

TRANSACTION AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE PROCESSES OF PRINT-BASED WRITING AND WRITING
WITH MULTIPLE FORMS OF REPRESENTATION

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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The purpose of this study was to observe the processes involved when adolescents write traditional print-based text and the processes involved when adolescents write text using multiple forms of representation (MFR), paying particular attention to the influence of audience and genre on both forms of writing. Drawing on the work of socio-cultural theorists who argue that educators should be attending to the contexts and processes that shape and mediate student learning, I framed my study using Kress's (2003) Theory of Modes and Rosenblatt's (1978) Reader's Response Theory. The question guiding my research was: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing which uses MFR? I explored this question by conducting three case studies, using a combination of interviews, participant narratives, participant journals, and the collection of participant writing samples. Key findings included that: 1) The process of composing traditional academic print-based texts involves transaction and

transformation, while the process of composing academic texts with MFR does not often involve transaction and/or transformation; 2) Audience is the largest determinant of the content and genre of text in regard to academic writing; and 3) When adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR it shifts from “writing” to “communication”. This research highlighted the need to teach adolescents that they must consider their audience, genre of choice, and objective as they transact with and transform the texts they are writing.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to David “Butch” Wolfe and Martha McBride.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Today over 80 percent of kindergarteners use computers; at least 61 virtual universities and colleges currently educate American students; in 2006, over 158 billion text messages were sent; over 106 million individuals are registered on MySpace, there are at least 91 million Google searches each day (National Council of Teachers of English, 2007) and in 2011 it was reported that over 500 million people from around the world had an active Facebook account (Facebook Statistics, 2011). These are today's new tools of meaning-making and communication that require writing, and consequently a writing process. These are today's new tools of meaning-making that literate adolescents use in every facet of their lives. However, what it means to be literate today is different than what it meant to be literate even just twenty years ago, when being able to compose or decode a sentence gave a person the title of "literate." Johnson and Kress (2003) reveal that, "[t]here is undoubtedly a massive shift towards electronic communication, in the world of work, as well as in our private and public worlds...The [computer] screen is now the culturally dominant medium in many parts of the world, and for many members of numerous societies around the globe" (p. 7). Being literate means being able to use and interact with these electronic and visual meaning-making and communication tools of our time and place. This use and interaction with these tools of today, like the computer screen, necessitates a specific writing process which differs from that of traditional writing with a pen and paper.

Part of being considered literate twenty years ago involved being able to write, and that has not changed. As Kress (2003) argues, writing is not actually declining, just adapting in modes and functions in a new technological world. He presents the fact that visuals accompanying written text will soon replace, if they have not already done so, the dominant written word:

Language-as-speech will remain the major mode of communication; language-as-writing will increasingly be displayed by image in many domains of public communication, though writing will remain the preferred mode of the political and cultural elites. The combined effects on writing of the dominance of the mode of image and of the medium of the screen will produce deep changes in the forms and functions of writing (Kress, 2003, p.1).

The concepts of writing and of literacy are changing, and therefore it can be assumed that the writing process itself is changing. Students today are writing in order to make meaning and communicate more than ever, but not in traditional formats like diary entries, hand-written 5-paragraph essays, or scribbled notes on lined paper to be passed in the hallway between classes and friends. They are writing digitally and online, including but not limited to text messages and Facebook wall posts. Students are *multimodal*, which means they are using more than one type, representation, or mode of communication to relay their messages, and ultimately to make meaning through this communication. For example, they may use visuals and audio, along with the written word. Kress believes that these literacies involving multiple forms of representation are fast becoming more important than traditional print-based literacies for today's adolescent writers. I believe that the two types of writing are equally important, and, consequently, deserve equal attention from researchers, educators, and writers themselves. I also believe that the processes employed to write traditionally or to write with multiple forms of representation differ and deserve this same attention.

The following sections in this chapter will address my problem statement, clarify key terminology and underlying ideas, explain the significance of my work, present my research questions, and summarize the outline of my dissertation. While this study explores the field of literacy education and the field of writing, with a special focus on writing processes, audience, and genre selection, it does not look at other separate writing components in isolation, such as grammar knowledge, proofreading skills, or topic selection.

Problem Statement

There is a need for students to acquire both traditional print-based literacies and literacies using multiple forms of representation in order to be successful writers in the twenty-first century (Leu & Leu, 2000). I believe that an integral part of this acquisition is learning about the processes of writing in both forms. However, no research has yet thoroughly observed these processes in an effort to ultimately inform writing instruction for traditional print-based text and writing instruction for text with multiple forms of representation.

Therefore, I have set out to research the processes involved when adolescents write traditional print-based text and the processes involved when adolescents write text with multiple forms of representation. Furthermore, I have looked to see how audience and genre influence the meaning made through this written text and the communication of the specific message. Although research has looked at which basic skills are necessary for a student to employ in order to be considered a successful writer (Spandel, 2005), and the effects of digital and multimodal literacies on writing (NCTE, 2007), research has not

yet considered how the actual process of writing is affected by choice of either a traditional print-based writing task or a writing task which uses multiple forms of representation, specifically when genre selection and meaning-making incorporating personal background knowledge are considered. I chose to look at the process of writing in both contexts in an effort to inform the field of education about how a student writes in a specific context, and how this information can help students and educators alike to not only understand their own processes of writing, but also to choose the appropriate genre for the appropriate audience in order to make the appropriate meaning, and, ultimately, deliver the most appropriate message as dictated by the writing task.

Key Concepts

Modes and modes of text. For the purposes of this dissertation, the term *mode* refers to the various types, or representations, of communication used to relay a messages. Modes include, but are not limited to, alphabetic text, pictures and other visuals, audio files and sound clips, movie clips, diagrams, layout designs, and colors. More than one mode may be utilized within a text, making the text, as a whole, multimodal. *Modes of text*, on the other hand, refer to whether a text in its entirety is created in a traditional print-based context, or a context using multiple forms of representation. The term *mode* will be more widely used in this dissertation.

Multiple forms of representation. In this dissertation *new literacies* are defined as new, and often social, methods and genres of reading and writing, which often use multiple forms of digital and non-digital text, including but not limited to blogging, instant messaging, wiki usage, multimedia presentations, texting, pictures, visuals,

diagrams, and audio clips. More specifically, this study explores new literacies as a way of looking at writing which makes meaning and communicates this meaning, or message, using *multiple forms of representation* (MFR). New literacies embrace practices which are not only skills, but also means of social interaction with audiences, such as the cell phone and Ipad mentioned in the opening vignette.

Traditional literacies. For the purposes of this research study, *traditional literacies* are defined as conventional methods and genres of reading and writing. These include, but again are not limited to, reading the print version of a novel, writing a five-paragraph essay, writing a journal entry with a pen or pencil and paper, or composing a formal letter. Due to my focus on writing, these literacies will be referred to as traditional literacies, traditional print-based literacies, or print-based literacies throughout this dissertation.

Combining literacies. Teaching students to be successful writers is not a matter of making them choose MFR or traditional literacies because it is “better,” but instead recognizing that both forms of literacy have a common goal: the creation and communication of a message. Pedagogical content knowledge involves understanding the relationship between print-based texts and texts using MFR (Swenson, 2006,).

Adolescent students choose the mode of communication that best fits the situation. Kress (2010) points out that, “Different modes offer different potentials for making meaning. These differing potentials have a fundamental effect on the choice of mode(s) in specific instances of communication” (p. 79). Just because this may indicate that a Facebook wall post or a text message may be the most practical means of communication at a specific time, in a specific place, and for a specific purpose, does not mean that these students are

not writing; they are writing in a way that is not only acceptable in current society, but also necessary to understand if they are to be part of a global and technological community.

Academic writing. Academic writing is a very subjective concept. The creation of a text to meet the expectations of the teacher and achieve the desired learning outcome is known as *academic writing*. It is important to realize that the difference between academic and nonacademic writing is dependent upon the teacher assigning it, as well as the various needs, skills, and nuances required of the specific discipline.

To date, most research on academic writing at the secondary level focuses on writing engagement and isolated basic writing skills, such as grammar and essay formatting. As will be presented in the following literature review, there is a limited amount of research available on academic writing in high school (Yancey, 2009). The fact that Applebee (2009) reports that in 2007 only 31% of students at grade 8 and 23% of students at grade 12 were considered proficient in writing makes it apparent that more research needs to be done. Improvements need to be made in the areas of academic writing instruction and academic writing skills for this demographic.

What, then, are these necessary improvements in both academic writing instruction and writing skill? Fanetti, Bushrow, and DeWeese (2010) interviewed writing instructors at a large metropolitan university, as well as middle and high school English teachers from surrounding communities. All participants were asked the same questions about teaching practices in writing, the effects of standardized testing, and expectations of students in regard to writing. Two major findings were discovered in this study: 1) secondary teachers feel that they need to teach to the state mandated tests, and 2) college

instructors dislike the formulaic writing approach taught to students in high school, including the infamous five-paragraph essay and thesis statement in the first paragraph. This research shows that our students are not meeting post-secondary expectations in writing, that they are being taught formulaic writing that they are expected to reproduce on standardized tests, and that this type of writing and writing skill will not benefit them beyond high school. However, the research does not address why this may be occurring. In addition, and maybe most importantly, it fails to look at the process of writing, and more specifically the processes of print-based writing and writing with MFR. As Kress (2003) tells us, our students are writing more than ever before. Then, why, are not more of our students succeeding as writers?

The writing process. *Process*, in this study, is defined as a series of actions and changes undergone in order to meet a goal. More specifically, *the writing process* is defined as the steps a student takes in order to not only know something new, but to also create and communicate a message about this new meaning. This process involves actions and changes which lead to the creation of a meaningful message from the writer to his or her audience. For the purposes of this study, *meaning making* through writing, then, is defined as the creation of a new, unique message which reflects the thoughts of the writer about a specific topic combined with the goal of the text. In an academic setting this writing process involves *writing instruction*, which will be defined in this research study as the process of imparting knowledge about the writing process to others.

To clarify, the writing process is not just a skill, but it is also a process for learning. In defining the writing process, Murray (1994) understands it as, “a way of separating the knowing from the not knowing, or, to put it differently, a way of

organizing knowing...The process was, after all, a process of learning, exploration, speculation, discovery...the purpose was to write to know” (p. 60). This is the means, or process, of learning. However, most researchers have focused on the acquisition and the product of the skill, and not on 1) the process of learning that accompanies it, and 2) how the process looks when creating print-based texts vs. texts which use MFR. Researchers like Smith and Wilhelm (2006), who looked at groups of resistant adolescent male writers, discovered that teenage writers need to feel control and competence in their writing skills if they are going to be motivated to write, but these researchers failed to recognize the process which achieves this control and competence, as well as any possible influence of a print-based writing form or writing form using MFR. Similarly, in a study I conducted (Wolfe, 2008) looking at how new literacies affect adolescent writing, and in turn how adolescent writing affects new literacies, I discovered that new technologies shape the ways in which our students write. The study focused on how home-literacy writing practices influence academic practices of writing. Although I discovered what adolescent writers valued, and that there is a need for educators to teach the role of technological literacy in today’s world, I overlooked important issue; I overlooked: 1) how print-based writing vs. writing using MFR dictates the meaning and genre of the writing, 2) how the process of writing looks for print-based texts vs. texts using MFR, and, finally, 3) how knowledge of these processes can be utilized to help students succeed as writers making meaning and communicating these ideas in classrooms. In other words, what writing process and which writing form (print-based writing or writing with MFR) affords adolescent writers the skills that they need in order to be successful writers in specific situations? Is this process the same in all

circumstances? If not, which factors, if any, affect these differences? Current research, including my own, has overlooked these issues.

Significance

The significance of my research lies in the fact that it examines authentic, realistic writing processes of adolescents in order to better understand these processes and, consequently, to better instruct adolescents in multiple writing processes and the effects of audience and genre on these processes. Often the forms of writing expected and taught in school environments, the traditional print-based forms, no longer reflect the reality of much of the writing in the real world, the forms using MFR.

My research is also significant because it draws on the work of two socio-cultural theorists who argue that educators should be attending to the contexts and processes that shape and mediate student learning, specifically in regard to writing. Kress (2003) looks at both the print-based literacy practices and literacy practices using multiple forms of representation in his Theory of Modes. The second theorist, Rosenblatt (1978), uses her Reader's Response Theory to explain the process of making meaning. While she applies her theory to reading, this study is unique and significant in that it will employ her ideas to explain meaning-making in both the print-based writing process and the process of writing using multiple forms of representation. Even more significant, my research connects the theories of Kress (2010) and Rosenblatt (1978) across the field and process of adolescent writing and education.

Most importantly, however, is the fact that my dissertation has provided educators with practical teaching strategies for assisting students in writing both traditional print-based texts and texts which use MFR.

Research Questions

In this qualitative study, I describe the processes of three adolescents' print-based academic writing and academic writing with MFR. In doing so, I attempted to answer the following research question and sub-questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR?

- A. What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR?
- B. How does audience mediate the content in a specific writing event, considering the design of a specific genre?

Role of Researcher

My role as researcher was to research, design, and conduct this dissertation study, to collect and then interpret data, and finally to present my findings. Along with being the researcher I was also a former full-time English teacher at the school where I conducted my research. This allowed me to take on the role of both insider and outsider. As the insider, my participants had once been students in my classroom with whom I had a positive rapport. As the outsider, I was not physically in their school building or classrooms during the time of the research study. As an outsider I was able to remind them that their participation was completely voluntary and that their participation in this

study would in no way be assessed. My own experiences with writing, as well as my relationship with my research sample and research site, are presented here so that any influence they may have on the findings is apparent. My role as the researcher will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3, *Methodology*.

