogue
Academic Knowledge	√	Read aloud Writing Workshop Author's Chair Conferencing

To mediate the students' learning Janet read aloud, provided daily writing time, conferred with students, used humor to lighten up difficult conversations, built confidence by making assignments adaptable to students' strengths, and made authentic assessments directly from classroom instruction.

Read Aloud

Janet read aloud *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). While students were expected to read the chapters at

home, Janet read aloud the chapter the next day during class. In reading the book to the students Janet assured that reading would not be an obstacle for the two students who had less than a year in US schools. In addition, reading aloud provided chances for Janet to stop and discuss the themes of power, family, and friendship; it also allowed her to discuss difficult vocabulary and academic ideas.

Time for Dialogue

Janet provided students time for listening, speaking, reflecting about what they were reading. The conversations were predominantly about character analysis, vocabulary development and clarification, and Total Physical Response.

> Janet: Does Esperanza feel happy with her place?
>
> Janet: Do you think she's serious or do you think she's joking?
>
> Carla: What did you say before—sarcastic?
>
> John: Do you know what being sarcastic means?
>
> Carla: No
>
> Janet: Well, what if I said, You didn't do your homework; that makes me very happy. That's being sarcastic.

During the time for dialogue Carmen also incorporated the following strategies:

- Used pauses between reading some phrases
- Frequently clarified unfamiliar vocabulary

- Used total physical response (This is a method used to teach English learners where they can react physically to verbal cues. This method allows students to react immediately without too much thinking)
- Used gestures and body movement to convey meaning

Writing Workshop

Janet used the writing workshop approach daily. This approach was a way to allow her students to write at their own pace and ask for help whenever as needed.

Often, students signed up to meet with her during the last 20 minutes of class. During these conversations Janet focused on answering the student's questions about content and grammar. In the next conversation, a student is wondering about comma proper use.

[Anna is sitting next to Janet]

Janet: Remember about AAAWWUBBIS?

Janet: I would be so happy if you did that!

(Janet/Observation/102-104/January 26, 2010)

Using Jeff Anderson's (2007) AAAWWUBBIS (i.e., as, although, after, while, when, unless, because, before, if, since) A was invited to notice and act like an editor correcting her own comma errors. This tool provides her a way to address her grammatical errors in a friendly, safe environment. Janet had learned about this tool in a recent professional development.

This tool is beneficial to developing English language learners who are struggling with comma placement.

Author's Chair

Carmen asked students to write about the similarities and differences of body features between one parent and themselves. To do this, they had to go home and "study" one of their parents then write a short story. They were then expected to read the story to each other.

Conference Time

Janet allowed for time to confer in order to discuss student's writing, reading, and general concerns about other work. The last 20 minutes of the class period were often dedicated to address student concerns. On most days, Janet spoke to 4 or 5 students. While some students wrote, other edited, published, or researched information to add to their writing (Janet/Observation/106-118/January 26, 2010).

Humor

Janet used humor to have fun with students or to diffuse confusion.

[Reading Hips Chapter]

> Janet: [Reading] We slow the double circles down to a certain speed so that Rachel who has just jumped in can practice shaking it. … and then is Rachel who starts it. Skip, skip, snake it in your hips. Wiggle around and break your lip.
> (Janet/Observation/60-65/January 26, 2010)

After reading this passage, Janet stood up out of her chair and pretended she was jumping rope and shaking her hips like the book describes. Students began to laugh as she shakes her hips; students immediately were able to visualize what the chapter was about.

Building Confidence

Janet focused on building confidence so her students could share, discuss, and debate.

Deciding When and How to Assess Learning

Janet decided to assess learning after they read each vignette. She asked students questions orally to obtain immediate responses, as students answered she allow them to think deeply and correct themselves where appropriate.

Janet: So what's going on so far in the story?

Victor: The man.

Janet: Who is the man?

Carla: The husband.

Janet: Where is he?
Janet: Maria, where is the man, the husband?
Janet: It doesn't tell you M you have to guess.
Janet: Who is narrating the story?
Janet: Where is Esperanza?
Janet: What country is Esperanza in?

John: Mexico?

Janet: Why do you think Mexico? Because she's Hispanic? Raise your hands how many think its Mexico? [No one raises hand]

> Janet: Where is she?
>
> Students: In Chicago?
>
> Janet: Yes, she in Chicago, right? So, Maria where is the man then?
>
> Maria: In Chicago?
>
> (Janet/Observation/24-45/February 2, 2010)

Janet used an essential questions approach to allow students to make meaning during instruction and to process what they had learn from the text. She decided to use essential questions because she felt that this would be the best way to elicit a good response from her students (Janet/Interview/33/February 9, 2010). During the reading she purposefully had focused on the connections the book had with her students' experiences and the way the characters kept or gave away their power. In other words, she had been giving ideas about how to write about these topics since they begin reading the text.

> Janet: We have finished ***House on Mango Street;*** I have come up with two questions. Tell me something that you have in common with the book. How do people keep their own power? (Janet/Observation/11-13/February 9, 2010)

Learning Zone

Figure 10 displays a visual of the transaction between the reader affordances, text affordances, teacher mediation and the contextual affordances during the instructional unit. Of the three instructional units this study observed in Janet's class, this was the most successful in using the students'

sociocultural resources. It was helpful too that Janet had previously taught this text to other students and possessed ideas about how to mediate the book's theme about power.

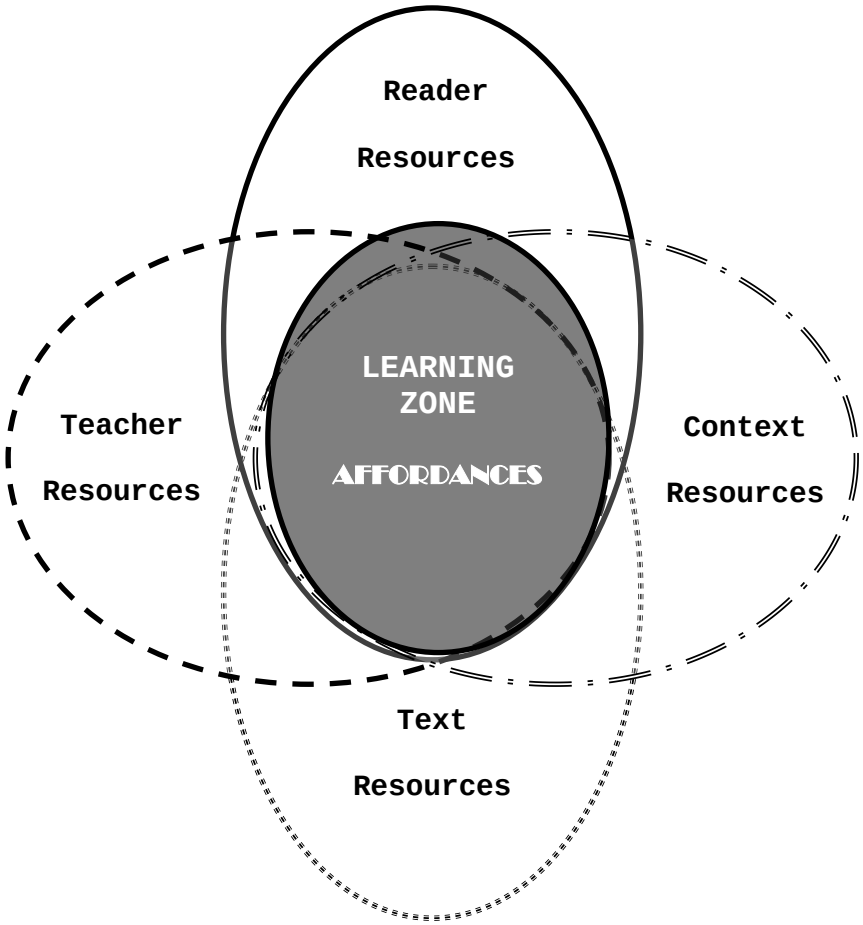


Figure 10. The House on Mango Street (during instruction)

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (Texas Education Agency)

Janet made a conscious decision to devote just one day for Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) preparation because she felt time was better spent reading and writing about authentic topics (Janet/Observation notes/March 2). For the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment Standards (TELPAS)

Janet assigned four writing assignments in the month of February. Each week students wrote about topics pertaining to a book they were reading or an assignment they were working on in math or science class.

To provide a focused discussion about Janet's decisions pertaining to formal assessments and how she prepared her students the discussion in this section focuses on the students' interaction with A Horse for Matthew (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills) practice assessment which occurred during a class period.

Reader Resources

The students possessed limited affordances for the Texas state assessments. Table 30 displays the possible resources the students had available compared to what they possessed.

Table 30

Janet Students' Resources for Second Instructional Unit

Resources	Possess	Mediation Needs
Sociocultural Knowledge		Students were not familiar with living in a rural setting.
Linguistic Knowledge		Students were not familiar with some of the academic vocabulary.
Thinking Strategies		Students were not familiar with strategies to answer questions.
Academic Knowledge	√	

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Resources

There were limited resources the Texas Assessment Knowledge and Skills practice exam provided for the students. The exam was composed of two stories, “A Horse for Matthew” and “Hello, Old Paint.” Students were asked to answer 33 multiple-choice questions, and 3 short answer questions. The test expected them to answer academic questions such as what does emitting mean.

Context Resources

The classroom, school, and district provided students acceptable resources for student to prepare successfully.

Teacher’s Resources

Janet had appropriate knowledge to prepare students for the state assessments. In previous years, her students had successfully met and exceeded the standards.

Learning Zone

Figure 11 displays the students’ resource and how they match with their sociocultural resources, linguistic knowledge, thinking strategies, and academic thinking required for the TAKS and TELPAS. “A Horse For Matthew” and “Hello, Old Paint” (TAKS released test, 2006) and the TELPAS writing assignments did not take advantage of the students’ sociocultural resources, linguistic knowledge, thinking strategies, or academic content. In fact, this exercise created anxiety and tension among the students.

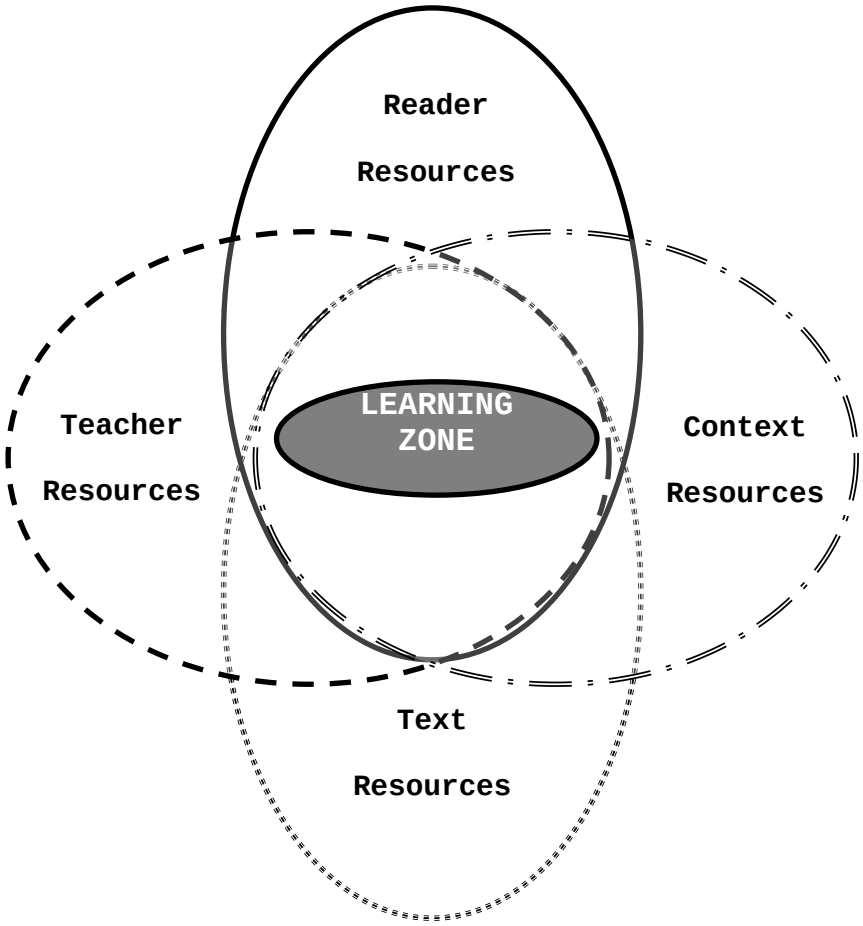


Figure 11. Texas Assessments of Knowledge and Skills.

Deciding on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Janet decided to assign the story "A Horse for Matthew" (TAKS Released Test, 2006) as a way for students to practice for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

Teacher's Mediation

Janet recognized that the students possessed limited resources about this particular story. However, she believed that once they spoke about strategies to use when facing difficult questions it would positively impact their performance and confidence. So, she spent less time talking about the

content of the story and more time about the buzz words they would encounter (e.g., main idea, summarization).

Table 31

Janet's Mediated Affordances with Second Instructional Unit

Affordance	Mediated	Activity
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Confidence
Linguistic Knowledge	√	Conversation
Thinking Strategies	√	Conversation strategies
Academic Knowledge	√	Conversation strategies

Time

Janet focused on time during the practice assessment. She wanted to provide students enough time to take the test, but also have time to discuss the answers with the students.

Janet: You have ten minutes to finish.

Carla: What if you don't finish in ten minutes?

Janet: That's OK; we will work with what you have.

Carla: But you said we would get a grade?

Janet: You can turn that in later for a grade, but we want to know how you did, and where you need help.

Carla: OK, thanks!

(Janet/Observation/20-25/March 2, 2010)

Conversation

Janet spent 45 minutes talking to students about the answers to the test, and effective testing tips they could use as they encountered difficult questions. During the conversation

she often asked students about how they reach an answer, then, suggested multiple thinking strategies they could use to navigate the difficult questions. These conversations allowed students to validate their answer or redress what had leaned them toward an answer.

Strategies

Janet decided to focus on teaching students quick strategies they could use as they approached difficult materials. The strategies included focusing on the questions that they had familiarity with, proving answers, slowing down, word usage in assessments, and not using your background knowledge to answer questions.

Janet wanted students to let go and focus on the familiar. She wanted to address this issue because she noticed that the students who did not finish the test focused their time on just a few questions and never reached the questions they knew how to answer.

> Janet: What I've noticed is that many of you [students] get stuck when they ask, What does a word mean? That's OK; you're not going to get all of the answers right, focus on the ones you know.
> (Janet/Observation/39-41/March 2, 2010)

Proving answers and reading carefully was another tip. Students keep assuming they knew the answer, instead of looking back to verify their hunch.

> Janet: Prove your answers Anna! [This will help]

(Janet/Observation/50/March 2, 2010)

> Janet: Read carefully; don't assume you know the answer. (Janet/Observation/45/March 2, 2010)

Janet wanted to discuss words students would encounter often. If students were familiar with them, then they could be familiar with what the question was asking.

> Janet: Does anybody know what foreshadow mean?
>
> Kyle: He is getting ready to say something?
>
> Janet: Why did you miss it the first time around? Why are you getting it now? I noticed that you guys hurried through the test! I [saw it] when I saw your faces change.
>
> Janet: Paragraph 23 shows the reader that Matthew us feeling—
>
> Students: [shout out A/B/C/D]
>
> Janet: If they ask you to focus on paragraph 5/6 just focus on paragraph 5/6 does not think about the story. Victor, do not over think, focus on what's in the story, keep it simple.

Confidence

Janet wanted students to feel confident taking the test (Janet/hallway conversation/March 2, 2010). She believed that it was important to practice the test once so that students understood its content and the process, but did not want to overdo it to the point of her students losing confidence.

Figure 13 displays the interaction between the students' affordances, the formal assessment, the teacher's mediation, and the sociocultural resources. The student's possessed few

affordances, in fact, their faces, at times, looked scared and nervous. The assessment did not also help. The stories contents and their question tasks were too unfamiliar and added to their misunderstanding. Janet was knowledgeable of a way to mediate students through this difficult situation.

Carmen and The Texas Education Agency reported (2010) that 100% of the students met or exceeded the standards set by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

Deciding When and How to Assess Learning

Janet decided to assess learning as soon as the students had completed the test. She created a semi-circle and asked the students to sit together to discuss their answers. She decided to do this so that she could provide immediate feedback.

Learning Zone

Figure 12 displays a visual of the transaction between the reader affordances, text affordances, teacher mediation, and the contextual affordances during the instructional unit. With this instructional unit it was Janet's intent to provide the students' practice taking a criterion test, then share suggestions about what to do when they encountered difficulties. It was not her intent to build on the affordances of this particular story because she knew that they would read other stories. In the end, this strategy worked because all the students met or exceeded the state requirements.

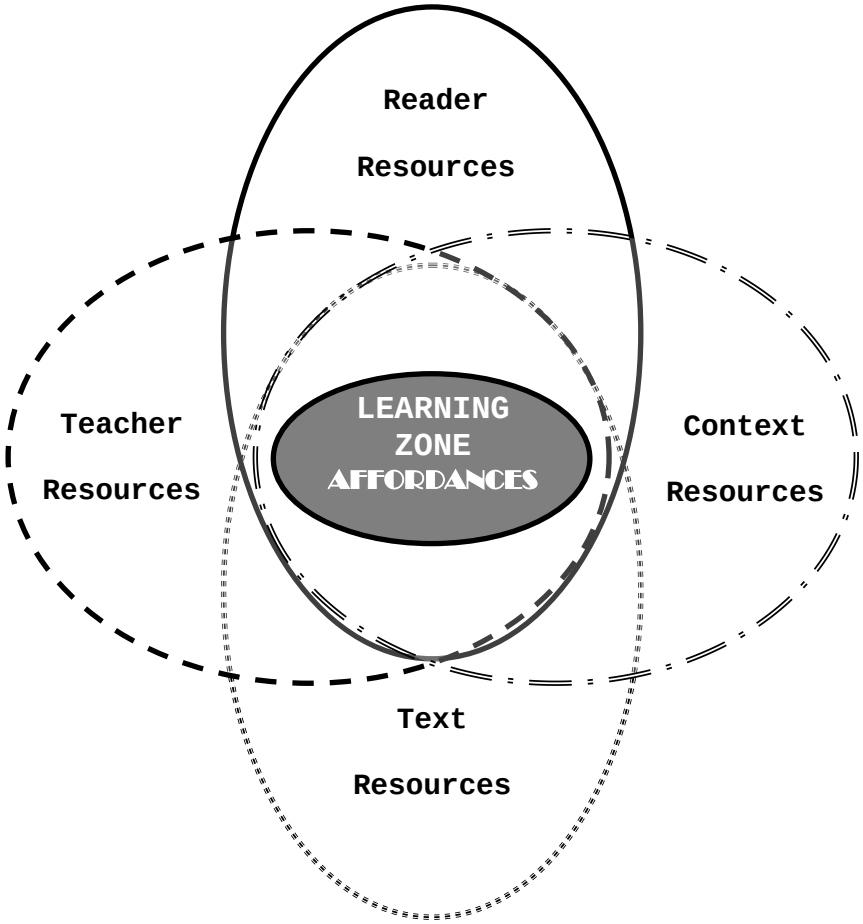


Figure 12. Texas Assessments of Knowledge and Skills.

The Odyssey (Homer, trans. 1996)

Juan: Who decided to read *The Odyssey*?

Jane: The district.

(Janet/Interview/37/April 23, 2010)

Janet decided to read *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) because it was required by her curriculum and also as a way to decide who was ready to exit the English as a second and other language (ESOL) program. For the past three weeks several students had been asking whether they were ready to exit the

program. One student and his parents feared that continuing in the ESOL program would hurt his chances of attending The University of Texas. To introduce the students to Greek mythology she asked them to find traits for what makes a hero, which became the central discussion throughout the reading of the text. Through initial conversations Janet knew that her students possessed little knowledge of Greek mythology, but she had decided that she would mediate their learning when they encountered difficult sections.

Reader Resources

The students possessed negligible sociocultural, linguistic, thinking strategies, and academic knowledge. Table 32 displays the possible affordances the students had available compared to what they possessed.

Table 32

Janet Students' Resources for Third Instructional Unit

Resource	Possess	Mediation Needs
Sociocultural Knowledge		Greek era and importance for learning about the civilization.
Linguistic Knowledge		Reading Poetry
Thinking Strategies		Connecting Greek mythology to current issues.
Academic Knowledge		Building vocabulary and thinking in the abstract.

At the onset the students possessed the background knowledge to relate to some of its themes (i.e., Hospitality, honor, and self-discipline); they did not have the background to address other difficult themes (i.e., Respect for Gods, reconciliation, and the importance of lineage).

In Janet's class the students had not read a book as dense, long, and so different from their sociocultural resources.