Summary of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. This first chapter, *Introduction*, introduced the rationale for my study, as well as my research questions. Chapter 2 is the *Literature Review*. This chapter examines not only current research exploring my topic, but also the theorists and theories which support my study and findings. Chapter 3, *Methodology*, explains the procedures used for data collection and analysis. It also examines my role as the researcher, ethical considerations, and validity procedures. Chapter 4, *Findings*, presents the data from my three case studies. Lastly, Chapter 5, *Discussion*, presents how my data informs the research questions. This chapter also presents limitations of my research, my contributions to the field, implications for practice and further research, and finally, conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter first looks at the theoretical literature, and more specifically the theories themselves, used to frame my dissertation. Next, the chapter focuses on the current literature that explores topics relevant to my own research.

Theoretical Framework

Socio-Cultural Theory of Learning is the overriding, or “umbrella” theory of my research study. The theoretical framework of this study is composed of aspects of two socio-cultural theories, Theory of Modes and Readers Response Theory. In this section, Socio-Cultural Theory of Learning is first defined. Next, Theory of Modes gives insight into how and why literacies using MFR are utilized. In other words, Theory of Modes explains why a specific mode or form may be considered more appropriate than an alternate mode or form in a specific situation. Lastly, Reader Response Theory allows me to look at how meaning is made through writing in each form, whether it is print-based or involves MFR.

Socio-Cultural Theory asserts that learning occurs in a specific social-cultural context. Vygotsky (1978) offered a definition of this theory when he said, “[h]uman learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (p.88). His work lays its foundation upon the belief that one’s culture influences one’s actions. These cultural influences and norms may also determine an individual’s readiness to understand specific learning objectives

and tasks at a specific point in his or her development. However, although an individual may not be ready to approach a learning task or objective alone at a specific time, he or she may be able to accomplish the task or objective with scaffolding or guidance.

Vygotsky refers to this as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZOPD). He states that, “It is the difference between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and high level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 88). In regard to the writing process and product, a student’s ZOPD is determined by not only his or her cultural norms, but also by 1) the mode that he or she feels competent in employing, and has consequently chosen to write in (as seen in Theory of Modes), and 2) his or her personal interests (as seen in Readers Response Theory).

The first socio-cultural theory, Theory of Modes, used to frame this study comes from Kress (2003) and his work with new literacies and the multimodality of writers. Kress explains that literacy is not dying; it is simply changing. It is adapting to different modes in order to fulfill needs as our world changes, especially through advancements in technology. Here, we see how multimodality plays a part in the examination of new literacies; being skilled in new literacies means being skilled in the use of multiple modes of communication. The following example further explains this idea of multimodality:

Print-based reading and writing are and always have been multimodal. They require the interpretation and design of visual marks, space, colour, font or style, and, increasingly image, and other modes of representation and communication...A multimodal approach enables these semiotic resources to be attended to and moves beyond seeing them as decoration (Jewitt, 2005, p. 315).

This example allows us to better understand what components may be incorporated in a multimodal design. This example also, consequently, embodies the main concepts of Theory of Modes.

Theory of Modes explains that a mode is a mode only if society says it is a mode and accepts its usage. Kress's theory emphasizes the fact that a message, or its mode, does not exist without the reader of the message who must interpret the message. Kress (2010) notes that, "[w]ith writing alone, the message would, quite simply, be too complex" (p.1). In other words, other modes are often necessary in order to communicate a message properly. He gives the example of a sign on a busy street that shows, through a visual diagram, how to enter a parking garage. Words alone would not be adequate to explain to a driver, moving quickly by, how to enter the garage. Only an alternate mode, a picture, could communicate this specific message in the limited amount of time allotted by the circumstances. The mode in this example was also accepted and understood by the culture. Kress successfully makes his point: modes are culturally made and socially specific. In other words, modes are culturally and socially transformed, or used for a specific reason and given a specific task in a specific culture and society. This *transformation*, "describes the process of meaning change through re-ordering of the elements in a text...within the same culture" (Kress, 2010, p.129). This concept of transformation is contingent upon the sign maker/meaning maker, who is referred to as the writer in this particular research study.

The cultural norms discussed above are relevant to Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory of Learning. This theory asserts that culture influences one's, or in this case, a writer's, actions. This culture, again, directly influences the writer's ZOPD,

including the mode that he or she feels competent in employing, and has consequently chosen to write in. For example, if part of a writer's cultural norms includes text messaging, the writer is likely to engage in the practice of text messaging. Consequently, this writer's ZOPD grows to include text messaging, possibly making this a viable and comfortable genre in which to make meaning and communicate a message. The process of transformation occurs once this mode has been selected, possibly shedding light of the following research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR? In addition, when considering the choice of mode as being determined by the objective and audience of the text, how the audience mediates the content and design of the message can be considered.

Along with Theory of Modes, Rosenblatt's (1978) Reader's Response Theory, in light of writers, was also used to analyze and ultimately to help frame the methodology of my study. Rosenblatt's theories of reading and reading response shed new light on the active role of the reader. She asserts that, "the reader has tended to remain in the shadow, taken for granted, to all intents and purposes invisible" (p.1). For the purposes of this dissertation, the reader was equated to a writer, creating new meanings traditionally and digitally. This was possible because reader and writer employ comparable cognitive processes. Both readers and writers use communication tools to relay and understand a message. Both readers and writers use text to make meaning and create an idea. Consequently, both readers and writers are the seminal parts of the text created, and both readers and writers employ similar processes in creating these texts.

The following five concepts from Reader's Response Theory were considered in the framing of my study: 1) Readers are active, not blank tapes registering ready-made messages. Writers are also active, making choices in genre and content. 2) The reader's attention to text activates certain elements in his past experiences that have become linked with verbal symbols. Texts are symbols that point to something besides themselves and which have public and private meanings. The same can be said for writers and the texts they create. 3) "The reader is no less immersed in a creative process that goes on...below the threshold of awareness. He is conscious of the resulting images...but he is not aware of the individual responses or...selection and synthesis" (p. 62). In other words, making meaning occurs naturally and often as a process, not as an event that happens perfectly the first time. Choices that readers, and writers, make are not random; they are mediated by a form of writing. 4) Texts are events, not static elements. The meaning of a text is dependent upon the background, beliefs, values, setting, etc. of the specific reader or writer. 5) Form, or genre, in the response to a text, or in writing a text itself, should not be dictated if a response transaction is to be authentic: "Another negative means of furthering a spontaneous response is to avoid placing undue importance on the particular form in which the expression of the students' reaction should be couched, He should be able to express himself freely" (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 64). This idea of *transaction*, where meaning is made by combining the text itself and the personal interests and beliefs of the reader/writer, is central to this dissertation.

Transaction is dependent upon a specific socio-cultural context. As Vygotsky (1978) tells us, learning occurs in a specific social-cultural context. This context influences the personal interests and ZOPD of the writer, and, consequently, the

transaction which occurs. The concept of transaction may help to answer the research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR?

Although both theories are socio-cultural and, thus, implicate the involvement of and effect of society with and on the writer and his or her text, the focus of each is unique. Theory of Modes attends to the mode, or format, of a text. On the other hand, Readers Response Theory pays attention to how meaning is made in the said text. Although these foci diverge, when looking at both from the perspective of Socio-Cultural Theory they are both processes which complement and complete each other in many ways seen in the visual below.

Fundamentally, both theories rely upon the human factor. Kress (2010) states that modes do not exist without a human need (the sign maker/meaning maker/ writer), while Rosenblatt (1978) asserts that a text is meaningless without a reader (and in this research study, a writer). Just as there is no one type of human, consequently, there is no one way to make meaning. Theory of Modes and Readers Response Theory both look at the process of meaning-making in a text, whether the text be print-based or one with MFR, and both acknowledge that the process is dependent upon the human involved, and that the process is a continuous one.

Reader's Response Theory asserts that a person's interests, expectations, etc. influence the meaning that is made by him or her in his or her text, and in this case, in his or her piece of writing. Rosenblatt (1978) states that this transaction is "an ongoing

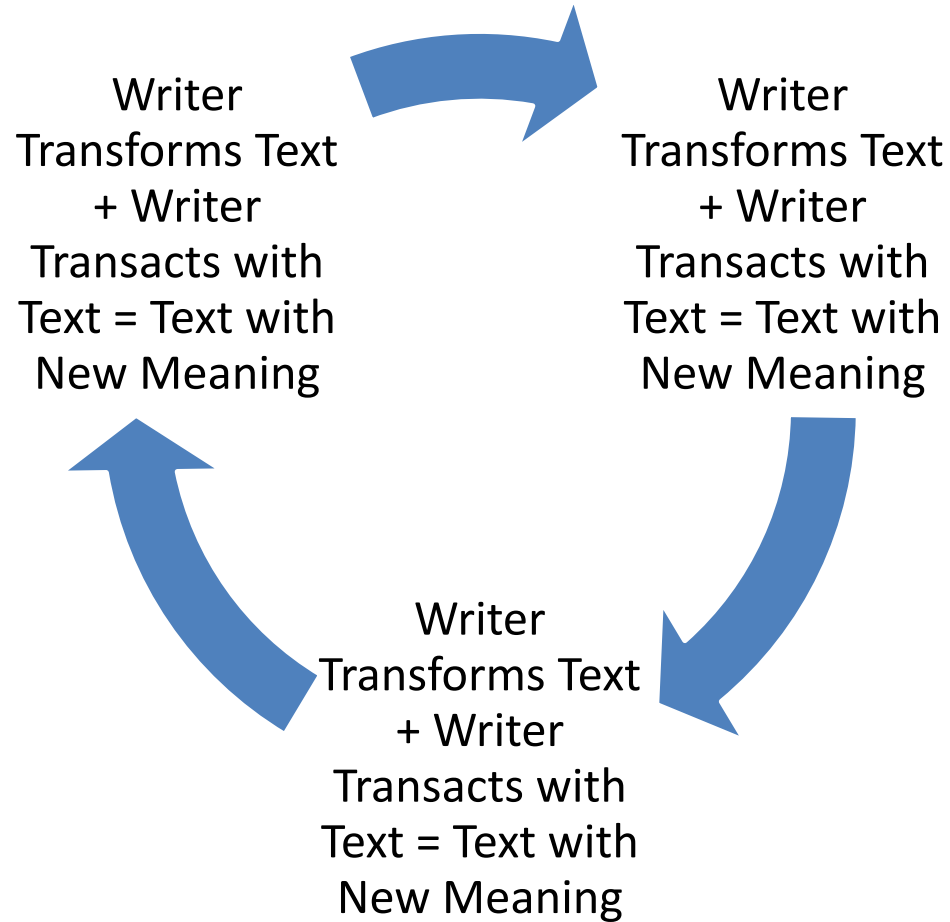
process in which the elements or factors are...aspects of a total situation, each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (p. 17). On the other hand, Kress (2010) is looking at transformation when he states,

[T]he tools [of work in a society] have (been) changed by their use; and what has been worked on has changed. Each of these changes has produced meaning, new meaning, The effect of these changes is to produce cultural resources...therefore, culture is the name for the resources which have been made, produced, remade, 'transformed', as the result of social work. Everything that is socially made and remade becomes part of cultural resources, imbued with the meanings of the work of those who have made and remade the resources. Cultural resources, being meaningful, are semiotic resources. It is 'the social' which generates 'the cultural' and, in that, "the semiotic" (p. 14).

Kress's definition of transformation relies on the fact that a text is transformed based on the tools of the culture, and, consequently, the culture itself. The process of making meaning, then, occurs within a consistent culture with the re-ordering of the elements in a text; this text is created with a specific cultural tool. Each tool is created to serve a specific purpose; this purpose guides the message of the text, or writing in this case, and influences the meaning made by the writer.

Therefore, the process of making meaning, or the process of writing, occurs when the writer simultaneously transacts with the text and transforms his or her message by choosing specific cultural tools to create the writing. It is important to note that neither the transaction nor the transformation happen first or last, or in isolation; instead, transacting and transforming occur simultaneously, each process influencing the other process and consequently continually giving new meanings to the text being written. This research study looked at transaction and transformation as components of the process of academic writing in both the traditional print-based form and the form with MFR.

The Process of Transformation and Transaction



The Literature

The literature reviewed focuses on four specific research areas: writing instruction, the impact of audience, new literacies and multimodality, and the effects of digital literacy. The first area of research is writing instruction. Writing instruction research looks at not only how to teach writing, but also at the needs of adolescent writers

which must be met in order to ensure success. The next area of research reviewed examines how audience affects adolescent writing. The following section looks at new literacies and multimodality as a way to explore writing using MFR. It explores what is already known about digital writing with MFR. Finally, the last section of this literature review addresses how working with digital literacies shapes students' literacy skills. This final section addresses the impact of digital writing, and writing using MFR, on the skill of writing itself, as well as distinguishing these skills from traditional print-based writing skills.

Writing instruction. Writing instructors are given the complex task of schooling students in all aspects of writing. Writing is a skill which involves purpose, process, and product. As stated in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, process is defined as a series of actions and changes undergone in order to meet a goal. More specifically, the writing process is defined as the steps a student takes in order to not only know something new, but to also create and communicate a message about this new meaning. This process involves actions which lead to the creation of a meaningful message from the writer to his or her audience. This message is the product and is created for a specific purpose.

Writing instruction in school is not a new concept; schooling and writing have evolved together:

Even among the earliest ancestors of our writing system, it was possible to find “writing manuals,” which were lists of words used to teach people how to write. It is no exaggeration to say that schooling and writing were born hand-in-hand (Tolchinsky, 2006, p. 83).

Writing, along with writing instruction, is a cultural event that has its roots in traditional practices. Aspects of writing instruction seem to have always included grammar, mechanics, content, style, genre, format, and audience. These constructs have

remained consistent in the writing process itself and, therefore, they have consistently remained topics that writing instructors need to address in the classroom. However, while many aspects of writing have remained consistent, others are changing. This is true of not only writing, but also of writing instruction. Smith and Wilhelm (2006) explain that other issues affecting adolescent writers, specifically those associated with technology, have already changed. These researchers tell us that writing instructors must 1) learn to adapt to cultural changes resulting from emerging technologies including digital writing and communication methods, 2) learn from their students, and 3) accept that new literacies are constantly changing societal norms (p. 144).

Writing traits. As was stated before, writing is a complex process, and, consequently, many traits of writing must be taught in order to give a writer all of the tools he or she needs in order to compose a successful text. A substantial amount of research has been conducted on this “how to” of writing instruction. Writing is not a skill that just “comes” to individuals; it must be taught and honed. In his reference book for writing instructors, Fletcher (1993) includes: 1) the conditions needed by students to become writers (finding mentors, learning to take risks, and building on a love of words), and 2) a look at dozens of tools writers use every day (balancing the specific with the general, creating character and a sense of place, writing beginnings and endings, and juggling issues of time). Similarly, Spandel (2005) has discovered in her own research the traits that she feels are vital to honing good writing for elementary and secondary students. These traits are ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. In a traditional classroom, these traits would be taught separately and then applied to a traditional genre of writing, such as the five-paragraph essay or a book

report. Regardless of which genre is used, practice is vital. Spandel (2005) goes on to emphasize the importance of practice in writing instruction: “Research is crystal clear: Schools that do well insist that their students write every day and that teachers provide regular and timely feedback with the support of parents” (p.27). I agree that students need to practice writing and teachers need to assess and correct. I would add that the practice, assessment, and correction need to take place for writing which is print-based as well as writing with MFR.

Hidi and Boscolo (2006) consider more complex writing traits that need to be taught when they look at self-efficacy and writing, considering another component of an intricate process that is more than the mere physical activity of forming letters and numbers. They define self-efficacy as, “a cognitive construct that represents individuals’ beliefs and personal judgments about their ability to perform at a certain level and affects choice of activities” (p. 148). Both note that interest and self-efficacy are associated and affect the other’s development. Hidi and Boscolo (2006) also claim that writing involves intense self-regulation. This means a student who is completing a writing task must, among other tasks, make decisions about what to write, how to write, the use of time, selection of sources in order to find information, and strategies for writing. In regard to practical methodology, this means that teachers need to promote self-efficacy, as well as hone skills such as decision making, timing, research, communication strategies, and genre selection strategies, all in relation to writing. However, while Hidi and Boscolo look more in depth at the components of writing, they still fail to look at the process of meaning-making through writing as a whole, continuous, process of change. Pahl and Rowsell (2005) raise the following questions to consider with student writing: In which

genre are they working? What is the function of the text? Which language or Discourse should they use? What is the format and layout of the text? Is the text represented best in print or electronic form? (p. 34). These questions allow for an understanding of writing traits which include components of digital writing, or writing with MFR. They also show a focus on process.

The research presented above looks at traits of good writing and explains what teachers must instruct students to “do” in order to learn to write, but as we have seen, much, although not all, of the literature fails to look at the instruction of the process of writing itself. Its focus lies mostly on the product of writing (or the final text), uses of writing, and how technology has been utilized to morph “writing’ into “word processing.”

The identity and community of the writer. When looking at identity and community in regard to the practice of writing and the practice of writing instruction, researchers have focused largely on feelings of competence for the individual, as well as the need to have a community of writers who often serve as an audience. According to Gee (2005), identity is what allows access to a specific community, or a specific group of individuals with a shared purpose, goal, or set of beliefs. Thus, the individual identity of the writer and the community of writers with which the identity is a part are both needed if the writing process is to be a success.

Williams (2006) explores how writing and new literacies shape the development of an adolescent’s identity. He argues that identity is not only found through personal writing, but also through academic writing when he states that, “[T]here are many others who have argued that work that is explicitly personal and addresses issues of identity can

be as intellectually rigorous as what is conventionally considered academic” (p. 1). His main point is that identity is always present in writing. The voice of the author is apparent and cannot be hidden, regardless of the genre in which he or she chooses to write in. He explicitly notes that this applies to new literacies, such as texting and blogging, and in this way applies the idea of transaction to writing with MFR.

This necessity of writing instructors to permit, and even teach, their students to share their voices, and thus their identities, through writing is supported in a study by Smith and Wilhelm (2006), where it was surmised that adolescent males needed to feel competent in order to be engaged in the writing process and thus share their identities or voices. The study was conducted in order to discover why underachieving male students were passionate about their hobbies, and how these passions could fuel a desire to read and write. The participants were adolescent males from an urban American high school. Participants were asked to engage in a series of literacy activities. However, “[w]hen the young men felt they weren't competent in a school activity, they rejected it” (p. 5). In other words, if being a competent reader or writer was not a part of the identity they had for themselves, it was not acknowledged. The participants in the study sought out challenges in reading and writing that they felt they could handle and they abandoned tasks that they felt were beyond their abilities. In a similar study of teenage boys and literacy, Brozo (2005) discovered that, “Choice and control are two key ingredients commonly missing in instruction provided to adolescent boys who are not reading [and writing] as would be expected for their grade level and who are disinterested and reluctant readers [and writers]” (p.18). This competence and control came in asserting their own identity through choices in genre, content, and presentation. In turn, this lead to

more student engagement in writing; where more competence was felt, students were more willing, and even anxious, to write. Identity, therefore, is a key component of the writing process. It is a component which is connected to both the process of print-based writing, as well as the process of writing with MFR.

Writing instructors should know that instructing a student to share his identity through his or her writing is a way to allow him or her to reflect on themselves as writers (Spandel, 2005). Choice in writing allows for the individualistic preferences of the writer to be fulfilled. In other words, a student's identity can emerge in his or her writing. However, to be a writer a student needs to take on the identity of a writer. Research reveals that an internal change in discourse is needed to advance writing skills; students must see themselves as part of an academic writing community in order to embrace the identity of a writer and succeed with its attributes (Flower, 1990). To be a writer, a student must be a part of a group of writers. A student must also see him or herself as a writer, and identify as a writer. It is not enough that they be placed in a group of writers. They must inherently and intrinsically find their role within the group.

Groups of writers are important because writing is not an isolated event, just as the search for self-identity is not an isolated event. Writing is situated in the community or the society. Faulkner (2005) addresses the issues of writing instruction and adolescent writing itself in her ethnographic study of a Year 8 homeroom in Australia. She observed in this classroom for an entire academic year. During this year, she interviewed teachers and administrators, as well as her case students. Her findings revealed that writing must be a social process if it is to be authentic and successful. Similarly, in his study of digital writing practices, Yi (2008) found that writing in, with, and for a community is a natural

practice for our teenagers today. He addressed the question: What does relay writing, or writing where each member of a group contributes a portion of an evolving story, suggest about adolescents' uses of writing and reading under voluntary conditions? Observing the digital relay writing practices of 22 Korean adolescent high school students and three college freshmen in an online writing community, he found that multiple "local" or "situated" literacy practices do take place outside of school in the lives of adolescents. In other words, writing instructors need to know that adolescents invest not only their time, but also their self-identities, in writing practices in print-based writing activities as well as writing activities with MFR, and that these activities often involve a community acting, in part, as an audience.

Audience. For writers, the people who often matter the most to them are the members of their audience. The audience is the individual or group who will receive the composed message of the writer. Kitsis (2008) explains that, "[O]ur real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people, because they are located outside us in space and because they are others" (p. 31). These "others" who see and understand the writer are the audience. Many researchers, such as Yancey (2009), recognize that the audience influences the motivation of the writer:

In much of this new composing, we are writing to share, yes; to encourage dialogue, perhaps; but mostly, I think, to participate. In fact, in looking at all this composing, we might say that one of the biggest changes is the role of audience: writers are everywhere, yes, but so too are audiences, especially in social networking sites like Facebook, which, according to the New York Times, provides a commons for people, not unlike the commons that used to be in small towns and large (Yancey, 2009, p. 5).

Audience, then, is a major component of the writing process.

Audience is not only a major part of the writing process, but it is also a natural and authentic part. Numerous researchers agree that authenticity in writing practice promotes engagement and is therefore necessary in writing instruction. Kahn (2009) argues that abstract writing prompts are less likely to engage students when she states, "I have also found that the cases that work most successfully involve concrete situations and specific people, rather than abstract concepts" (p. 16). The cases she refers to are those of her own students, who, for a particular writing assignment, chose specific argumentative prompts involving real issues and real people, or a real audience. Moje (2000) agrees with Kahn (2009), explaining that, "time and time again, the youth with whom I work tell me that their schoolwork is boring, that it does not relate to their lives, or that it lacks purpose" (p.84). In other words, adolescents need to see the authenticity and practicality of what they are learning in order to want to succeed. This authenticity and practicality in writing is possible with an authentic audience, one which is not solely the teacher. In their own research, Heron, Hruby, Hagood, and Alvermann (2008) found that adult-youth conflict over popular culture, or writing with MFR for the purposes of this dissertation, allows adults who work with adolescent writers to reflect on how their own expectations about reading and writing shape student learning. In other words, they found that when the teacher was the audience, his or her expectations greatly influenced the text of the student writer.

Who this authentic audience is often influences 1) what content will be presented in the writing itself (Smith & Wilhelm, 2006) and, consequently, 2) the process employed to construct the text. For example, a letter or email written for the President of the United States voicing concerns about the environment will most likely include stronger voice

and emotion, as well as different situational details and examples, than if the letter was simply written for a teacher in order to get a positive assessment mark. This section looks at the literature addressing 1) social networking, and 2) engagement. Both are concepts directly related to audience in the writing of adolescent students.

Social networking. Social networking is connected to not only the process of adolescent writing with an audience, but also adolescent schooling as a whole. Jenkins (2009) defines social networking as, “[t]he ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information” (p. xiv). Searching, synthesizing, and disseminating information occurs as a natural part of the research and learning process in schools. This searching, synthesizing, and disseminating often also requires the use of digital writing, especially when situated in an online social community. This community provides the audience for the writer.

Social networking has taken on a new digital identity and this digital identity has brought social networking into the realm of popular culture. Consequently, more people are able to use social networking as a learning tool. Jenkins (2009) explains why people engage more, and thus learn more, from popular culture versus textbooks:

[Constructs of popular culture are] sustained by common endeavors [such as age and race]...because people can participate in various ways according to their skills and interests, because they depend on peer to peer teaching with each participant constantly motivated to acquire to new knowledge...and because they allow each participant to feel like an expert while tapping the expertise of others (Jenkins, 2009, p. 10).

Social networking allows for a process of writing and learning which encompasses identity, motivation, and perhaps most importantly, audience.

Social networking in schools allows learners to authentically engage with this audience. In her own study, Kitsis (2008) looked at Facebook and homework as social

networking. She states that, “knowledge is constructed in the exchange of voices, not in the voices themselves but the space between them” (p.30). These reflective voices can also be called the audience. In this particular study students exchanged email with another class while working on the novel *The Great Gatsby*; these student writers took on the roles and personas of characters. They used blogs to discuss literary prompts and give feedback to each other. The student participants felt that more effort was necessary, or more was at stake, because they were reading each other’s ideas and thoughts. In other words, this was *authentic writing*, or writing that mirrors that which will be expected outside of a school environment, incorporating an audience outside of a teacher. This authentic writing experience allowed students to feel like writers because they were writing for a real, authentic reason that had an outcome, or a response, from the audience. They were writers who would be critiqued by other writers, not just a teacher. Kitsis does note that in order for a project like this to be successful, students must be trained to provide meaningful feedback. But, according to her, the extra effort is worth it. Here, the idea of audience moves from something that is static to something that is participatory. The role of audience becomes one that is active. Meaning is constructed and reconstructed as it is passed between and added to by multiple personalities. This email exchange study reveals that learning is a social, or community, process, and as Jenkins (2009) says, “Participatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement” (p. 6). The participatory culture that is mentioned here is social networking. This culture has its own set of tools. These eleven tools, according to Jenkins (2009), include:

1. Play: “The capacity to experiment with the surroundings as a form of problem solving” (p. 33).
2. Simulation: “The ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes” (p. 41).
3. Performance: “The ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery” (p. 47).
4. Appropriation: “The ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content” (p. 55).
5. Multitasking: “The ability to scan the environment and shift focus onto salient details” (p. 61).
6. Distributed Cognition: “The ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capabilities” (p. 65).
7. Collective Intelligence: “The ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal” (p.71).
8. Judgment: “The ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources” (p. 79).
9. Transmedia Navigation: “The ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities” (p. 85).
10. Networking: “The ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information” (p. 91).
11. Negotiation: “The ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms” (p. 97).

These tools allow the new knowledge to be created effectively and shared with an audience. This creation is a process; it is a process aligned with writing using MFR. Writing using MFR relies upon these tools to create meaning. When more than just alphabetic text is present, skills such as simulation and judgment are necessary in order for the writer to make and relay his or her meaning and message.