> Janet: I think they have done a good job of connecting, but also I think this is so outside they don't have any prior knowledge, I really don't, you know now they are really coming to me and asking you know if I want to watch ***Clash of the Titans*** (motion picture), Yeah, I just don't think any of them had done anything with Greek mythology and so they have no prior knowledge, so, I don't think they have something to hang it on to, so when you say, try to visualize it, they can't, it'd be like me asking you to visualize what Mars looks like. We don't have anything. (Janet/Interview/13-19/April 23, 2010)

The students seemed confused and resistant to continue the unit prior to Janet's attempt to mediate for the book. However, the confusion and lack of interest was lost as students made connections.

The Odyssey (Homer, trans. 1996) Resources

The text provided the students few affordances. The characters, themes, setting, and plot were very unfamiliar for students. In addition, the book was far longer than many students had been reading in Janet's class. Initially, this was a challenge for both Janet and her students to address.

Context Resources

For this unit, technology was a resources Janet used to support student learning. Specifically, students explored the MythWeb (www.mythweb.com) Internet site to read about Odysseus in a fun interactive way. She also played students *The Odyssey* (2008) movie to provide students a visual for the text.

Teacher's Resources

Janet was very familiar with the text because she had previously taught this to English language learners. She was aware of the many challenges students faced as they were introduced to a book away from their comfort zone.

Learning Zone

Figure 13 displays the students' Resource and how they matched with their sociocultural resources, linguistic knowledge, thinking strategies, and academic thinking required for *The Odyssey*. Initially, the book did not tap into the students' sociocultural resources. However, as the discussions took place they were able to think of movies they had seen like *Clash of the Titans*. This book required students to possess rich linguistic and academic knowledge that at first frustrated the students into silence and self-doubt.

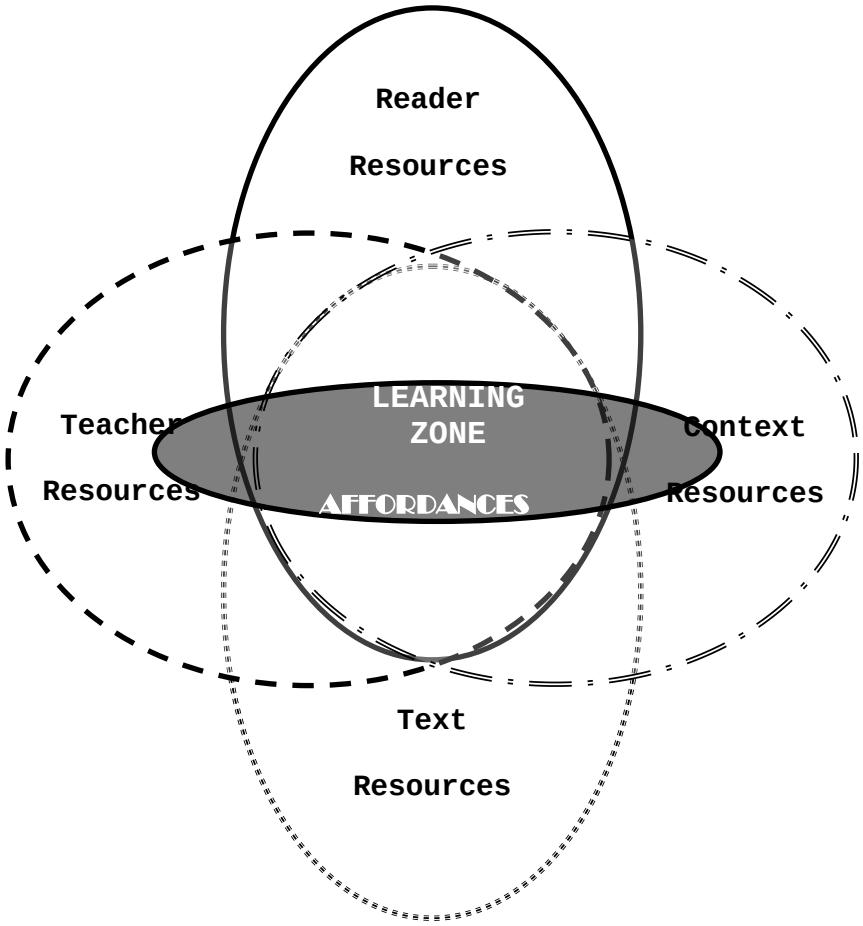


Figure 13. The Odyssey (initial).

Deciding to Read The Odyssey

There were two reasons why Janet decided to read this text. First, she wanted to follow the district curriculum. Second, she wanted to gauge her students' readiness for the mainstream class. However, if it were up to Janet she would have done something different the last eight weeks.

Juan: Who decided to teach *The Odyssey*?

Janet: The district. If it was up to me, I would not be teaching *The Odyssey*, I would be teaching something else the last eight weeks of school and we would do some kind of inquiry project where we would come up with a question, I would base it on Romeo and Juliet and relationships.

Deciding When and How to Mediate Learning

Janet wanted to stretch the students' thinking skills to the limit. She purposefully wanted to see their readiness for the mainstream classroom. Once she had observed their frustration with the text, she quickly provided mediation to bring them back to their instructional zone. While a few students still appeared confused as the unit went along, most of the students made connections to Odysseus and the book's themes.

Table 33

Janet's Mediated Affordances with Third Instructional Unit

Affordance	Mediated	Activity
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Movie
Linguistic Knowledge	√	Internet activity
Thinking Strategies	√	Dialogue Chapter leaders
Academic Knowledge	√	Dialogue Chapter leaders Who is a hero? Project

To mediate the students' learning Janet had to make different decisions than she had for *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). For *The Odyssey*, students had minimal sociocultural resources they could tap into. To mediate their learning, Janet read aloud, provided daily writing time, conference with students at their desks, made jokes when possible to lighten difficulties, built confidence by making

assignments adaptable to students' strengths, and made authentic assessments directly from classroom instruction.

What are the Characteristics of a Hero? Research Project

Janet had her students' research characteristics of Greek heroes as a pre-reading activity

Chapter Leaders

Janet created inquiry groups so that together students explored chapters and then lead a discussion about what they learned. She created chapter leaders to encourage inquiry, expertise, and discussions. This mediation allowed students to make sense of what they were reading before they presented their bulleted list to the rest of the class.

> Janet: Wow you guys are so perky and energetic today, I don't know if I can take it.
>
> Janet: OK so what books did we do?
>
> Victor: 9, 10
>
> Victor: You want me to start?
>
> Janet: Talk to the guys in your group? You guys decide.
>
> (Victor turns to the others to ask)
>
> Victor: "In this chapter this is the story when Aristides and Horatio are like whom are you? And then talks like what he felt from the Trojan horse while getting back?"
> Janet: "So what were you bullets points?"
>
> Victor: huh (silent), I guess, and then he told his soldiers to go back but they didn't obey him. And there was one quote from someone who attacked him, and then he was feeling betrayed by Zeus, and then he entered the lotus land, and that land there the people gave him the lotus to

> eat, and then when you that thing you can forget your homeland, and the bullets that were are they from, and the monsters, and these things.
> (Janet/Observation/42-51/April 22, 2010)

In addition, chapter leader discussions provided Janet with a way to address the student difficulties, clarify, and help them make connections to 21st century themes like prostitution, drugs, and gender roles. These conversations allowed students to make connections that they could relate to, allowing them to use their sociocultural resources.

> Janet: Ok, so, the lotus is like drugs, and the thing they care about is getting more lotuses, it's like modern time drugs, and that's what they are feeling. What about the men being turned into pigs? Think of it like a metaphor. Like the lotus and the drugs and modern times. Calypso is sort of the same thing in modern times. Is the sort of the idea of sex? Can you think of the men being turn into pigs? If you change the story and put the setting into modern times, what would the men being turn into pigs be? What would that look like? Why did she turn them into pigs?
> (Janet/Observation/131-136/April 22, 2010)

Movie Watching

Janet felt it was important to allow students to visualize what they were reading since they possessed few resources.

> Juan: How do you think [watching the movie] is going

> Janet: They love it. They honestly and truly love it. When I do the bulleted list, I get the summary, but reading it, and watching the movie that helps because we've had some good conversations and discussions about whether he is a hero because I don't think they understand that some of the stuff is not heroic by today's standards but when they watch the movie they make that connection.
> (Janet/ Interview/7-11/April 23, 2010)

Deciding When and How to Assess Learning

Janet decided to assess learning orally, through individual and group projects, and a final exam that encompassed what students had learned throughout the year not just for *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996).

Initially, the students were assigned to explore the traits of heroes in the www.mythweb.com website as a way to get them interested in the book. However, students were not interested in learning about Greek mythology.

> Janet: What we are looking for is the traits of heroes. What you're doing is what students are doing in college; the difference is that I've given you a place to visit. According to what I've read this [site] is supposed to work for you.
>
> Kyle: It's not funny.
>
> Janet: It's not funny, ha! Ha!?? What's the problem? Is it too difficult?
>
> Kyle: Yes. (The rest of the class nods)
>
> Janet: Do you want to look for your own site?
>
> Class: Yes.
> (Janet/Observation/31-36/March 23, 2010)

Janet decided to turn a teacher-directed assignment into an inquiry project that allowed them to explore the Internet to find resources that made sense for them. Although Janet had a different activity planned for the day, allowing her students to explore on their own gave students a sense of agency, power, and ownership of *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) moving forward.

> Janet: I am so happy I have the flexibility to modify content, I can only imagine if I have to follow through with what I started…
> (Janet/Observation/15/March 23, 2010)

To gauge chapter comprehension, she created chapter leaders of 2 and 3 students, where students were in charge of leading the discussion.

Janet frequently asked students to respond to questions that directly connected to the conversations going on during instruction. The questions extended beyond the context of the text, or focused directly to a topic they had been discussing during their group led activities.

1. Do heroes help us define, and develop the values we live by?
2. Where can we find heroes?
3. Was Circe using Odysseus because he was a man or did she truly care for him?
4. Was Calypso using Odysseus because he was a man or did she truly care for him?

At the end of the year Janet asked students to reflect on what they had learned, below are the questions students were asked to answer. The essay exam was two-fold in one part students were asked general questions, in the other they were asked specific questions about something they read.

Metacognitive Thinking about Literature

1. Do you agree or disagree that literature can help you become a better thinker? How does it help or not help? If you were to ask to explain to your parents how what we do in class helps you prepare for that goal, what would you say?

2. What is something important you have learned from reading or writing?

3. If you were to write something else that helped someone else be a better thinker, what would it be? You can use examples from what you have read in class.