This meaning and message is new knowledge created or understood by students through, in the case of my research study, a writing process which involves an audience. According to Jenkins (2009), “[Social] Networking is only partially about identifying potential resources; it also involves a process of synthesis, during which multiple resources are combined to produce new knowledge” (p. 94). Yet, as Yancey (2009) points out, social networking as a networked literacy is not held in as high esteem in schools as it deserves to be held in: “First, we have moved beyond a pyramid-like, sequential model of literacy development in which print literacy comes first and digital literacy comes second and networked literacy practices, if they come at all, come third and last” (p. 6). This sentiment denies the fact that social networking involves a specific process of writing using MFR that creates new knowledge, and it denies the fact that, as I stated in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, all literacies need to be addressed equally in today’s classrooms.

Engagement. Real writing is engaging, and thus academic writing should also be engaging. This engagement in writing is often a product of an authentic audience. Literacy researchers Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) define engaged writers as those who are,

intent on ...writing to understand. They focus on text meanings and avoid distractions. [They] exchange ideas and interpretations of text with peers. Their

devotion...spans across time, transfers to a variety of genre, and culminates in valued learning (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 403).

Writing, and engagement in writing, is critical to the success of our students:

“...Disengaged readers [and writers] are inactive and inert. They tend to avoid reading [and writing] and minimize effort. Rarely do they enjoy reading [and writing] during free time” (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 403). When traditional academic reading and writing are not considered by adolescent students to be authentic real-world activities with authentic real-world audiences, these students often lose this sense of engagement.

Engagement was the focus of The UNC Charlotte Writing Project Collaborative (2008), a group who took an extensive look at one traditional writing practice in the adolescent writing classroom, the five paragraph essay. The Project concluded that, “[five paragraph essays] represent an unrealistic view of the writing process, a view that assumes writing is done by formula and in a vacuum” (p. 16). Researchers decided that their lack of authenticity proves that they are an illogical writing practice because they very rarely existed in settings other than academic classrooms. These researchers argue that writing should be a way for students to express their individuality and ideas to an audience through composition, not a means for teachers to train students to be obedient citizens who write a paper in one specific way because that is what they were taught and told to do. These researchers discovered that students feel that if they stray from the five paragraph model, they are the ones who are wrong. They would rather, in that case, fill in the blanks or complete true or false questions. The Project concludes that, “[w]hile it may appear to teachers that they are accomplishing something by stressing the formula, they are merely looking for a topic sentence, counting the examples, looking for transition words, and not worrying at all about engaging what writers are saying” (pp. 19-

20). Students are learning, through inauthentic writing assignments, that school and the writing process has nothing to do with them, their ideas, or their futures (UNC Charlotte Writing Project Collaborative).

To prove to students that school and the writing process does in fact have much to do with them, their ideas, and their futures, it is necessary to engage students in writing for authentic audiences in authentic contexts, both print-based contexts and contexts using MFR. Researchers such as Cox, Otrmeir-Hooper, Tirabassi (2009), and Karchmer (2005) have focused on a student's ability to engage with not only his or her classmates, but also the real world that surrounds him or her through authentic writing, as I have defined it above. Students are motivated to write for "real" people, not simply for a grade. Cox, et al (2009), for example, found that teaching only traditional, print-based literacies does our students an injustice when workplace experiences compete with academic experiences. Workplace experiences require a completely different set of writing skills, including collaborative writing, writing for multiple audiences and purposes, writing for audiences who do not know the content, writing in unfamiliar genres, and writing that is meant to not only be read, but also used to accomplish a task (p. 73). In their study, Cox et al. describe a lesson which involves students creating documents such as menus and fliers for an authentic local business. In their findings, the authors note that a student's ability to communicate effectively in his or her community, to be comfortable writing in various genres, and to advocate for themselves and others through writing to an authentic audience allowed him or her to engage in his or her world through writing (Cox et al, 2009). These abilities may not come naturally to all students, and thus the opportunity to practice writing for authentic audiences should be presented in the classroom.

Writing for an authentic audience happens naturally in the “real world,” but is a skill that should be learned and honed within the walls of a classroom in preparation for a lifetime of writing. Karchmer (2005) states that “...students take more care when writing messages by attending to content, composition, and form when they are writing to an audience other than the teacher” (p. 173). This truth is seen through the words of one student who, when told that his essay would be read by multiple people after it was posted on a blog, stated, ““Oh you mean we’re really writing to real people, not pretend people? Can I start over?” ” (p. 173). For this student the process and product of writing for “real people” in the world that exists outside of school is far different than the process and product of writing for pretend people, an assessment grade, and/or a teacher. Because of this, texting, IM, and many other forms of representation become viable educational opportunities. They are ways to help prepare students to write in the 21st Century outside of school, where writing using MFR to communicate with an authentic audience is engaging and just as important as, or even more important than, using print-based writing to communicate with the audience of the teacher.

New literacies and multimodality. The research cited in this section looks at the connections of writing to new literacies and multimodality. New literacies are new methods, genres, or modes of reading and writing, which often use MFR to create a text. Multimodality is the ability to use more than one type, or mode, of communication to relay a message. In other words, new literacies are the new methods of communication, while multimodality is the ability to communicate in more than one method. These methods may be traditional, new, or a combination of both. These two constructs, new

literacies and multimodality, continue to change the way our students write each day, in both print-based writing and writing with MFR. Jewitt, et al. (2000) state that,

[T]he communicational landscape is changing; new modes of representation and (re)producing knowledge are emerging...and this is forcing a reassessment [in the field of education]. The availability of word processing, visual design applications, and CD-ROM have accelerated the transformation from a dominance of writing to multimodal “design” (Jewitt et al., 2000, p. 327).

Writing in the form of an alphabetic system is no longer the only acknowledged or accepted mode of communication. Writing now involves new literacies and requires writers to be multimodal. This new writing may involve a new process. In other words, it may involve new steps taken in order to not only know something new, but to also create and communicate a message about this new meaning which has been made.

Most writing outside of the classroom today involves new literacies and multimodality. It is therefore not surprising that researchers are calling for an inclusion of multimodal practices in schooling. Mills (2010) warns that, "This is an age of multimedia authoring where competency with written words is still vital, but is no longer all that is needed to participate meaningfully in the many spheres of life" (p. 36). Mills' goal was to use current research to deconstruct some of the clichés surrounding the research about multimodal practices of youth. In doing so, Mills challenges educators to consider curriculum in their own schools in light of multimodality. He states that, “We need to consider the relationship between the literacies taught at school and the literacies practiced in other contexts. How much, for example, should social, workplace, and recreational literacies influence the curriculum?” (p. 37). Should literacies used outside of school be taught in school? If Mills is right in assuming that home and school literacies should both be addressed in an academic environment, then we may ask: What are the

processes for composing these varying types of literacy that may no longer rely upon the linguistic?

There is a need for educational research and practice to "look beyond the linguistic" (Jewitt, 2005, p. 315). This can be accomplished by considering the writing processes associated with various modes. Jewitt states that, "different modes offer specific resources for meaning-making, and the ways in which modes contribute to people's meaning-making vary" (p. 316). This section looks at these modes in light of 1) traditional print-based literacies and literacies using MFR, (such as digital literacies) as multimodal, 2) home and community literacy, and 3) ownership in literacy practices. In other words, in this section I look at the role of various modes in the processes of both print-based writing and writing with MFR.

Traditional print-based literacies and literacies using MFR, as multimodal. Embracing new literacies does not presuppose the need to get rid of traditional literacies. New literacies allow for the combination of many types, or modes, of literate practices across the forms of print-based writing and writing with MFR (Kress, 2003). Swenson (2006) claims that technological pedagogical content knowledge involves understanding the relationship between print-based texts and digital texts, such as those using MFR. Students need to be able to think and function in numerous and varying contexts in school, and more importantly, outside of school. Multimodality allows for the joint usage of these contexts.

Along with allowing for the combination of contexts, multimodality also gives students a choice in context. If a student is not able to express him or herself through one mode of communication or form of representation, it does not mean that he or she is

incapable of understanding, or expressing, a specific idea. The student may simply be unable to communicate this idea or message in one specific mode. For example, a student may not be able to write out an explanation in words, but may be able to communicate the same idea using a visual diagram. As Newkirk and Kent (2007) point out,

Multimodal texts offer layers of meaning and open up what counts as communication within the English classroom. Or, in other words, opening up assignments so that my students can compose as filmmakers...or as graphic artists...allows me to engage more students, to welcome more of them into a rich community of readers and writers, and to give them a reason to really value what we do in English class (Newkirk & Kent, 2007, p.151).

Students are given the opportunity to express their understanding and to make meaning in a context which, for them, best communicates this understanding or meaning. This was displayed when Ranker (2008) utilized multimodal media projects with his two twelve-year-old student participants. Ranker, along with a colleague, designed a project that resulted in student-produced documentaries about any appropriate topic chosen by the students. He found that the use of multimodal texts allowed for the greater and more thorough communication of ideas. An idea could be expressed through written words, but added details that expanded and supported that idea were understood through a visual picture or PowerPoint slide, through an audio sound clip, through the layout of a webpage, or through the hand gestures or body language of the presenter.

Students even, at times, chose to utilize more than one context to communicate their message or understanding.

Utilizing more than one context is looked highly upon by most students. When given the choice to either embrace or reject the combination of traditional print-based texts and texts with MFR, research has proven that students choose to embrace it (Hobbs, 2007). A study was conducted by Hobbs (2007) in which two groups of eleventh grade

high school students were given similar assignments based on the school's media curriculum. One group was encouraged to use the multimodal literacies and media in their final research presentations while the other was not. In this study, Hobbs notes that students in the media group wrote longer paragraphs and had higher measures of writing quality than students in the control group. Evidence from this research shows that media literacy instruction has a measurable impact on students' traditional reading comprehension, critical reading, and writing skills. In other words, literacy skills influence other literacy skills.

Because of the way in which literacy skills influence other literary skills, it is possible to incorporate familiar literacies in school in order to teach a new idea. In an article exploring multimodal curriculum design, Albers (2006) notes that, "when constructing multimodal texts, meaning makers intentionally choose media with which they are familiar and/or the media that will enable them to say what they want to say" (p. 75). The author examines and promotes multimodal student activities which incorporate new literacies. Albers acknowledges how the use of new literacies leads students to reflective action, a key component of many writing processes. Incorporating familiar literacies in school in a multimodal fashion allows students to create and communicate a meaning in a way that culturally makes sense them. The teacher can then assist students in understanding how to communicate this same message in an alternate mode, possibly one more often associated with traditional schooling. This reflective process is also acknowledged by Vasudevan, Stageman, Rodriguez, Fernandez, and Dattatrevan (2010) who argue that authoring occurs in numerous, various ways. They note that, "[b]eyond merely the verbal telling of tales, we author ourselves through the engagement of cultural

artifacts...which have been collectively ascribed with meaning” (p. 54). They said, “[These multimodal communication activities were] a place of profound reflection, ongoing critical dialogue, and collaboration” (p. 63). The activities required more than simply putting information together. Instead, writers reflected on and revised their texts.

The examples of multimodality in the studies presented above all recognize the need for and the advantages of combining traditional print-based texts and texts with MFR. These researchers agree that if students are going to be active citizens of the world, they need to be able to tell their own stories and communicate their own messages using writing, visuals, technology, and other varying modes. They need to be proficient in both traditional print-based literacy practices and modes, and literacy practices and modes with MFR, such as the digital. Moreover, they often need to be proficient in them simultaneously, and they need to recognize the processes they use to compose such texts, as well as when, where, and why to use each particular mode.

Home and community literacy. Students are aware of these new literacies; they can assert their own multimodality because these literacies are often already a part of their home and community literacy practices. These are literacy skills they use, often on a daily basis, outside of the classroom. These are literacy skills that students partake in naturally. Swensen (2006) explains, “Most of us do not need to ‘invite’ our students to compose using newer technologies. They are already doing so: Young people today live media-saturated lives, spending an average of nearly 6 ½ hours a day with media” (p. 360). Similar research reveals that when the academic and personal lives of students do not mesh, a disconnect is created in the classroom. This was proven when Whitmore and Norton-Meir (2008) presented two case studies looking at the literacy lives of adults at

home. Their research revealed that when the literacy life of a mother is revalued, new relationships between the home and the school can be formed in order to positively affect her children's literacy learning in the classroom. Therefore, when the literacy life of a mother involves MFR, then incorporating writing using MFR into the classroom will positively affect her children's literacy learning. In summation, Whitmore and Norton-Meir state that, "results indicate that differences between home and school reduce expectations for some children's academic success" (p. 450). Ignoring or deeming home literacy skills as inferior to academic skills can do just as much damage as the complete lack of the skill in the home; in both situations, necessary literacy skills of the 21st Century are being ignored. Home literacy skills have a specific process and a specific place in today's classrooms.

New literacy skills using MFR are not just utilized at home, but they are also often born at home. Agee and Altarriba (2009) conducted their own study situated in the theoretical framework of New Literacies Studies. They surveyed 189 sixth and seventh graders in two suburban schools about computer technologies and digital literacies. They then interviewed 24 of these students for more detailed information. Findings revealed that sixth graders were much less interested in computer technologies than seventh graders. However, Agee and Altarriba noted that the overall most interesting finding of the study was that the participants learned about computer technologies primarily on their own at home, not in an academic setting.