4. Think about a character you have read in class. Describe something you were able to infer about the character.

5. Choose something you have read in class that has changed you in some way-your thinking, how you feel about other people, something you had learned that you didn't realize before.
   (Janet/Final/May 2010)

Learning Zone

Figure 14 displays a visual of the transaction between the reader affordances, text affordances, teacher mediation and the contextual affordances during the instructional unit. Janet knew many of the students would struggle with *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996). To address this, she stepped in more often and mediated the themes, vocabulary, and general ideas about Greek Mythology. Because the text was written in poetry form, it was difficult for the students to get a grasp of the themes and characters. To mediate this, Janet showed them a movie so they could "visualize" what they were reading.

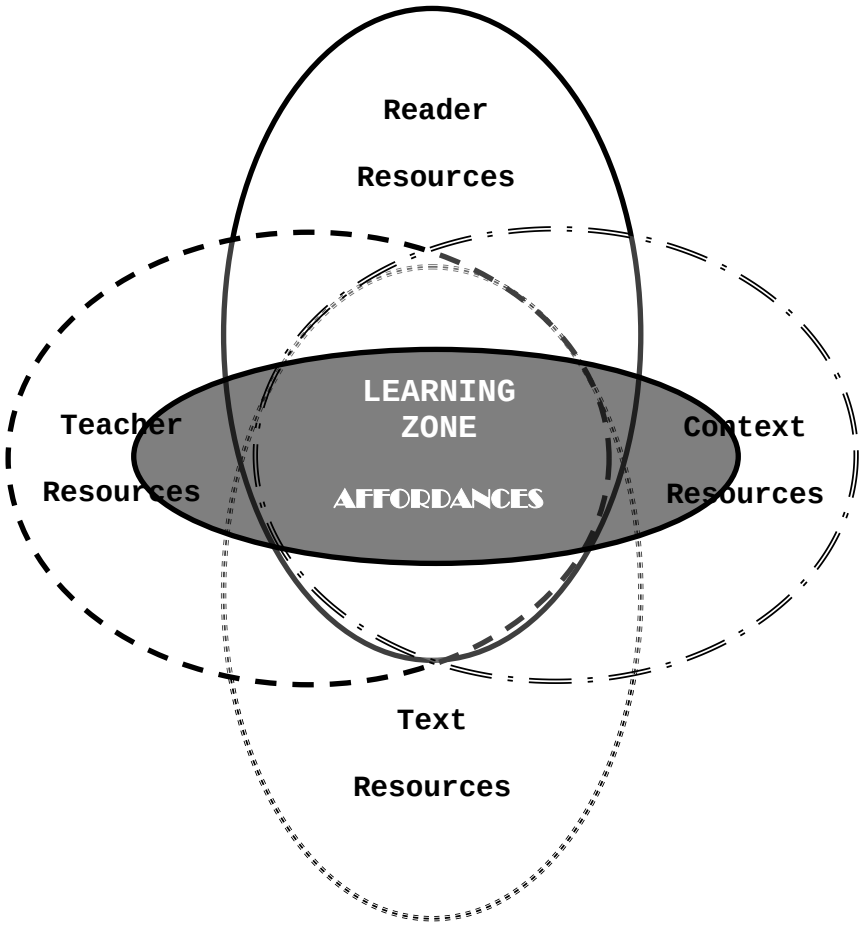


Figure 14. The Odyssey (during instruction).

Conclusion

The decision-making process for the teacher participants was complex as shown with the previous examples. Their conscious and deliberate courageous actions taken during classroom instruction were guided by multiple factors (e.g., resources at their disposal) including personal and professional experiences, curricular mandates, student needs, professional development experiences, pedagogical stance, and what they saw as they interacted with their students. These decision-making excerpts

provide some insight about what teachers can do to support students in adolescent classrooms.

The teachers' decisions made a difference for students learning. When the teachers decided to use the students' resources as part of the instructional activities, students engaged more often (*The House on Mango Street* and *The Hunger Games*) compared to when the texts and activities were solely curriculum directed (*The Odyssey* and *The Catcher in the Rye*). Moreover, the students engaged beyond the minimum and continued reading and writing after school.

The nature of decision-making informed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The size of the learning zone varied according to the appropriateness of the text, students' funds of knowledge, and teacher's ability to mediate when necessary.

Providing "good" instruction depends on more than diagnosing, analyzing, and gauging the student's developmental state. The teachers were conduits (cultural mediators) so the students could interact with their environments in and out of school. In addition, teachers need to think about their local and district context, the instructional tools at their disposal, and their ability to appropriately mediate when students encounter difficulty.

As the decisions illustrate, Carmen and Janet provided "good" instruction when they took into consideration more than

curriculum delivery and summative assessments. Conducting diagnostic conversations to learn more about the students' prior knowledge and misconceptions and frequently monitoring learning during instruction allowed Carmen and Janet to make "more appropriate" decisions.

Summary

In an effort to contribute to an understanding of the key elements of effective language and literacy instruction, this naturalistic study proffers a description of the decision-making process of both mainstream and English as a Second Language teachers went through as they supported their students in a high school language arts classroom.

The following two questions guided this study:

(1) How does the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction in a mainstream classroom compare to the enactment in an ESL classroom?

(2) What is the nature of teacher decision-making in high school during English language arts instruction?

Using observations, interviews, questionnaires, and other archival data, well-documented descriptions of participants' decision-making emerged as illustrated using the case studies presented in this chapter 4 and 5. Both of these case studies provide an opportunity for researchers, teachers, and policymakers to gain an insider's view of the process

monolingual teachers in a high school English language arts classroom experience as they support their mainstream and English as a second language students.

In the next chapter, I provide the discussion, interpretation, and implications of these findings as well as future directions for research as it relates to this study.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this naturalistic study was to compare the enactment of culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) and describe the instructional decisions of two high school teachers during English language arts instruction in a mainstream and English as a Second Language classroom. The data indicates, and is supported by the review of the literature, that learning is developmental, socially constructed, and mediated by tools (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers who think more about the influence and use of their student's resources and linguistic diversity, the specific contexts in which they teach, and the effects of their particular pedagogical approaches (Ball, 2006, p. 295; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Luke, 2003) provide richer academic experiences for their students.

The observations, interviews and questionnaires revealed the following themes: (1) embracing the students' sociocultural resources, (2) using and building students' linguistic knowledge, (3) expanding thinking strategies to make difficult information comprehensible, (4) providing authentic learning opportunities, (5) using formative assessments as instructional guides, (6) delivering just-in-time support and (7) making decisions guided by content knowledge, students' sociocultural, linguistic and thinking resources, text, district mandates, and

time. These themes provide a better understanding of how teachers make decisions, and how seeing students for who they are improves teaching and learning.

The following discussion focuses on each of the themes as outlined above and as supported by the review of the literature discussed in Chapter 2. Subsequently, a discussion is provided about the nature of teacher decision-making. Afterwards, a brief discussion will be presented about the differences that made a difference for Carmen and Janet. This is followed by implications and recommendations for practice, policy, research, and theory. The final section will conclude with ideas for future research and conclusions.

Summary of Findings

To discuss the findings from these two case studies it is necessary to review sociocultural theory and CMWI the professional development institute that this study investigates. Sociocultural theory states that learning is developmental, it is situated in social interactions, and psychological tools are essential to understanding how the learning process happens (Wertsch, 1990, p. 113). Teachers who work within the Zone of Proximal Development provide appropriate learning opportunities for their students regardless of language proficiency. Students come with a wealth of knowledge that has been learned outside of the school setting; it behooves teachers to use this "fund of

knowledge" (Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 2001) to mediate their academic learning. As students transact with the text, the teacher, other students, and the context around them, they walk away with a new perspective. In this stance, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Learning becomes transformative. That is to say, the students were able to think critically, reflect about their learning with other students and teachers, and walk away with a newfound perspective about the topic they would not have done on their own.

Carmen and Janet attended the CMWI professional development during the summer of 2007. During this study, Carmen was an English language arts teacher for monolingual students. Janet taught English as a Second Language I and II classes to second language learners from diverse populations including Korea, Mexico, Cuba, and India.

The findings suggest that there are seven interwoven patterns that capture the enactment of CMWI and the decision-making process teachers are involved in during English language arts instruction in mainstream and English as a second language classrooms. The themes are: (1) embracing the students' sociocultural resources, (2) using the students' linguistic knowledge, (3) using thinking strategies to make difficult information meaningful, (4) providing authentic learning opportunities, (5) delivering just in time support, (6) guiding

instruction using formative assessments and (7) decisions informed by knowledge, students' sociocultural, linguistic and thinking resources, curriculum (text), district mandates, and time.

Enacting a Sociocultural Perspective

Using the Students' Resources

The first theme that emerged in this study focused on the stance the teachers took about the resources students possessed when they entered the classroom. Their actions during the study indicated that it was essential for them to focus on the many resources students possessed and use them accordingly to mediate learning. According to the sociocultural theory of education, learning happens socially in and out of school (Heath, 1983; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). In this perspective, everyone possesses essential knowledge that can contribute to the learning of new concepts. During the study the teacher participants focused on students learning together. Students read together, researched and gave feedback to each other's writing, presented work, and dialogued about what they were reading. At the end of the year, the students in both settings wrote about the discussions, how much they enjoyed them, and how the discussions helped the students to connect to what they were learning in the classroom.

In taking an apprenticeship model approach (Rogoff, 1990) the teachers assisted the students' transition from novice to experts and insisted that they use each other as scaffolds. The sociocultural perspective says that in focusing on the cultural, linguistic, and social knowledge base, teachers provide effective instruction (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lee, 2008; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 2001). This was indicative throughout the study in both the mainstream classroom and English as a Second Language classroom in the way the students assisted each other during in class assignments. Instead of waiting for the teachers to answer their questions, students took initiative and asked for help from each other. In addition, this approach allowed students to recognize each other as "experts" and therefore see the abundance of talent in the classroom (Barr & Tagg, November/December 1995).

Taking Advantage of the Students' Linguistic Knowledge

The second theme that emerged in this study focused in the ways Carmen and Janet took advantage of the students' linguistic resources that they brought into the classroom to learn academic and non-academic concepts. Carmen and Janet believed that their students' linguistic functions "originated in the social life" (Wertsch, 1990, p. 113) and using them in class for academic purposes was beneficial. In Carmen's classroom, students connected their "everyday" language with the academic concepts

they were learning in school. In other words, both Carmen and Janet used "the students' linguistic diversity as an aid to help them negotiate the interactive process as they transacted with the environment around them" (Perez, 1998, p. 5). Their linguistic resources were seen as an aid not as interference (Cummins, *1979).*

Expanding Students' Thinking to Aid Comprehension

The third theme that emerged in this study focused on the way both teacher participants expanded thinking strategies to make challenging material more comprehensible for students. Tharp and Gallimore (1987, p. 185) argue that "the beginning capacity can, at times, be assisted by experts like teachers, parents, siblings, or others sources" like linguistic knowledge and thinking strategies. Often, the teacher participants introduced a new thinking strategy when students were struggling to grasp a new concept.

In Carmen's case improving thinking was evident as she focused on activities pertaining to author's style, tone, point of view, and satire. Carmen often modeled the new concept following the apprenticeship model (Rogoff, 1990). She guided her students by modeling the activity, working on something together through interaction with her or with other students, asking them to work in groups to practice the activity, and then

finally making their learning public by asking them to share with the rest of the class.

In Janet's case improving thinking was her long-term goal as shown with her final metacognitive exam. Often, she thought out loud and shared with the rest of the class. This deliberate activity allowed students to hear for themselves the "thinking process." At times, Janet requested parents to scaffold learning as she did during *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) assignment when she asked students to discuss with their parents their immigrant experience.

Providing Authentic Learning Opportunities

The fourth theme that emerged in this study focused on the authentic learning opportunities the teacher participants provided students regardless of language and literacy proficiency.

In Carmen's case the authentic learning opportunities were evident during *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) and *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) units. Until Carmen decided to assign *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) most of her students felt uncared for; her relationships with her students changed once she made the decision to read the text students were interested in. The authentic learning opportunities like *The Hunger Games* research project, *The Catcher in the Rye* music

soundtrack, and the Dear Abby columns allowed students to display and make public their strengths.

In Janet's case the authentic learning opportunities were evident during *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). While Janet tried to incorporate them during *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996), students found the reading and activities still difficult.

Delivering Just in Time Academic and Non Academic Support

The fifth theme that emerged in this study focused on the kinds of support the teacher participants provided for their students, specifically, academic and nonacademic.

As seen in the case studies, Carmen and Janet provided more than English language arts support for their students. They provided moral, social, cultural, and personal support.

With Janet students felt they had an extended family member, a friend who would help both academically and non-academically. This commitment went beyond the academic year since many of her past students often visited the classroom to ask for advice, for food, or simply to rest for a while. This connection to students cannot be taken lightly; students remembered what they had learned. Past students often said about the activities going on, "I remember when we did that last year Miss Janet."

Using Formative Assessments

The sixth theme that emerged from this study focused on the ways the teacher participants used on-going formative assessments to inform their instruction. During the observational period Carmen and Janet taught and assessed student progress based on the students' short and long term academic, career and life needs, not just to meet the needs of the state required measurement tool. Both frequently commented that they had realized that to meet the needs of their students they had to teach and assess beyond the designated curriculum at their disposal. Furthermore, as seen through their decision-making these teachers thought that the state required assessments gave them different data than they need to modify their instruction. Scriven (1967) argued in his seminal research that summative and formative assessments seek and report different information; therefore, it is important for teacher not to focus on one or the other.

For Carmen assessments initially focused on content mastery, and then focused on local and global connections.

For Janet formative assessments involved engaging with students across multiple tools to measure their listening, speaking, reading and writing so that it makes them better thinkers. She used reflective journals, essays, short quizzes, and discussion as formative assessment tools. For Janet, these

assessments allowed her to modify the instructional decisions about what to do. For students, the assessments allowed them a way to monitor their own progress, and then revise any misconceptions (thinking) at any time without penalty. This is beneficial for second language learners since it provides constant feedback about what a student knows and does not know.

The formative assessments that were documented in this study informed the teachers' practice and allowed students to become responsible and reflective about their learning (Boston, 2002). Further, in releasing responsibility to students for learning, teachers were able to create lessons and activities that addressed the individual and group needs.

Decision-Making

The seventh theme that emerged from this study focused on the decision-making the teacher participants engaged in to provide meaningful instruction for their students. The findings suggested that teachers made decisions often. Their decisions were informed by multiple factors that made their decisions complex. The factors included their personal knowledge, the students' sociocultural, linguistic, and thinking resources, text, district mandates, and the amount of time available to make the decision.

Cultural Mediation

Vygotsky (1978) argued that we are frequently responding to the stimuli (e.g., classroom, world, home life, friends, and family) around us. We respond to or act on these natural stimuli through the use of tools and signs (e.g., language, hammer, and thinking strategies) that are socially and culturally constructed. Sometimes, this interaction aids to further develop our cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). Carmen and Janet using the vast knowledge of the tools, their students, and the context around them were able to choose the appropriate support, scaffold the student when needed, and allow for time for self-discovery and inquiry.

In these two classroom settings, the students were frequently responding to the tools and signs provided by their previous experiences, teacher, classroom context, and the text. The tools and signs did not determine their action. Rather, the students were expected to choose the appropriate way to transact to improve their learning.

The themes identified in this study indicated that the participant teachers (1) embraced the students' sociocultural resources, (2) built on students' linguistic knowledge, (3) expanded thinking strategies to make difficult information comprehensible, (4) provided authentic learning opportunities, (5) used formative assessments as instructional guides, (6)

delivered just-in-time support and (7) and made decisions based on their knowledge, students' sociocultural, linguistic, and thinking resources, curriculum, district mandates, and the time at their disposal. They are examples of the differences that make a difference for both participants in this study. It is through these differences that we can see how both teacher participants benefited and learned through the CMWI professional development and how their decision-making made a difference for student success. These differences allowed the teachers to differentiate their instruction for their particular situation while at the same time keep the principles and practices of CMWI.

Differences that Made the Difference for Participant Teachers

When exploring the findings discussed in this chapter of the study, it makes sense to discuss the differences that make a differences for both teacher participants in order to obtain a clearer view of the themes presented above.

Participating in culturally mediated writing instruction (CMWI) made a difference for Carmen and Janet for four reasons. First, CMWI took into account Carmen's and Janet's wealth of expertise during delivery, assessment and follow up activities. Second, CMWI provided Carmen and Janet the opportunity to learn from one another, conduct on-line conversations, and engage in sustained, authentic and meaningful efforts that focused on

their students' immediate needs. Third, CMWI provided Carmen and Janet a common language to discuss what they were noticing in the classroom. This language empowered them to seek for answers to their pressing instructional needs. Finally, CMWI expected all participants to share responsibility for determining, addressing, creating supportive environments, and having honest discussions about what works and does not work with English language learners.

CMWI contributed to Carmen's and Janet's as decision-makers. They felt they were no longer constrained by natural curricular forces that predetermined their every action in the classroom; rather, they felt that their decisions mattered for students. During the study, this shift was evident in Carmen's actions during *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) instructional unit.

Carmen and Janet took a wider perspective about what counts as literacy resources. More specifically, Carmen and Janet focused on more than the academic content knowledge; they also thought of ways to incorporate the students' sociocultural resources, their first and second languages, and available thinking strategies. This wider perspective improved all aspects of the students' academic experiences.

Carmen's and Janet's actions mediated transactions (Rosenblatt, 1985). Carmen, Janet and their students were not

simple “onlookers” waiting for something to happen. Instead they were in an ongoing process to observe, support, and assess the “total situation” (Rosenblatt, 1985, p. 100) then act accordingly to mediate learning. The actions, reactions, and transactions transformed their thinking in irreversible positive ways. These students were able to then make the necessary changes as they responded to the new information. That is to say, these classes “took a life of their own, as the students transacted with one another” (Patterson, Baldwin, Araujo, Shearer, & Stewart, 2010, p. 143).”

Carmen was a middle school teacher when she attended the CMWI professional development institute working with Spanish English language learners in a suburban school. Today, Carmen is in a different situation. She works with mainstream students who are mostly on grade level, gifted and talented, and are thinking about what university to attend in two years. She found that applying the same principles and practices also worked for the mainstream students. Carmen acknowledged, accepted and embraced her students’ strengths and needs. Using meaningful readings and applications she built caring and empathetic communities in the spring semester.

Janet was a high school teacher when she attended the CMWI professional development institute beginning to install English as Second Language program in an affluent community. Prior to

this, Janet was an ESL teacher working with multiple classes—mostly Spanish second language learners. Janet accepted her students for who they were, and acknowledged their social, cultural, linguistic, and academic resources. Throughout the observational period Janet made meaningful connections to the students' cultural and linguistic diversity with help from the reading and writing assignments (e.g., *House on Mango Street*, Author's Chair, and *The Odyssey*). One of her goals was for her students to experience success daily. By assigning tasks which were within the students' zone of proximal development she accomplished this goal.

Implications

In general, these two case studies, although limited in scope, are enlightening because they provide more information about how teachers enact sociocultural principles and practices in adolescent settings and how decisions impact student learning. In particular, this study has implications for teachers, administrators, professional developers, and policymakers as they evaluate and support effective instruction in a high school English language arts classroom. The findings of this study suggest that decision-making is a complex undertaking, impacts student learning, and needs additional focus.

CMWI, the professional development at the center of this study, provides some evidence that sustained, inquiry-based, context-specific support makes a difference for teachers and their students. By providing opportunities for social and academic transaction, allowing students to make informed decisions about what to read and write, recognizing students' individualities, and encouraging constant dialogue about what they were learning in and out of school, Carmen and Janet over time created a rich, student-centered community of inquiry where students felt comfortable reading, writing, and sharing about what they identified with.

Carmen and Janet joined CMWI because they were looking for answers about what they should do for their students who were from linguistically and culturally diverse communities. The enactment of CMWI in the two classrooms validates earlier findings reported in other research (Patterson, Wickstrom & Araujo, 2010) about the differences in implementation of CMWI depending on the teacher's context, students, curriculum, and other resources. Although Carmen was no longer working with middle school English language learners in her new setting, she found that the high school mainstream students benefited from the same principles and practices pertaining to validating their identity, recognizing their multiple knowledge sources, and allowing for collective learning to take place. Janet, on the

other hand, was working with English language learners in smaller numbers and in different economic settings. The enactment of CMWI in Janet's classroom focused on building relationships and making connections to past academic and non-academic experiences to learn new applications for improved thinking ability.

The themes that emerged from this study suggest that collaborative learning environments provide students the latitude to learn from one another, discover their own and others' talents, and make meaningful connections about what they are learning. It is beneficial to point out that allowing teachers the opportunity to make decisions about instruction for their students is necessary if they are to address what students need to know.