Agee and Altarriba's (2009) claims are supported by Tarasiuk (2010) when she explains that, "[t]he adolescents we have in our classrooms today have grown up in a world where cyberspace is not new, but rather space for them to live in, learn from, and

communicate” (p. 544). This English teacher-researcher surveyed 253 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students to measure their traditional and digital literacy practices. The results showed that students are capable Internet users, even if they are struggling in the classroom with traditional literacy skills. Using these results, Tarasiuk decided to diverge from her ordinary worksheets, and instead have the class use a wiki to track information from novels being read in class. She admits that this can be a challenging task for educators, since it may be outside of their own comfort zone and literacy skill set, and since the outcomes can be unexpected and diverse. Tarasiuk says, “[w]orking in digital media requires that I let these projects evolve and not expect current groups to mimic past groups’ work...it is difficult to outline these projects” (p. 551). The process of a text constructed with MFR results in different pacing and a different product than a print-based text.

In the example above, the word “group” is vital. New literacies, especially those born and practiced at home, are not solitary literacies. On the contrary, new literacies are often social literacies and, consequently, community based. Many new literacy practices are dependent upon groups of people communicating with each other in digital, and often multimodal, ways. Researchers such as Leu and Leu (2001) find that the “real world”, the home, and the classroom should promote social learning, and new literacies does exactly that: “Learning about the Internet is best accomplished through social interactions with others, perhaps even more naturally and frequently than in traditional print environments” (p. 24). Communities and literacies using MFR complement each other. The communities add and shape a writer’s identity and audience while the literacies using

MFR allow for a process resulting in the communication of a specific message to the specific community.

Ownership in literacy practices. New literacies using MFR allow for ownership of a text. MFR invite the writer to make more decisions in his or her presentation, since there is often more than one choice in the form chosen to represent and communicate an idea. This, in turn, leads to a greater sense of ownership, and even pride in the work. Lawrence, McNeal, and Yildiz (2009) illustrated this idea in a study where new literacy texts, including graphic novels, were utilized to teach low achieving, urban adolescents. Technology was used whenever possible. Findings identified the benefits of allowing students to create their own texts using new literacies, including higher confidence and success rates. In another study looking at the use of new literacies to teach traditional texts, McVee, Bailey, and Shanahan (2008) found that poetry could be interpreted as a mode of meaning as well as communication. The use of new literacies here allowed for students to claim ownership over their work, which was a personal interpretation of a classic poem: "...as students worked with various modes to interpret their poem, they took ownership of that poem" (McVee et al., 2008, p.136). Here it is evident that new literacies and multimodality allow for self-expression through various modes and, consequently, ownership of text. This self-expression and ownership are components of the very writing processes this dissertation explores.

Ownership of a text is not always a simple thing to claim in a digital world. New literacies and multimodality face their own set of challenges in the classroom with regard to resistance, ownership, and authorship. These challenges include resistance from some educators, and a lack of clarity in the rules of plagiarism when applied to multimodal

texts where ownership and authorship are in question. Explaining the resistance of some educators, Kress (2010) reminds us that,

The school has the task of upholding canonical forms of knowledge and representation without the support of clear direction from state or society. In popular culture, the very same practices of production which are censored in the school have acceptance and high status: “sampling” in music, or “mashing”. It is an extremely serious matter that contemporary forms of semiotic production...are poorly understood or not at all, as witness to the moral panics around “plagiarism” (Kress, 2010, p. 134).

In a time and place where the concept of plagiarism and the process of creating a text and a message needs to be revisited, is it even possible to embrace multimodality before accepting that society, education, and literacy as a whole, are changing rapidly?

Impact of digital literacy. Digital literacy skills are no longer a novelty. They are fast becoming a necessity, and, consequently, they are impacting our culture, our adolescents, and our adolescents’ writing in multiple ways. Gilster (1997) explores the idea of digital literacy where he addresses the ideas and realities of hypertext and virtual libraries, comparing digital literacy skills to a driver’s license. For Gilster, in the same way that a driver's license changes the way an adolescent physically navigates the world, digital literacy skills change the way he or she communicates. Hull (1996) even looked at literacy skills that are necessary in today’s changing workplaces, compared the literacy skills of successful companies with the literacy skills of less successful companies, and suggested methods for teachers to be introduced to the new demands of the workforce.

This section reviews the literature on how the writing and the writing processes of adolescents are being impacted by digital literacies, including literacy practices using traditional print-based texts and literacy practices using MFR. Specific attention will be

paid to 1) the format and genre of adolescent writing, and 2) the amount and quality of adolescent writing.

Format and genre of writing. The format and genre of a text are impacted by digital writing using MFR. As multimodal writers, students may tend to be more creative and feel less restricted in regard to format and genre when utilizing new literacies and literacies with MFR. This may be because the possibilities of format and genre in a multimodal world seem limitless. While doing research in this field and looking to identify teaching and learning skills and processes for digital literacy, Luce-Kapler (2007) found that radical changes can be seen in texts when students use new literacies. These changes include: 1) change in form and format, such as new forms of graphics, 2) change in perspectives such as multiple points of view both visual and verbal, and 3) change in boundaries such as dealing with previously forbidden or overlooked subjects and settings, new types of communities, characters portrayed in new and complex ways, and unresolved endings. Her secondary student participants were responsive to changes they encountered in new literacy texts; these changes included the ability to use more than one mode to represent an idea, and the ability to easily revise or edit the representation of an idea using digital resources. One student participant in this wiki study said, “These authors...like they’re different. They make the stories into chunks and then have bits and pieces where they want them” (Luce-Kapler, 2007, p. 218). In regard to writing using a wiki,

[A student] added that he would choose to write with wikis most of the time because, “You don’t have to write with your hand and pencil, and plus its funner because you can put pictures in that are actually real pictures” (Luce-Kapler, 2007, p. 219).

This study illustrates how the format and genre of writing, which in this case involves MFR, can in fact change the way the adolescents perceive the task and the process of writing.

Moving the focus to post-secondary adolescent writers and their response to greater flexibility in format and genre, Dave and Russell (2010) looked at college level writing studies conducted before word processing technology and compared them to the beliefs, assumptions, and actions of college level writing with word processing capabilities. These researchers surveyed 112 undergraduate students who use computers to write. It was found that word processing does not encourage more thorough revision, and that printing out a paper or other written piece in order to revise is on the decline. Students are simply revising on the computer. Dave and Russel suggest that, “perhaps the way to get students to do more global revision is to teach them to do it, not simply to expect it or require multiple drafts” (p. 428). Our researchers also conclude that, “the significant two-way relationship between printing out for revision and producing more drafts might suggest paper is complementing and enhancing electronic revision in ever more complex ways...those who reported producing more drafts also reported printing out more” (p. 429). Traditional print-based writing involving paper and pen is reflected in the idea of “tangible and tactile paper = draft,” even though MFR are utilized in the creation of a document with a screen and word-processing program. Here, not only is the impact of format and genre noticeable, but it is also noticeable that print based literacies and literacies with MFR are working together.

Sometimes the merging of text forms also means the merging of identities. West (2008) explored a situation where the identities of “student” and “blogger” needed to

work together. Looking more closely at blogs as a specific genre with a defined format for writing, West notes that the student bloggers in his study each built an identity in their online blog posts as “serious literature students.” However, all three students in the study also seemed aware of the expectations of informally writing online. In other words, students were able to merge their two identities of student and internet communicator. They combined formal literary analysis with informal digital writing tendencies with MFR. These students utilized a hybrid genre, “perhaps transforming notions of traditional and academic by interspersing bits of what some teachers and parents might call questionable or unacceptable language” (p.1). In this situation the form of the writing comes into play. The print-based form and the form with MFR, as well as the convergence of the two, aid in the continuous meaning-making in the student’s process of writing. It also reaffirms the idea that Kitsis (2008) presented about authentic writing experiences; these students, along with merging a real, unique identity as a writers, felt like writers because they were writing for a real, authentic reason that had an outcome, or a response. They were writers who would be critiqued by not only the teacher, but also by other writers. Therefore, their format and genre not only impacted the content of their writing, but also the identity they needed to create for themselves as writers in this situation.

Amount and quality of writing. Format and genre of a text are not the only components of writing impacted by digital writing with MFR. Writing using MFR has an obvious impact on the amount and quality of adolescent writing as well. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2007) acknowledges this, asserting that writing has become more prevalent in the lives of today’s students:

K-12 students on computers produce compositions of greater length and higher quality and are more engaged with...writing than their peers. College students who keep e-portfolios have a higher rate of academic achievement and overall retention rate than their peers (NCTE, 2007, p. 1).

Students are writing, and they are often writing a great deal.

This greater amount and quality of writing can also be attributed, in part, to the community based nature of writing online. Gibbons (2010) realized that, “[s]ocial networking was exactly what Vygotsky was talking about; it just needed to be updated” (p. 35). Here, Gibbons is referring to the Vygotskian theory (Vygotsky, 1978) that learning is a social and cultural happening, and Gibbons is aligning this theory with social networking, or the act of communication in a given society or group.

Understanding that discussion experiences shape thinking, Gibbons conducted research looking at the differences between traditional revision practices and revision practices incorporating the use of a digital social networking tool, a wiki. He introduced traditional brainstorming to one of his two classes, and digital wiki revision to the other class.

Traditional revision practices elicited these responses from students:

I did not have enough time to read the entire paper, I did not want to make negative comments and hurt someone’s feelings, Everyone else was finished and talking and I was still reading, and I couldn’t read the handwritten comments on my paper (Gibbons, 2010, p. 36).

Students who used the wiki, in contrast, were engaged and much less resistant to share ideas and suggestions. They wrote more to each other, making revision suggestions, and they wrote more and made more revisions on their own papers. These revisions lead to a better quality of writing from the writers. Gibbons’ conclusion was that online collaboration motivates learning and social networking inspires learning and increases motivation. This idea of co-authorship and peer apprenticing in writing lends itself to a

more motivated student writer. This is a student writer who even revises his or her own work, leading to a better quality of writing. A report from the NCTE President Yancey (2009) explains that,

In the case of the web... writers compose authentic texts in informal digitally networked contexts, but there isn't a hierarchy of expert-apprentice, but rather a peer co-apprenticeship in which communicative knowledge is freely exchanged. In other words, our impulse to write is now digitized and expanded—or put differently, newly technologized, socialized, and networked (Yancey, 2009, p. 5).

Students who write digitally, according to the research cited above, write more. These students are also more willing to revise their work. Consequently, the revision of work will lead to a better quality of writing. Therefore, the process of writing is enhanced in regard to quantity, and quality of writing will be enhanced due to revision.

But is the wiki the only digital literacy activity that promotes this learning and motivation to write more, and in better quality? Based on the literature, I would argue that it is not. Looking at another digital form of writing, Lewis and Fabos (2005) conducted a more extensive study of young people's use of instant messaging (IM). They found that, "by 2003, 70% of online teens ages 12-17 used instant messaging. One fourth of all online teens see IM as their main communication tool" (p.1). It was noted that an instant message must be achieved through written expression, showing a strong adolescent connection to writing. Students felt that IM enhanced their depth of thought, in having to respond to friends without the use of tone of voice, gesticulation, etc. Students were aware of their spelling and didn't want to look "dumb" with misspellings. In summation, using MFR in communication, including the digital kinds, did not deter writing ability and skills. On the contrary, it forced students to take their writing to the next level of the writing process where they relied not only on content, but also on the

tone, or emotion, that was relayed. Without the use of voice, gesticulation, or even extensive text, IM forced students to relate tone to their audience using limited alphabetic text and MFR, such as symbols, punctuation, and emoticons. This resulted in a text with a higher quality of emotion, or meaning. Here, Lewis and Fabos argue that the quality of the text was enhanced.

Gaps in the literature. Writing has long been second in line behind other adolescent literacy practices. As Yancey (2009) points out, “Writing has never been accorded the cultural respect or the support that reading has enjoyed...because through reading, society could control its citizens, whereas through writing, citizens might exercise their own control” (p. 2). This favoring of reading and other literacy practices over writing is apparent in the literature on literacy at the adolescent level. While the literature reviewed in this chapter addresses in isolation the practical applications associated with writing instruction; the components of new literacies including genre, content, and writers’ needs; and how students interact with new literacies, it does not recognize how meaning is made incorporating the components of Rosenblatt’s (1978) idea of transaction and Kress’s idea (2003) of transformation through the processes of writing in both traditional print-based forms and forms with MFR. Although process writing was in fact introduced in the 1960s through 1980s, and research began to explore these ideas, the standardization of writing in the form of standardized testing led researchers to instead focus on not the process of writing, but instead the product (Yancey, 2009). In addition, at that time in history the process of writing using MFR was not yet a topic to be explored. Consequently, the gaps in the literature reflect this.

So now my research questions can be considered: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR? How does audience mediate the content in a specific writing event, considering the design of a specific genre? These are vital questions to ask because they have the potential to inform theory, and ultimately teachers and practitioners, about how best to instruct students in writing.

Yancey (2009) has said that in order for quality writing instruction to occur, three things must happen: 1) “Articulate the new models of composing developing right in front of our eyes” (p. 8); 2) “Design a new model of a writing curriculum K–graduate school” (p.8); and 3) “Create new models for teaching” (p. 8). These processes, or models, of writing and their subsequent abilities to inform new models of teaching are what are missing in the current research literature. The observation of these processes of writing and their subsequent abilities to inform new models of teaching are the focus of my dissertation.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Research Design Overview

I designed this methodology to observe the processes of adolescent writing, as well as notice the effects of audience and genre. In a previously conducted pilot case study of one high school student that I conducted, *Adolescents and Writing: Traditional Writing Versus Digital Writing*, I explored research questions similar to those addressed in this dissertation. I discovered from my one purposefully selected participant that, from her perspective, writing in either context, traditional or digital, served multiple functions in various situations. In order to look more closely at the writing processes associated with these functions and situations, I expanded my dissertation study to include more participants. I also changed the data collection plan to more thoroughly answer my new research questions.