So, what was the relationship between the teacher's decisions and the consequences in the classroom for students?

The teachers' decisions about what books to read, the kinds of assignments to do with students, how to assess learning, and when to mediate directly impacted the initial and ongoing connection students made to the text, and consequently, the knowledge students exhibited during conversations and authentic assessments.

On one hand, *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) matched Carmen's students' interests pertaining to relationships,

adolescence, rebellion, and reality television. On the other hand, they struggled to connect with *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) because of its focus on isolation, sadness, and madness. Consequently, Carmen's decisions about the books she chose directly impacted her students' learning.

In Janet's class *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) took advantage of the wealth of resources students possessed. Students made direct connections to the characters and themes because the connections were made explicit. Conversely, *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) was very different than their lived experiences, requiring them to make explicit connections to a topic that was unfamiliar for them.

So, what did the teacher's decisions and actions reveal about the implementation of CMWI?

The teachers' decisions and actions reveal that CMWI provided the teacher participants with a framework to think and speak about the influence of their students' sociocultural resources and linguistic diversity, take into account the classroom content in which they taught, and discuss with other teachers their pedagogical approaches about what works with mainstream and English language learners in high school settings. Through conversations with other teachers in the same situation, university faculty, and their students, Carmen and

Janet over-time were able to appropriate decipher their students' needs.

Their decisions and actions also reveal that building strong bonds between teachers and students affects academic achievement. In Carmen's case, students' ideas about the amount of caring Carmen had for them impacted their academic engagement. In Janet's case, students' viewed her class as a home away from home. This stance provided students and teachers a baseline for understanding each other's role in the classroom.

So, how did the decisions, actions, and consequences vary depending on the assignments, text, students, and teacher?

The teachers' decisions varied depending what they noticed about how the students were responding to the assignments, the time at their disposal, the students' and the text's available resources. Sometimes, their actions were immediate, while other times they consulted with faculty, friends or other resources.

Implications for Practice

Although the themes that emerged from this study for teachers are specific to Carmen, Janet and their students, all teachers are decision-makers. This study, in particular, is a reminder that teaching students is not just about figuring out the curriculum and then implementing it. Rather, it is also about keeping in touch with student needs, accepting students for who they are and acknowledging (and incorporating) their

knowledge in the classroom. To that end, it is helpful to think more about the impact of understanding the culture of the classroom; understanding more about why students behave the way they do in classrooms; understanding more about how they think they should behave in the classrooms; understanding more about how they are rewarded for this behavior; and understanding more about what they value.

This study is also a reminder for teachers that it is a good idea to explore the resources (i.e., professional, textual, students, and contextual) around them and think about how to use them as resources in action to mediate learning.

Implications for Policy

The themes that appeared from this study for policymakers, particularly, provide some evidence that good instruction for mainstream and/or English as Second Language (ESL) students ***is not*** a formulaic endeavor. As policymakers appraise and support effective instruction, it is important to keep in mind that teachers provide more than academic support for their students. They provide moral and personal support.

Opportunities for continued, ongoing, embedded professional development should be encouraged. Teachers want to make a difference for their students, and providing resources in their professional settings will allow time for growth that can help students.

Calculating teacher effectiveness is not so simple; rather, it is very difficult. While quantitative information can provide some information about program effectiveness, it may not measure or quantify its quality. More qualitative studies are needed to demystify what goes on in classrooms.

The challenge to formulate "one program" that works for all students is idealistic because of the complex real needs of our students at all grades. Teachers who provide effective instruction for their students see the whole child (Goodman, 1986).

Implications for Research

The themes that emerged from this study for researchers suggest that more information is still needed about what teachers do to support English language learners, especially at the high school level. The review of the literature suggests that very few studies have looked at decision-making since the inception of No Child Left Behind (2001).

More studies are needed to uncover the impact of inquiry-based professional development and its impact on instruction.

More information is still needed about how monolingual teachers support English language learners in mainstream classrooms.

Finally, research is still needed about the other "social factors" not pertaining to curriculum revision that impact

student learning. Teachers teach students more than subject mastery including preparation for college, career, and life.

Implications for Theory

The themes that emerged from this study for theory validate Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective that learning takes place through conscious, deliberate, and strategic mediation. Teachers, students, parents, contextual resources, or text sources can provide this mediation or assistance. In this approach, students are invited to participate in the ongoing dialogue about what they need to know.

The heuristic developed to analyze the decisions made by Janet and Carmen can be extended to explore ways other teachers make decisions. This is particularly important as politicians, researchers, and teachers try to understand how to provide support for students.

Future Research

There are three suggestions for future researchers to ponder. First, more information is still needed about how teachers' decision-making influences student writing. The heuristic developed to analyze the teachers decisions presented in this study is a first step to help understand the complexity of decision-making during classroom instruction. More information is needed about its four categories (i.e., teacher resources, student resources, context resources, and text

resources) and how these resources contribute to the learning zone for students and teachers. While some of these categories seem broad, its attempt for this study was to capture the decision-making process. More information is needed about what resources fall within each category.

Second, there needs to be a focus on the decisions students make during writing instruction, especially at the high school level. Third, more information is still needed about decision-making at the high school level by teachers and students in dual language programs in urban settings.

Conclusion

Teachers matter, this is an undeniable fact. Navigating between the underlying tensions of knowledge delivery for school success and meeting the students' individual needs is a complex undertaking regardless of language proficiency. More studies are needed to unpack what good teachers do to provide quality instruction for all students. The themes that emerged from these two case studies provide some evidence that monolingual English language arts teachers can provide appropriate instruction for 21st century adolescent mainstream and English language learners. Teachers who work within active, empathetic, caring communities, provide just enough degrees of freedom and in-time support, and allow students to make genuine connections will prepare them not simply for subject mastery, but also for college, career, and

life. Sustained, ongoing, engaging, professional development provides teachers learning opportunities that make a difference for students. It is important to remember, nevertheless, that ***there is no one program*** that works for all situations. Teachers must remain vigilant for ongoing shifts in their classroom needs, and then act accordingly, keeping in mind the students' learning zones as they decide what to do next.

There are no easy answers to address the literacy needs of our adolescent students in school today. Teachers should think more about how to use the students' social, cultural, linguistic, academic, and other resources to mediate school—to create learning zones for individuals and group of students. Curricular changes can only help reconcile ***some*** of the challenges 21st century students face as they continue on their life pathways. Teachers who are equipped and willing to make complex decisions can help to actively mediate this endeavor.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Teacher decision-making; case studies of cultural mediation in adolescent classrooms

University of North Texas Institutional Review Board

Informed Consent Form (Teacher)

Before agreeing to your participation in this research study, it is important that you understand the risks and benefits of the study.

Title of Study: Teacher decision-making; case studies of cultural mediation in adolescent writing classrooms

Principal Investigator: Dr. Carol Wickstrom, Associate Professor, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Teacher Education and Administration.

Key Personnel: Juan Araujo, Graduate Student, University of North Texas will also be involved with data collection of this study.

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study in which _____, will allow the principal investigator to document through observation the teacher's decision-making process during writing instruction. We think this approach will motivate students to write well and will teach writing strategies in a more effective way.

Study Procedures: You are being asked to participate in a case study about how their teacher makes decisions during writing instruction. The research will primarily use observations, interviews, journal entries, and a wrap up a conversation. One teacher in one high school of English language arts will be observed during writing instruction. Each teacher will be interviewed periodically throughout the observational period. The researcher will observe classrooms during the spring 2010 semester for a period between 6-9 weeks.

Although you will plan the particular activities and assignments, you can be assured that they will be consistent with district curriculum and with research-based instructional practices designed to help students write more effectively.

Foreseeable Risks: There are no foreseeable risks are involved

in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This project may benefit other teachers by providing more effective writing instruction. This project may benefit other teachers by producing findings about whether this approach works with middle and high school students, especially with English language learners.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: All participants will be assigned pseudonyms. These false names will be used to identify individuals in all documents. Only the research team will have access to the participants' identities. All videotapes and documents related to the study will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the UNT office space of the researcher. The only person with a key to access to the office space and the filing cabinet is the principal researcher and the departmental Administrative Assistant. The confidentiality of your individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study. Once the reports are written (or at the end of three years) all videotapes and documents will be destroyed.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact ***Dr. Carol Wickstrom***, Teacher Education, at telephone number (940) xxx-xxxx or carol.wickstrom@unt.edu or Juan Araujo at telephone number (214) xxx-xxxx or juan.araujo@unt.edu.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights: Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- You understand the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as the teacher of a research participant and you voluntarily consent participation in this study.
- You understand you will receive a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Teacher

APPENDIX B

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Teacher decision-making; case studies of cultural mediation in adolescent classrooms

University of North Texas Institutional Review Board

Informed Consent Form (Parent/Guardian)

Before agreeing to your child's participation in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose and benefits of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: Teacher decision-making; case studies of cultural mediation in adolescent writing classrooms

Principal Investigator: Dr. Carol Wickstrom, Associate Professor, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Teacher Education and Administration.

Key Personnel: Juan Araujo, Graduate Student, University of North Texas will also be involved with data collection of this study.

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study in which _____, your child's English language arts teacher, will allow the principal investigator to document through observation the teacher's decision-making process during writing instruction. We think this approach will motivate students to write well and will teach writing strategies in a more effective way.

Study Procedures: Your child will be asked to participate in a case study of how their teacher makes decisions during writing instruction. The research will primarily use observations, interviews, journal entries, and a wrap up conversation. One teacher in one high school of English language arts will be observed during writing instruction. Each teacher will be interviewed periodically throughout the observational period. The researcher will observe classrooms during the spring semester for a period between 6-9 weeks. Student writing samples will be collected at the beginning and at the end of observation to document student growth.

Although your child's teacher will plan the particular activities and assignments, you can be assured that they will be consistent with district curriculum and with research-based instructional practices designed to help students write more

effectively. Your child's teacher will keep you informed about specific assignments. This will not require any time from your child other than his or her class time and time to complete typical homework assignments.

Foreseeable Risks: There are no foreseeable risks are involved in this study for your child.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This project may benefit other teachers by providing more effective writing instruction. This project may benefit other teachers by producing findings about whether this approach works with middle and high school students, especially with English language learners.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: All participants will be assigned pseudonyms. These false names will be used to identify individuals in all documents. Only the research team will have access to the participants' identities. All videotapes and documents related to the study will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the UNT office space of the researcher. The only person with a key to access to the office space and the filing cabinet is the principal researcher and the departmental Administrative Assistant. The confidentiality of your child's individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study. Once the reports are written (or at the end of three years) all videotapes and documents will be destroyed.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact ***Dr. Carol Wickstrom***, Teacher Education, at telephone number (940) xxx-xxxx or carol.wickstrom@unt.edu or Juan Araujo at telephone number (214) xxx-xxxx or juan.araujo@unt.edu.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants' Rights: Your signature below indicates that you have read or have had read to you all of the above and that you confirm all of the following:

- You understand the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study.