Case study design. The purpose of these qualitative case studies was to describe three adolescents' print-based academic writing and academic writing which used MFR. According to Yin (2009), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). The phenomenon I investigated was the process of academic writing for three adolescents in traditional print-based forms as well as forms using MFR. The real-life context of this phenomenon was a school environment where students wrote in both forms. Therefore, the boundaries between the decisions governing the writing process, meaning-making,

and form selection in writing, and the context of the school environment, were blurred. In other words, students were restricted to writing in ways which seemed appropriate for school according to themselves, and sometimes also according to their teachers.

Yin continues to explain that,

the case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009, p.18).

My research involved multiple sources of evidence which converged in a triangulating fashion. This means that the data I collected from each method supported the data from other methods. I collected data to explore my research questions using the following methodologies: an on-going collection of print-based traditional and MFR writing samples from each participant; print-based or MFR participant journal logging of all academic writing events over a specified period of time; interviews; and print-based or MFR narratives written by each participant.

My research relied upon the socio-cultural theoretical frameworks of Rosenblatt's (1978) Reader's Response Theory and Kress' (2010) Theory of Modes. My research, in other words, is presented using the ideas of Rosenblatt (1978) and Kress (2010).

Research questions. The research question and sub-questions which my research study was designed to consider and observe, were: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR?

- A. What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR?

B. How does audience mediate the content in a specific writing event, considering the design of a specific genre?

These questions aligned with the purposes and uses of the case study method. The questions did not have yes or no answers; they allowed for further investigation into processes and situations that were not necessarily easily described or defined. As Yin (2009) explains, “[h]ow...questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies...This is because such questions deal with operational links needed to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence” (p. 9). The case study, in addition, has an advantage when a “how” question is being asked about a contemporary event over which the researcher has little or no control (Yin, 2009). The contemporary writing events that I researched did not have prescribed outcomes. Instead, I collected samples, read narratives, and asked questions in order to collect data whose meanings had infinite possibilities.

Research Site

This research took place with three adolescent student participants from a suburban New Jersey High School located in Monmouth County where I was once a full-time English teacher. This regional school included grades nine through twelve. The school had a ten-period schedule each day which included a lunch period and an optional study hall period or elective period. Each period was 40 minutes in length. Each student in this school came from one of four sending districts with separate K-8 schools which shared this regional secondary school. Each of these four districts was a separate town of the same name. Three of these sending districts were upper-middle class/upper class,

while the fourth sending district was lower-middle class/lower class. Over 95% of the school population was Caucasian. At the time of the study, approximately 500 students attended this school.

Technology, a key component of this research study, was valued in this school's culture. Four laptop carts, each equipped with a set of fifteen laptops, were available for teachers to borrow and use for enrichment purposes with their classes. The media center housed thirty desktops and twenty laptops which were utilized by students and staff as well. In addition, each teacher had his or her own desktop computer that was connected to the projector in the room. This allowed for implementation of online and digital tools in lesson planning and in classroom instruction. However, while these details of the research site are vital in understanding the academic writing traits and habits of the participants, my research did not take place on these school grounds. The physical location of the actual research interviews and collection of data was always at a public meeting place, specifically a local chain bookstore or local coffee shop. This location was determined by each participant and his or her guardian(s).

Research Sample

I used purposeful sampling and convenience sampling (Patton, 1990) to select the three participants for this study. My sample was a purposeful one which meant that I first chose possible participants who I believed met my criteria list. I then purposely sampled these potential participants to make sure that they did in fact meet the criteria in the list below. I did this by having each potential participant fill out a checklist of criteria, answering "yes" or "no" to each criterion. Criterion questions included, but were not

limited to: Do you write with a pen and paper in school? Do you write using a computer in school? Would you be willing to write a short narrative for me about writing in your life? These criteria had been established in order to find willing participants who engaged in traditional and digital writing practices and who would be comfortable with my data collection strategies. My sample was also one of convenience since all possible samples were students with whom I have a rapport and with whom I had access to during the school year. The sample ultimately included three participants who fulfilled the following criteria:

- High school student who completes both academic print-based writing and academic writing using MFR as part of his or her school curriculum
- High school student willing to be interviewed
- High school student willing to share writing samples
- High school student willing to communicate digitally
- High school student willing to complete a narrative
- High school student willing to meet in their community for interviews and data collection
- High school student who was my student in an English class at one time in order to ensure my familiarity with his or her writing style

The names of all participants were kept confidential; I referred to them by the pseudonyms which they chose for themselves during Interview 3 (please see *Data Collection Strategies and Procedures*). Participants and guardian(s) gave full permission,

as was noted on the guardian/student permission forms, for all data to be collected and utilized. Participants were asked to correspond concerns and questions with me through email or Facebook for the duration of the study, and I relayed reminders and inquiries to them in the same manner. Facebook proved to be a more successful means of communication with these three participants. They responded to Facebook messages and wall posts within an average of four hours, while email messages were not answered for two to four days. Participants, who are introduced in the following paragraphs, were given a gift card to a local chain bookstore, as well as a formal thank you note, at the completion of the study.

Participant 1. Anais (pseudonym) was a seventeen year old female and a senior in the traditional public New Jersey high school where I chose participants for my study. She was an American-born student whose mother was originally from Greece and whose father was originally from Spain. She lived in a traditional middle-class household with her mother, father, and 15-year old brother. She was a member of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program at her high school. This meant that while fulfilling the requirements for high school graduation in the state of New Jersey, she had also elected to pursue an International Diploma, gained through rigorous course work, volunteer work, creativity hours, examinations, and additional writing and research assignments outside of those assigned in her academic classes. Anais visited Greece every summer and was a practicing Greek Orthodox Roman Catholic.

Participant 2. Aslan (pseudonym) was a seventeen year old male senior from the same traditional high school in suburban New Jersey. He was an American born student. He lived in a traditional middle-class household with his mother, father, and 14-year old

sister. He often procrastinated and turned academic assignments in late to his teachers. However, my view as his former teacher was that his abilities as a writer and reader far exceeded the grades he received on paper. Aslan was in the honors program of this high school. As an acclaimed youth opera singer, he spent much of his free time in New York City, attending special programs, completing advanced voice classes, and performing.

Participant 3. Paige (pseudonym) was a female senior student from the same traditional New Jersey suburban high school attended by Anais and Aslan. This high school senior was a committed member of her school's cheerleading and community service teams and was always surrounded by her friends. Although she took Honors English IV during her senior year, she was enrolled in the general proficiency classes for all other subject areas. Paige came from a middle-class household. She lived with her single mother who worked full time at a local army base as a civilian government employee. Paige had no contact with her biological father. Paige had one older sister who lived at the college she attended in Northern New Jersey and who had graduated from Paige's own high school four years earlier.

Data Collection Strategies and Procedures

All data collection took place after the regular school day or on weekends at a public meeting place, such as a local chain bookstore or local coffee shop, which was determined by each participant and his or her guardian(s). The narratives and other written work were completed by the participants on their own time. Data collection took approximately sixteen weeks to complete and, in keeping with the case study design, was conducted using multiple methods which are explained below.

Writing samples. The following data methods all involved writing samples.

Classroom Assignments. The collected writing samples were assignments completed by participants for academic courses which they were enrolled in at the time of the study. Classroom assignments comprised journal entries and reflections, essays, notes, creative writing pieces, and worksheets. Journal entries and reflections documented the writers' feelings about class topics, novels read for class, historical events being discussed in class, etc. Most of these journal entries and reflections were unstructured. Essays had a main focus, or thesis, paragraph and subsequent body paragraphs and a conclusion supporting the thesis. Most of these essays were written in a formatted style and very structured. Notes came in multiple forms, some using roman numerals and others in a web structure. All notes were based on class content and reflected facts that needed to be memorized or applied in class, or to complete assignments. Creative writing pieces included poetry and short stories. These texts were unstructured. Finally, worksheets were filled out based on class content. Specific questions were asked on these worksheets and participants provided the necessary answers. Very little reflection, if any, was required in order to complete these worksheets.

I introduced this task of collecting classroom assignments on the first day of the study, in order to be able to see any development or changes in the participants' academic writing as the study and school year progressed. I asked the participants to give me copies of all written assignments in both contexts (print-based academic writing and academic writing with MFR) on a weekly basis for the duration of the study, along with a written explanation of the original assignment. I provided participants with envelopes and postage with which to mail these assignments to me. However, all participants chose to

hand assignments to me directly, usually during interviews and occasionally by meeting me at the local chain bookstore or coffee shop for this purpose.

Classroom assignment writing samples were limited; participants did not produce as many samples as I had originally expected. This was partially due to fewer assignments from teachers than I had anticipated, and partially due to the participant's forgetting to save the assignments for me. In addition, most assignments did not include a thorough explanation of what the purpose of the assignment was and any expectations that the teacher may have provided. This was in part due to my lack of specificity about what I hoped would be explained to me about the assignment, and in part due to the participant's forgetting to note assignment details. Consequently, the classroom assignments proved to be the most challenging pieces of data to collect and to analyze, and presented the least insightful data. The analysis was challenging since I lacked pertinent information about the context of the assignments. Given these facts, I did request that my participants be more specific in providing me with details of their writing assignments as the study progressed, but this did not happen. Therefore, I adjusted my interviews to more thoroughly reflect information about classroom assignment writing samples.

Print-based journal or journal using MFR. I introduced this task to my participants during the first interview session (during the first week of the study), and it was completed every week for the duration of the study. I introduced this task early in the study in order to be able to see any development of my participants' thoughts about academic writing as the study and school year progressed.

Participants recorded all writing events related to school for five consecutive weekdays in either a traditional print-based, spiral bound, 1-subject notebook which I provided to each participant, or on a wiki, which I set up, using MFR to complete their entries. They were able to choose either format; the traditional notebook was print-based and hand-written while the wiki was typed. All three participants chose to write their journals in the traditional print-based notebook. For each entry I asked each of the three participants to record date, time, duration of assignment, assignment name and description, and a one to three sentence response to the questions “Did you like this assignment? Why or Why not? If you could change it, how would you? Why?”

The journal allowed me to see not only what the participants had been required to write for school on a weekly basis, but, more importantly, how they felt about these assignments and how they would have altered them if they had been permitted to do so. This document allowed me to see their thoughts about academic writing, the process of writing, and genre choice. In other words, the journal allowed me to address the research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR?

I reviewed their journals periodically throughout the study, usually during interview sessions, to make sure that they were being maintained appropriately. If they were not being maintained I simply reminded the participants of the expectations for the study. No “rules” were established, and, thus they viewed me as a researcher, and not a teacher who they may have feared would be in control of their grades. I collected the

journal from each of them at the end of the sixteen-week study. I gave each participant the option of handing the journal to me either in person or having the participant mail the journal to me with provided postage and envelopes. All participants chose to hand me the journal during our last interview session.

Print-based narrative or narrative using MFR. I introduced this task to my participants between the tenth and twelfth weeks of the study via email and Facebook. As noted before, the Facebook message was responded to much more quickly. By this time in the study the participants were reassured that the tasks were not being evaluated for a grade or any other reason, and, consequently, completed more honest and thorough narratives.

Having participants write a narrative gave me the opportunity to read what they considered to be the most important writing events in their academic lives and the thoughts and emotions attributed to these events; they were in no way influenced by anything I may have said in, for example, an interview. To ensure that my own outside influence did not affect their narrative, I provided guiding questions for them to consider when writing, but no potential answers or models of “what I was looking for.” The narrative served as their autobiography as a writer, documenting the thoughts, feelings, and events which stood out to them as they grew as writers. I was able to read, in their own words, what being a writer was like for them. The narratives helped address all of my research questions, giving insight into print-based academic writing versus academic writing with MFR; the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts; the processes involved in composing texts which use MFR; the role of the

audience; how the audience mediates the content in a specific writing event; and the designs and uses for specific genres in both the print-based form and the form with MFR.

Participants were given a week to write this personal narrative and were given the choice of completing it as either a print-based narrative or a narrative using MFR. The print-based narratives were to be written in a spiral bound notebook, provided by me, while the narratives using MFR were to be completed in the form of a wiki (which I set up). Participants were asked to comment on numerous specific writing events when writing their personal narratives, as well as explain why they chose to complete this task in either a traditional or MFR format. Full directions for the writing of the narrative are listed in Appendix B. The length of the narrative was not pre-determined, but participants were encouraged to address all prompts in Appendix B. Upon completion, students were asked to submit the narrative to me either online (wiki versions) or through postal service mail (print-based versions). I once again provided each participant with the postage and envelopes necessary for mailing.

Each of the three participants chose to write a print-based narrative in a spiral bound notebook. However, it is interesting to note that all three participants, without consulting each other, asked permission to type their narratives in a Microsoft Word document and email it to me as an attachment. Each participant noted that he or she did write it by hand first.

Interviews. Three 20-30 minute individual interviews were conducted with each participant in order to obtain a more thorough understanding of their ideas regarding their own writing practices. The location of each interview was a local public bookstore or coffee shop, chosen by the participant and his or her guardian(s). The location of these

interviews provided a casual, non-structured atmosphere. This allowed the participants to comfortably share their feelings and beliefs with me. It proved to be a better location than, for example, a classroom, where our teacher-student, adult-teenager dynamic would be highlighted and may have caused the participants to be more hesitant in sharing information with me.

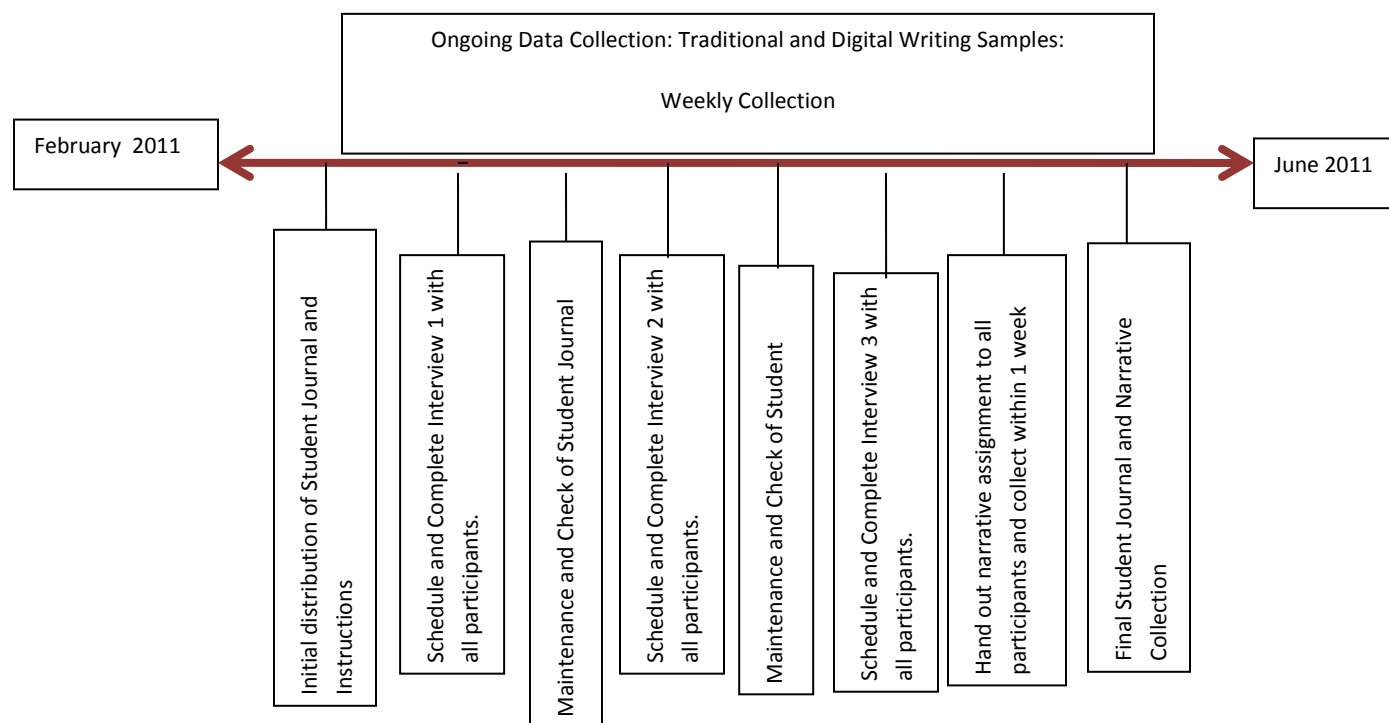
These interviews were conducted during the first, tenth, and sixteenth (last) weeks of the study. This timeline allowed me to: 1) gather their ideas about their writing processes before looking too thoroughly at the writing pieces themselves, which were analyzed as products of these processes, and 2) note any changes in their ideas about writing through the duration of the study. The first interview aimed to answer the following research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR? Interview 2 attempted to answer these research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? How does audience mediate content and design? Finally, Interview 3 addressed all of the research questions listed above, giving a more holistic data set. This last interview also allowed me to revisit responses from my previous two interviews. In addition, during this interview I asked each participant to choose a pseudonym for themselves and for their school in order to maintain their anonymity.

I chose to conduct three shorter interviews instead of one longer interview with each participant for three reasons: 1) the shorter time of each interview allowed for the scheduling of the interview during the school day; 2) the shorter time of each interview

proved to be less intense and necessitated less focus and energy from the adolescent participants who were already engaged in a full day of schooling; and 3) breaking up the focus of the interviews into three areas, each addressing specific research questions, gave me more time to initially reflect and focus when triangulating between the responses of the three participants. Conducting the interviews over the course of sixteen weeks presented many positive benefits. The students' responses became more detailed and focused with each interview. In addition, as the participants' comfort level with me increased, so did the depth of their responses. I was also able to hear specific answers articulated in various ways, allowing me to further analyze the responses. Overall, the information from the interviews allowed me to observe how adolescent writers respond to writing and the writing processes.

I was provided with more insight than I had originally expected. Although each interview focused on specific research questions, answers and examples provided by each participant often overlapped and were repeated among his or her three individual interviews. However, new insights about these answers and examples were often noted, making the redundancy in inquiry worthwhile to me, the researcher. Appendix A contains the protocols for all interviews.

Data collection timeline. The diagram below illustrates the timeline of data collection which I followed for this study:



Data Analysis Strategies and Procedures

According to Yin (2009), “a research design is a logical plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions.” When looking at the case study design, getting from here to there also involves analyzing multiple types of data. In these case studies I analyzed my data collected from interviews, student journals, writing samples, and narratives.

Artifact analysis. Considering the fact that my collected data might have included not only verbal and written alphabetic text, but also artifacts and visual representations, a protocol for analyzing non-verbal and non-alphabetic text data was needed. Key parts of Kress and vanLeeuwen's (2009) Article Analysis Protocol were utilized in order to interpret the meaning of non-verbal and non-alphabetic artifacts and visual representations. In other words, while the words themselves allowed me to understand the meaning of each piece of verbal and written alphabetic text and to recognize emerging themes, these elements could guide my approach to understanding the meaning of each visual artifact and recognizing their emerging themes.

The Article Analysis Protocol asserts that there are two primary types of visual structures: those that tell narratives, or stories, and those that are conceptual, or are “representing participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable or timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure in meaning” (p. 79). There are factors within these visual artifacts, whether they are narrative or conceptual, which inform the reader, and which I was prepared to utilize as a means of interpretation:

- 1) Information Value: “The placement of elements endows them with the specific informational values attached to the various ‘zones’ of the image” (Kress & vanLeeuwen, 2009, p. 177). The placement of information in a visual, based on the following zones, dictates their value as information to the piece as a whole:
 - *Left and Right:* Left is presented as given information; Right is presented as new
 - *Top and Bottom:* Top is presented as the ideal; Bottom is presented as real

- *Center and Margin*: Center is presented as the nucleus of information; Margin is presented as information relying on the nucleus
- 2) Saliency: “The elements are made to attract the viewer’s attention to different degrees” (Kress & vanLeeuwen, 2009, p. 177). The following elements, or degrees, are used to understand which parts of the visual piece are meant to capture the audience’s attention:
- *Foreground or Background Placement*: Foreground presented to attract more attention than background
 - *Relative Size*: Larger sizes presented to attract the viewers attention
 - *Contrasts in Color*: Contrasts in color attract viewer attention
 - *Differences in Sharpness*: The sharper the image, the more attention it receives within the visual
- 3) Framing: “The presence or absence of framing devices (realized by elements which create dividing lines, or by actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense” (Kress & vanLeeuwen, 2009, p. 177).

I would like to note that no visual artifacts of substance using MFR were submitted by the participants as writing samples.

Phases of analysis. After better understanding my alphabetic and non-alphabetic data, the next step was to further analyze it in a way which began to make connections between multiple pieces of data collected from various methods. I used the following three phases of analysis. Phases two and three are situated in the theoretical frameworks of my research.

Phase 1: Data organization. I organized all writing samples (classroom assignments, narratives, and journals) by participant, building a file of data for each of the three students.

I transcribed all interview data. After it was transcribed through typing, I numbered the lines of the transcribed data in order to assist in coding.

I typed all reflective notes, which were written immediately after each data collection method whether it was an interview or the reading of a writing sample. These reflective notes were kept with the pieces of data they referred to.

I read through each piece of data once again. I noted any early emerging observations, themes, patterns, etc. in memo form for each piece of data. The memo was a list of themes and patterns with notes linking the themes and patterns to specific pieces of data.

I organized each participant by theme. If and when broad themes were immediately obvious, I sorted each participant's file based on these themes. For example, if Paige talked extensively about the role of audience in her narrative and student journal, those pieces of data were grouped together.

Phase 2: Data description. I read through each piece of data and annotated data relating to my research questions and theoretical framework. I used my research questions to guide my reading and notice pertinent themes. I did this multiple times in order to be thorough. At this point I identified the most relevant themes. These themes became the codes for my analysis.

I looked through these codes in order to observe emerging patterns. In other words, I noted whether specific codes occurred again and again. I also grouped similar

codes together. In this way I began to formulate a list of codes with which to later analyze, as well as triangulate, my data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Triangulation means that I checked the validity of results by observing these results through multiple methods of research. If these similar results were not observed through multiple methods of research, they were organized in a separate list to be considered in the next phase of analysis.

In order to code this information using specific codes that I established, I created a chart (seen below) to show: 1) the actual piece of data (such as a phrase or line of interview dialogue or taken from a written document, or a description of a visual element of an artifact), 2) the codes and how each one applied to my theoretical framework, and finally 3) which research question or questions the code applied to. All rows with the same code were then grouped together.

Data Coding Table

DATA	CODE WITH THEORETICAL CONNECTIONS	RESEARCH QUESTION(S)

Once the chart had been completed, I finished more detailed and prolific memos explaining my first thoughts and interpretations regarding how each code related to my theoretical framework and research questions.

Phase 3: Interpretation and theoretical framing using explanation

building. In this final phase I used Yin's (2009) method of Explanation Building in order to identify patterns in the coded data sets. Yin argues that specific methodologies have specific analytical methods which suit them best: "The propositions would have shaped your data collection plan and therefore would have given priorities to the relevant analytic strategies" (p. 130). In this study, these propositions can be considered my codes and their theoretical connections, as seen in the *Data Coding Table* above. In this case, Explanation Building was the best fit for my case study. This strategy involved analyzing the case study by building an explanation for the cases in narrative form. The steps of Yin's explanation building that I utilized for this research study were:

- 1) Make an initial theoretical statement or proposition about social behavior: I made these statements based on the codes and theoretical framework of my study.
- 2) Compare the findings of the initial case against other cases and the propositions: I established connections between this proposition and one piece of data from my case study using the chart above.
- 3) Revise the statement or proposition: I revised the statement if it did not parallel the data of my case study.
- 4) Compare other details of the case against the revision, and/or against other cases: I examined other pieces of data from each of the three case studies in order to notice parallels or diversions. I made connections between codes where applicable. I made connections between the three case studies where applicable, as well as noted where they diverged (p. 143). In this way I was able to further triangulate my data.

During this phase of analysis, I also reviewed my research memos and non-triangulated data in order to apply any early interpretations or other notes to my explanation building. Since, "...the better case studies are the ones in which the explanations have reflected some theoretically significant propositions" (Yin, 2009, p. 141), my explanations were built upon the theoretical framework of Kress (2003) and Rosenblatt (1978).

The narrative. Finally, I responded to my research questions according to explanations based on my theoretical framework derived from my data. My data began to tell the story of three adolescent writers' daily use of many types, genres, and contexts of writing and, thus, I decided that my findings would be presented in narrative form. This choice of format also aligned with my use of Yin's (2009) Explanation Building. Explanation Building involved analyzing the case study by building an explanation for the cases in narrative form.

As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain, "We might say that if we understand the world narratively...then it makes sense to study the world narratively. [The world] is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities" (p.17). In other words, the world is explained in narratives, and, therefore, the findings of this study were explained in narratives. In addition, narrative form reflected not only the data collection strategy of the participants' own narrative writing and my analytical methods, but also my socio-cultural framework. By telling the stories of my participants, their background literacies and information informed the data and made it more meaningful.

The narrative itself took the structure of three vignettes, each focusing on a specific participant and each including a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning introduced the participant and his or her beliefs about writing; the middle highlighted his or her experiences with the writing process, and the end focused on what he or she perceived to be the processes, and the factors associated with the processes, of writing traditional academic print-based text and writing academic text with MFR.

Role of Researcher

Since all data had the possibility of being influenced by my own history and role in this study, it was appropriate to position myself as the researcher while discussing data and its analysis. As Creswell (2007) states, “the researcher comments on past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study” (p. 208). My role as researcher was to design and conduct this research study, to collect and then interpret data, and finally to present my findings. I conducted the interviews; I assigned and collected the narrative task; I collected all writing samples; and I proctored, checked, and collected the student journal writing activity. I then transcribed, organized, analyzed, and interpreted all data before ultimately reporting the findings of my research.

Along with being the researcher I was also a former full-time English teacher at the school where I conducted my research. This allowed me to take on the role of both insider and outsider. As the insider, my participants had once been students in my classroom with whom I had a positive rapport. Being aware of their personalities and abilities allowed me to not only understand their writing samples and interview

responses, but to also understand how best to communicate with each of them and what to expect from each of them in regard to effort and timeliness. As the insider I was also able to recall and reflect upon the perspective of a teacher in their school, understanding references my participants made to school-specific events and personnel.