- You understand that you do not have to allow your child to take part in this study, and your refusal to allow your child to participate or your decision to withdraw him/her from the study will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your child's participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as the parent/guardian of a research participant and you voluntarily consent to your child's participation in this study.
- You understand you will receive a copy of this form.

APPENDIX C

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

Student Assent Form

You are being asked to be part of a research project being done by Dr. Carol Wickstrom and Mr. Juan Araujo, graduate student at the University of North Texas, and the Department of Teacher Education and Administration.

This study involves your English language arts teacher, who will be using some activities and assignments to help improve your writing. These assignments will give you an opportunity to do some inquiry and to write for audiences outside your classroom. We think this approach will motivate students to write well and will teach writing strategies in a more effective way.

You will be asked to participate in these writing activities and assignments as a part of your English language arts class. It will not take any time other than your regular class time and homework time.

If you decide to be part of this study, please remember you can stop participating any time you want to.

If you would like to be part of this study, please sign your name below.

_____
Printed Name of Student

_____ _____
Signature of Student Date

_____ _____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date

APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Juan Araujo successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 10/01/2008

Certification Number: 108675

APPENDIX E

E-MAIL INVITATIONS TO TEACHERS

Email Invitation for Teachers

Teacher Decision-making; Case Studies of Cultural Mediation in Adolescent Classrooms

A graduate dissertation proposal

Juan Araujo, graduate student at University of North Texas, (Denton, Texas) is seeking for secondary English language arts teachers to conduct two case studies of teacher decision-making during writing instruction.

I invite you to be a teacher researcher in this project! See the description of activities below and contact Juan Araujo at juan.araujo@unt.edu or Carol Wickstrom at carol.wickstrom@unt.edu on or before May 1, 2010 about whether you can join us!

(some of the information here is archival data)

Teacher Activities

- Complete the teacher knowledge & practice survey.
- Take part in observations and interviews, and conversations during the spring 2010 semester.
- Have your students do writing samples twice during the semester, to submit their writing assessment, and have them complete a writing apprehension survey at the beginning and end of the year.

Teacher Researcher Benefits

- Focus on Writing Instruction
- End of semester one-on-one lunch

- Good times and great camaraderie!
- Better learning and improved writing for your students!

What? A dissertation research projects that documents two teachers' decision-making during writing instruction and the impact on student performance. These case studies try to develop a further understanding of how a teacher's decision-making process fosters effective writing instruction.

Dissertation Questions

What is the role of teacher decision-making in culturally mediated adolescent writing classrooms?

a. How, if at all, does choosing the kinds of affordances (personal/interpersonal, content knowledge, concept development, meaning making strategies, and linguistic support) influence teacher decision-making?
b. What, if at all, are the teacher's perceptions of mediating student learning?

Please contact Juan Araujo by May 1 to let me know if you want to join the project.

Contact Information:

Carol Wickstrom or Juan Araujo
1155 Union Circle Drive # 310740
Denton, Texas 76203-5017
Carol.wickstrom@unt.edu or juan.araujo@unt.edu
Cell (214) xxx-xxxx

APPENDIX F

DATA TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Data

Name _____ School District _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Email _____School Phone_____

1. Age _____under 25 ___25-34 _____ 35-44 _____ 45-54 _____ over 54 _____

2. Years of Experience Teaching ___ 1-3 ___4-6 ___7-10 ___ 11-15 ___16-20 ___ 21+

3. Grade levels taught during my career _____

4. Campus and District where I'll teach in the coming year:

5. Grade(s) I will teach in the coming school year. _____

6. Years I have taught this grade level _____

7. Ethnicity _____ African American _____ Anglo _____ Asian _____ Hispanic

_____Eastern Indian _____ Middle Eastern ____ Native American _____Other

8. Native Language ____ English _____ Spanish _____ Chinese ____ Japanese

____ Russian ____ Farsi ____ German ____ Other _____

9. Bilingual/Multilingual yes no what other languages? _____

_____

10. National Board Certified yes no

When earned? ____ within last five years _____ 6 or more years ago

11. Degree level/year earned Bachelor _____ Masters _____ Ph.D. _____

12. Do you have separate Reading and Language arts periods? ___ yes ___ no

13. How are your classes scheduled? _____ Traditional ____ time length of period
_____ blocked ____ time length of period
_____Accelerated ____ time length of period
_____ Other Please describe _____

_____

14. Percentage of English/Language arts instructional time spent writing

____0-25% ____ 26-50% _____51-75% _____ 76-100%

15. Do you see yourself as a writer? ____ Absolutely ____Maybe ____ Sometimes

16. What kinds of writing do you do? _____

_____

17. When others ask if you are a writer, which of these answers most closely fits your response?

_____ Yes, I am definitely a writer
_____ Yes, I usually feel like a writer
_____ Maybe. I sometimes feel like a writer.
_____ No, but I hope to be a writer someday.

18. How do you sustain yourself as a writer?
_____

_____

19. Are you an effective writing teacher?

___ Yes, I am definitely an effective writing teacher.
___ Yes, I usually feel like an effective writing teacher.
___ Maybe. I am sometimes an effective writing teacher.
___ No, but I am becoming more effective in my writing instruction.
___ No, but I hope to become an effective writing teacher in the future.

20. Do you see yourself as student-centered? Yes No Support your response____

_____

_____

21. How likely are you to take a teaching stance that differs from other teachers in your school?

___ I always adopt a different teaching stance from colleagues
___ I sometimes adopt a different teaching stance from colleagues
___ I seldom adopt a different teaching stance from colleagues
___ I never adopt a different teaching stance from colleagues

APPENDIX G

TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Knowledge and Practice Questionnaire

Name:

_____Date:_____

I. Please consider each of these belief statements and think about their relative importance to your instructional decision-making. Put a check mark in the box that most nearly reflects your priority. There is NO "correct" or "best" way to prioritize these beliefs. Every excellent teacher will have different priorities. Our purpose with this survey is to document where you are now in terms of these beliefs and see whether these change during the coming year.

	Highest Priority in my instructional decisions	High Priority in my instructional decisions	Important but not essential in my instructional decisions	Low Priority in my instructional decisions	Least relevant in my instructional decisions
Successful learners feel capable enough to take risks.					
Successful learners make connections across experiences and across texts.					
Learners' identities and affiliations influence					

their engagement and success.					
Successful learners have agency; they make choices about their learning, reading, and writing.					
Successful learners engage in dialogue, both with peers and with more skilled or more strategic partners.					
Successful writers make purposeful and strategic decisions about words and ideas, about form and function.					
Language and literacy are socio-cultural discourses; academic writing is a secondary discourse, different from familiar, everyday language.					

Secondary discourses are best learned in the context of INQUIRY – guided investigations of significant issues for authentic reasons.					
Guided inquiry means that teachers invite students to wonder; they set the conditions for students to engage in inquiry; they explain and demonstrate strategies, and they provide time to read, write, and discuss what students are learning.					

II. For each classroom practice, place a check in the column that represents how often you use the practice with your students.

	Daily	Weekly	1-5 times in a six-week period	
1. Activate prior knowledge and provide time to explore connections across texts and				

experiences.				
Briefly explain how you do this.				
2. Frame significant issues as springboards for inquiry.				
Briefly explain how you do this.				
3. Demonstrate strategies for inquiry, for reading, and writing.				
Briefly explain how you do this.				
4. Provide time for individual and shared investigation.				

Briefly explain how you do this.				
5. Support students as they synthesize what they are learning about the issue or topic.				
Briefly explain how you do this.				
6. Respond & revise; provide feedback for revision and editing.				
Briefly explain how you do this.				
7. Publish & present findings in a variety of ways/media/genre to a range of real audiences.				
Briefly explain how you do this.				
8. Assess learners' strengths & targets for growth; use assessment data to inform future				

instructional plans.				
Briefly explain how you do this.				

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX H

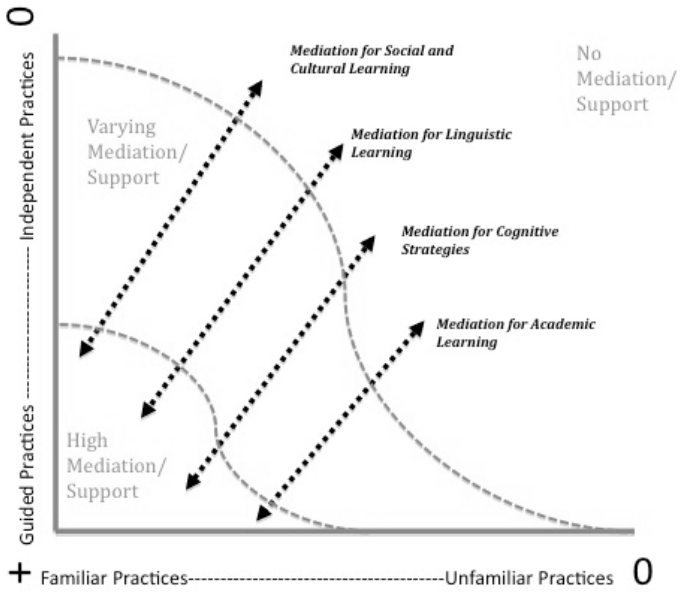
FOLLOW UP QUESTIONNAIRE

	Daily	Weekly	1-5 times in a six-week period	In one or more "units" or "assignments" during the year
Inquire, write, and publish together.				
Build on experiences outside and inside school.				
Activate prior knowledge and provide common experiences.				
Frame significant issues as springboards for inquiry.				
Demonstrate strategies and resources for inquiry, reading, and writing.				
Provide time for individual and shared investigation.				
Respond & revise; provide feedback for revision and editing.				
Publish & present findings in a variety of ways/media/genre to a range of real audiences.				
Invite further inquiry and opportunities to apply what we have learned.				
Assess learners' strengths & targets for growth; use assessment data to inform instruction.				
Use state and district curricular mandates as a basis for all the above.				

Comments:

APPENDIX I

CMWI LANDSCAPE DIAGRAM

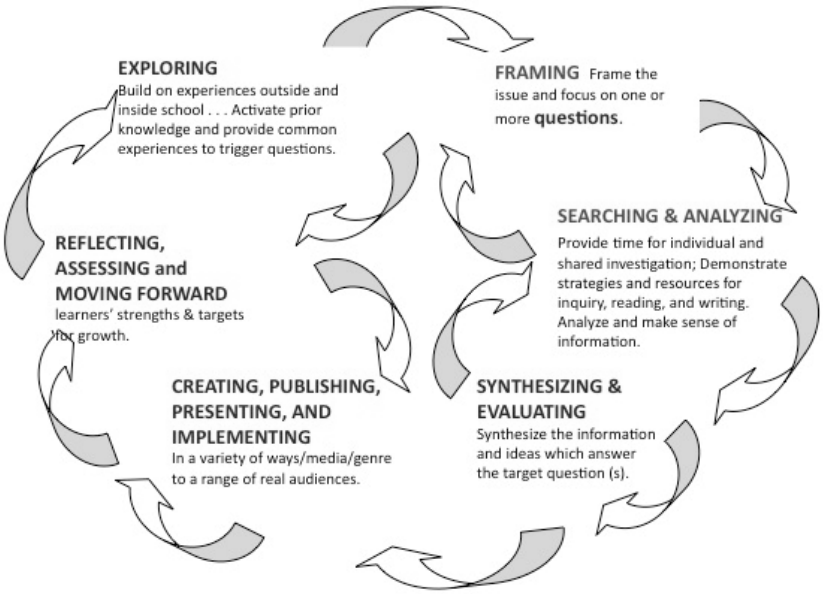

0
Independent Practices
Guided Practices
Mediation for Social and Cultural Learning
No Mediation/ Support
Varying Mediation/ Support
Mediation for Linguistic Learning
Mediation for Cognitive Strategies
Mediation for Academic Learning
High Mediation/ Support
+ Familiar Practices
Unfamiliar Practices 0

APPENDIX J

CMWI INQUIRY CYCLE

Inquiry Cycle

Adapted frpm Short, K. et al. (1996). *Learning together through inquiry*. Portland, ME.: Stenhouse Publishers.



APPENDIX K

CMWI QUESTIONNAIRE

	Daily	Weekly	1-5 times in a six-week period	In one or more "units" or "assignments" during the year
Inquire, write, and publish together.				
Build on experiences outside and inside school.				
Activate prior knowledge and provide common experiences.				
Frame significant issues as springboards for inquiry.				
Demonstrate strategies and resources for inquiry, reading, and writing.				
Provide time for individual and shared investigation.				
Respond & revise; provide feedback for revision and editing.				
Publish & present findings in a variety of ways/media/genre to a range of real audiences.				
Invite further inquiry and opportunities to apply what we have learned.				
Assess learners' strengths & targets for growth; use assessment data to inform instruction.				
Use state and district curricular mandates as a basis for all the above.				

APPENDIX L

CODING DICTIONARY

Unit of Analysis = Utterance

This is defined as that part of continuous spoken language by one speaker that relates to one event or a series of connected events. One utterance could either end with the cessation of talk by the speaker or by the change of subject within the continuous talk.

Academic and Non Academic Support (AS/NAS)
Teachers provided both academic and non-academic support (family, friendship, healthcare)

Agency (AG)
Teachers empowered students to construct knowledge in small and large groups.

Attention to Student's Needs (ASN)

Decision-making (DM)
Documented evidence of teacher decision-making related to instructional strategies or content choices

Decisions-sociocultural (DMSC)
Documented evidence of teacher decision-making related to instructional strategies or content choices based on student's sociocultural resources.

1. Funds of knowledge
2. Culture
3. Social Status

Decisions-linguistic knowledge (DMLK)
Documented evidence of teacher decision-making related to instructional strategies or content choices based on student's linguistic knowledge.

1. Semantic/Vocabulary
2. Syntactic/Grammar
3. Pragmatic
4. Grapho-phonemic

Decisions-thinking strategies (DMTS)
Documented evidence of teacher decision-making related to instructional strategies or content choices based on student's thinking strategies.

1. Prediction
2. Analysis
3. Summarization
4. Synthesis
5. Self-Monitoring
6. Evaluation/Critique

Decisions-academic content (DMAC)
Documented evidence of teacher decision-making related to instructional strategies or content choices based on student's knowledge of academic content.

1. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
2. Texas Assessment Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)
3. College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)
4. District and Campus Curriculum

Empathy and Caring (EC)
Documented evidence of teacher empathy and caring through verbal, written or other interaction.

1. Caring
2. Mutual Engagement
3. Joint enterprise as writers
4. Shared repertoire of practices

Just Enough Support (ZPD)
Documented evidence that teachers provided support within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Literacy Community of Practice (LCOP)
Teacher comments, actions that invite or encourage students to participate in the literacy "community of practice," including, but not limited to

1. Provide rich literacy environment (multiple and varied resources for thinking, reading, writing)
2. Provide opportunities for student choice (of reading selections and writing topics) and/or student input into decisions about classroom practices
3. Invite volunteers to share/publish personal stories and/or work products with a range of audiences (including teacher and classmates)
4. Teacher participates as a member of the community of practice

5. Provide appropriate teacher and peer support and collaboration (helping choose book, helping choose topic, conferring during drafting and revision, etc.)
6. Publish & present student work for authentic audiences
7. Teacher encourages students to capitalize on individual background knowledge, interests, strengths, etc.

Meaningful Connections (MCONN)
Teacher's comments and/or actions provide help and feedback for students as they engage in literacy practices (reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, representing, and/or oral dialogue). These comments and actions focus on student engagement in strategic meaning-making processes, but also include feedback about the effectiveness or appropriateness of their responses, writing products, etc.
These moves may accomplish one or more of the following:

1. Connections to student's lives
2. Connections to the literature they are reading
3. Connections to each other
4. Cross Connections
5. Invite, guide, and support student meaning-making by orchestrating appropriate levels of teacher and peer support through read-alouds, paired reading, shared reading & writing, independent reading & writing, discussions, etc.
6. Demonstrate appropriate use of particular strategies (determining what's important, sampling cues, predicting, self-monitoring, synthesizing, revising, etc.)
7. Utilize mentor texts as examples of author's decisions.
8. Explain rationales for authors' decisions and/or readers' responses.

APPENDIX M

HUNGER GAMES SUMMARY

Twenty-four are forced to enter. Only the winner survives. In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Each year, the districts are forced by the Capitol to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the Hunger Games (Collins, 2008), a brutal and terrifying fight to the death – televised for all of Panem to see.

Survival is second nature for sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who struggles to feed her mother and younger sister by secretly hunting and gathering beyond the fences of District 12. When Katniss steps in to take the place of her sister in the Hunger Games (Collins, 2008),she knows it may be her death sentence. If she is to survive, she must weigh survival against humanity and life against love.

APPENDIX N

HOUSE ON MANGO STREET SUMMARY

The House on Mango Street traces Esperanza Cordero's coming-of-age through a series of vignettes about her family, neighborhood, and secret dreams. Although the novel does not follow a traditional chronological pattern, a story emerges, nevertheless, of Esperanza's self-empowerment and will to overcome obstacles of poverty, gender, and race. The novel begins when the Cordero family moves into a new house, the first they have ever owned, on Mango Street in the Latino section of Chicago. Esperanza is disappointed by the red, ramshackle house. It is not at all the dream-house her parents had always talked about, nor is it the house high on a hill that Esperanza vows to one day own herself.

Esperanza is not only ashamed of her home, but she is also uncomfortable with her outside appearance, which she feels does not convey the true personality hidden insider her. She is very self-conscious about her name, whose mispronunciation by teachers and peers at school sounds very ugly to her ears. Esperanza was named after her great- grandmother, who was tricked into marriage and doomed to a life of sadness afterwards. Esperanza vows that she will not end up like the first Esperanza and so many women do- watching life pass by through the window. To break free from her name connotations, she longs to rename herself "Zeze the X," a choice she finds more reflective of her true self.

As the new girl on the block, Esperanza observes many of life's most joyous and harsh realities while meeting her Mango Street neighbors. Her first friend, Cathy, is a short-lived friendship because Cathy's father soon moves the family away because the neighborhood is getting bad, or in other words becoming more inhabited by lower-class Latinos like Esperanza's family. Two other young sisters, however, adopt Esperanza into their circle when she chips in money to help them buy a bicycle. Lucy and Rachel help Esperanza ponder the wonders of growing up by inventing rhymes about hips and parading around Mango Street in high-heeled shoes.

The older kids on Mango Street open Esperanza's eyes to the hardships faced by young people in rough neighborhoods. Louie's cousin's car-theft, the hit-and-run death of a boy Marin meets at the dance, and Marin's own desperate attempts to find a husband to take her away show Esperanza the limited possibilities she herself faces. Alicia, on the other hand, exemplifies self-betterment and strength in the face of stereotypes to Esperanza. Alicia, despite her father's macho views, attends a university and studies all night so she can one day be more than her father's housekeeper. As the novel

progresses, Esperanza starts to notice her budding sexuality. She is excited when boys on the street or at a dance look at her; however, two instances of sexual violence destroy Esperanza's illusions of true love and her first kiss. So too, her promiscuous friend Sally's behavior also contributes to Esperanza's cynicism and caution when dealing with the opposite sex. Nevertheless, Esperanza still dreams of sitting outside at night with her boyfriend, but she has set her standards higher than most of the women around her. She refuses to seek out a man to "escape," because she has seen too many neighbors unhappy in marriage. Ruthie, for example, has run away from her husband and has lost her senses; young Rafaela is so beautiful that her husband locks her indoors when he leaves. The tragedy which hits Esperanza the hardest though, is that of Sally. Her friend, who, like Esperanza only wanted to dream and share love, is first beaten by her father to prevent Sally ruining the family with her "dangerous" beauty. To escape, Sally, though underage, marries a traveling salesman and the cycle of abuse continues. Enraged and saddened by her friend's tragedy, Esperanza vows to leave Mango Street, become a writer, and build her dream home.

Although Esperanza is constantly reaffirming that she wants to move away from Mango Street, we know by the end novel that she will one day return to help those who will not be so lucky as she. Indeed, in the closing pages Esperanza admits that she cannot escape Mango Street; that what friends like Alicia were telling her was true: Esperanza cannot cut ties with Mango Street. It has influenced her dreams and personality and she has learned valuable life lessons from its inhabitants. That is why, explains Esperanza, she tells stories about the house on Mango Street, finding the beauty amidst dirty streets is finding her true self.

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