As the outsider, I was not physically in their school building or classrooms during the time of the research study. Consequently, the participants appeared to be more comfortable and at ease sharing information with me; their demeanor was much more relaxed and casual than it had been when I was their teacher years earlier. This calm demeanor was further understood by the fact that the data was never collected at the school itself. They used slang terminology and revealed information such as teachers whose pedagogy they liked and disliked; they may have not have done this while I was their teacher. Being an outsider allowed me to be more comfortable and relaxed with the students as well. Although I was always professional, I did not need to maintain the manner of their classroom teacher. For example, I could let them talk freely and even, for example, allow them to talk in ways not acceptable in a classroom, such as using curses and informal speech. As an outsider I was able to remind them that their participation was completely voluntary and that their participation in this study would in no way be assessed.

My background knowledge of teaching writing was utilized in analysis and interpretation. My interest in looking more closely at the writing process of both print-based texts and texts with MFR served me not only as a writing teacher for my students, but it also allowed me to understand my own writing practices more thoroughly. My own experiences with writing, as well as my relationship with my research sample and

research site, are presented so that any influence they may have on the findings is apparent.

Ethical Considerations

I prevented my biases from guiding my analysis of this dissertation by using member checks, explained in the following *Validity* section. I minimized any undue influence, given the fact that I was in a position of power (teacher) and the participants were minors (students), by reiterating to them throughout the study that their participation was completely voluntary, and that they could stop participation at any time. In addition, I reminded my participants that although they may have been my students in the past, their participation in this study was in no way assessed and, consequently, it did not affect their academic grades or transcripts. In this way, the fact that I was now considered an outsider helped to minimize undue influence.

During the course of the study, the participants presented their views and opinions about many of their teachers, as well as the teaching techniques used by these teachers. As a former teacher in their school, I had been very familiar with, and even friendly with, the teachers whom they talked about. I did not allow these comments to bias my understanding of the data; I did this by adhering to my analytical protocol. No other ethical issues emerged before, during, or at the completion of the study.

Validity

According to Cresswell (2007), the validation of qualitative research is a process. Once my data collection was complete, I triangulated between the data collected from the

narratives, interviews, writing samples, and student journals. I also triangulated between the cases themselves. This process validated my findings by highlighting similar themes and responses across the data and across the cases; multiple data sets from each case were used to analyze and tell the stories of the participants. I had the participants themselves conduct a member check to ensure accurate representation of my data. The participants each read the completed version of the narrative which described them and answered the following questions in email form: Is any of the information in your narrative incorrect? If so, what is the corrected information? Is there any information that we discussed, but which I did not include, that you would like for me to include in the final draft of my dissertation? The participants did not report any errors in the narratives I wrote about them.

Finally, I asked a recently retired faculty member from the English department at my research site to peer review my reported findings. I chose a faculty member who had never maintained any relationship, student-teacher, student-advisor, or other, with my participants, even though she had worked in the school while my participants attended. She was removed from any possible bias because at the time of her peer review she had retired and was no longer an active member of the school community, eliminating the possibility of any closeness with the building and/or students involved influencing her objectivity. This faculty member was also chosen because she had utilized both print-based writing and writing with MFR in her own classroom before her retirement. Thus, her beliefs about various modes of writing did not influence her reading of the findings. This faculty member did not report any bias or errors in my dissertation.

Conducting these validation procedures helped to ensure that my interpretations were not biased, and that my data was well represented.

Methodological Limitations

Although this study was intended to give an accurate and descriptive picture of three adolescents' writings in both the print-based form, as well as the form with MFR, it was limited in some fundamental ways. Since this study focused on only three participants, the results could not be generalized to a population. Case studies are generalized to theoretical propositions and not to populations (Yin, 2009). The results of this study may inform theory, but will not inform widespread practice. In addition, these three individuals were from the same suburban community and had similar socio-economic backgrounds. They had grown up in the same area, thus sharing many of the same beliefs and being exposed to the same culture, traditions, and norms. Consequently, my data was limited in regard to diversity.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The Adolescent Writing Process through Three Vignettes

These findings, in the form of a narrative, are composed of three vignettes of three adolescent writers' daily practices of writing in both traditional print-based forms and forms with MFR. Within the context of research, Yin (2009) defines a narrative as, “[an] open-ended answer to the question in a case study protocol.” (p. 121). However, within the context of literary writing, narrative is defined as a written account of connected events (Beckson & Ganz, 1989).

For the purposes of this dissertation, *narrative* is defined as a written account of connected events (Beckson & Ganz, 1989), and in regard to the findings of my research, each vignette is a section of this narrative. My findings present a written account of connected events for each participant, each focused on writing as stated above. This total narrative includes three vignettes, each one focused on a specific participant. A vignette is defined as, “a sketch or other brief literary work characterized by precision and delicacy of composition. A vignette may also be a section of a longer work” (Beckson & Ganz, 1989, p. 297). These vignettes are sketches characterized not by a formal writing style, but instead by precision and delicacy in regard to attention to detail and attention to the voices of the characters (the participants) and the writer (the researcher). In this dissertation each vignette focuses on a specific participant and each includes a beginning, a middle, and an end. The beginning introduces the participant and his or her beliefs about writing; the middle highlights his or her experiences with writing processes, and the end focuses on what the participant perceives to be the processes, and the factors

associated with the processes, of writing academic print-based text and writing academic text with MFR.

Saying Hello to Three Adolescent Writers

Anais from Beacon of Darkness High School Welcome to the writing world of Anais, a seventeen-year-old female and senior who attended a traditional, public high school in New Jersey. She was an American-born young lady whose mother was originally from Greece and whose father was originally from Spain. She lived in a traditional middle-class household with her mother, father, and fifteen-year-old brother. While she was an “average” (according to the belief at her high school that a “B” was average) student in regard to literacy, she was an above-average worker, understanding the importance of schooling for her future. Consequently, Anais was a member of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program at her high school. This means that while fulfilling the requirements for high school graduation in the state of New Jersey, she had also elected to pursue an International Diploma, gained through rigorous course work, volunteer work, creativity hours, examinations, and additional writing and research assignments outside of those assigned in her academic classes. Anais valued not only her education, but also her heritage and spirituality. She visited Greece every summer and was a practicing Greek Orthodox Roman Catholic. Overall, it seemed to me that Anais was a well-rounded, personable teenager from the east coast of the United States.

However, Anais was not really Anais and Beacon of Darkness High School was not really Beacon of Darkness High School. An avid reader, she chose to take on the pseudonym of a respected author: “Anais – like Anais Nin... Because her stuff is of

interest to me and I like her name.” Anais attended Beacon of Darkness High School and she chose this pseudonym for her school: “Beacon of Darkness....Not to sound too mean, but most of the people there are very ignorant and unintelligent and unwilling to learn more and so their mind is not open, and it’s not letting in any light. “ Anais was a young academic, a young intellect, a young thoughtful observer of her surroundings, and, as this vignette will tell, a young writer.

Anais’ beliefs about writing. In this writer’s words, “I’m most comfortable with pen and paper. I’m not really big on using my phone for things like that. I think pen and paper is so much more raw.” Anais commented on this “rawness” multiple times throughout the three interviews we had for this research study; it seemed to be her way of referring to writing that was personal, emotional, and not for school. She used this adjective to describe her personal journal entries and poetry. In her own narrative as a writer, the final task I gave to my participants, Anais admitted that, “I strongly favor pen and paper over the click-clack of a keyboard.” She preferred to write letters to her friends and family in Greece. However, she admitted that on more than one occasion she had waited too long to write the letters, and since the information needed to travel across the sea as soon as possible, she was forced to resort to the much quicker email. Her preference for pen and paper also seemed to be important to her so that she could connect in a more emotional and tactile way with her audience. She wanted her loved ones in Greece to hold her letter, not read it from a screen.

Emotions and meaning in writing. And she wanted them to understand the unrevised emotions she was trying to convey. She admitted, “See, I’ve already backspaced and fixed typos numerous times even this early into writing this e-

mail.” Email gave her the ability to rethink and correct, but it lost the immediacy of her ideas. Anais defined this immediacy as rawness: “The rawness and reality of writing would've come out. The spewing of thoughts onto paper is such a natural phenomenon that I feel like I'm almost cheating my creativity by writing this is an e-mail as opposed to on plain paper.” Real writing for Anais happened traditionally, with a pen and paper. And real writing was unstructured: “I don't have much structure (in my opinion) when it comes to writing formally, but I like to make it entertaining and lively.” Her audience, and her connection to them, was obviously an important aspect of her writing.

Anais continued her dialogue with me during an interview, noting that she utilized more than just words written on a piece of paper to make meaning: “Because a picture says a thousand words. I mean, I could take a picture of a protest, for example... I will just take a picture and send it to my friend, because she is into that stuff, but instead I would have to be like, ‘Oh, guess what? I’m at a protest... and there is this and this happening... blah, blah, blah...’ It was really hard for me to describe it, whereas a picture would just capture the image that I was trying to describe and she could have analyzed it herself.” She stated here that a picture, or text using MFR, could often give more information than traditional written words.

When meaning is and is not made through writing. Making meaning through writing was a process which occurred with a pen and paper for Anais. She told me during our second interview that, “I always write my essays and stuff first out by hand.” A first draft for this young lady was comprised of brainstorming and putting ideas together on paper using a pen or pencil. In other words, the part of the writing process where her ideas were formulated, organized, and combined, occurred in a traditional

manner, with a pen and paper. Anais noted throughout her interviews, her journal, and her narrative that using digital technology such as a word processing program or Power Point was for a final draft, or a final product. It was what happens *after* the thinking.

During our first interview Anais claimed that this thought process, this thinking, was not usually necessary in regards to social networking: “I kind of feel like with social networking things, it’s not a message you’re trying to convey, it’s an idea if that makes any sense? Just one idea in itself. There’s no explanation, background, thesis ... It’s not necessarily a profound statement.” This was what she considered interpersonal writing: “Texting, Facebook, IM’s, picture messaging, notes in school, letters, little sticky note reminder.” According to Anais, it was writing to other people, whether it be using MFR or traditional pen and paper, with the goal of communicating a simple, direct message. In her world it was primarily used to get straight answers, not to make complex, unique, or new meanings through the writing process: “If I’m texting or on Facebook, I’m either planning something or asking questions like, ‘what time is this?’” It was used as a form of communication, or a way to express emotions. She explained that, “I feel like it’s more of just a bonding thing like, ‘Hi, I miss you... I love you...’ things like that - just to reiterate your feelings about a person.”

The audience. The audience of these interpersonal writing exercises included “everyone.” She said, “Everyone is my audience for that type of writing. For example, Facebook, everything is public... Texting – the person you’re texting could be with someone else, could be with a whole group of people, could be by themselves, you don’t know.” When writing using MFR, including these digital pieces, Anais considered her audience to be public. In other words, her audience was not a group selected by her.

Instead, anyone and everyone could potentially be a part of the audience. Additionally, she considered her messages to be straight-forward and practical. For her, interpersonal writing was not a way to make meaning. This being said, she also felt that interpersonal writing would be considered the most important form of writing in her world; she said, “I would say interpersonal [is the most important form of writing] because you not only get to express yourself in the way that you wish, but you also get to have a kind a validity when you give it to somebody else and get a reaction to what you wrote... The audience makes it important for yourself because you realize that what you’re saying is valid and is positive or negative, and that it does deserve some sort of feedback, whatever it is.” Therefore, even though interpersonal writing may lack new meaning, it did involve audience and validity. And this made it significant.

While interpersonal writing sometimes involved a large audience, to Anais personal writing was for only one person. She explained to me that, “[p]ersonal writing is writing for myself...Something that I can personally, emotionally take from it.” This type of writing usually embodied a specific mode and lacked a specific format. She said that, “Usually in writing its pen and paper ...but it’s usually nothing really structured.” She noted the difference here between true personal writing and personal writing done in school. This difference involved the audience, and more specifically in this case, her teacher. She explained that, “if it’s a personal narrative or something at school I feel like that’s different because your audience is your teacher, and of course you are going to change that to get a better grade and please your teacher.” She reflected on these same ideas in her journal when she stated that most of her “reflections” were not truly personal reflections; they were done to satisfy the expectations of a teacher.

Anais noted in her first interview with me that since her audience was not herself in most of her other types of writing inside and outside of school, her audience always needed to be considered. She said that, “if I’m texting a close friend, I am going to use all those weird letters in my texts and smiley faces, and be really corny and animated, but if I don’t know someone that well, or if it’s my boss I’m texting, or something, I just use a more cleaner kind of text, you know? Not necessarily in words, but in the style of writing...[You really think about how you are going to write something based on who you are writing to] because every person means something different to you.” Who the audience is, then, influenced the ways in which the text was constructed. Friends are privy to more quirky writing, while a boss demands something “cleaner.” She alluded to these same ideas in her personal narrative as a writer.

School writing. Considering other types of writing, Anais shared that, “school writing to me is something that I don’t write on my own. I write it for a grade, not for my own personal satisfaction and I write it for my benefit in a sense that I get good grades.” Writing for school was often equated to a need for success and a fear of failure for this adolescent. When speaking in an interview about a particular writing assignment which accompanied the viewing of a film, she noted, “I really liked the movie, but I did not like that assignment because we hadn’t really gone over any financial crises... So, I wasn’t sure how to approach it without being wrong ... I don’t really know the basics... so I felt I couldn’t really address anything properly.” She lacked knowledge about this topic and, consequently, feared failing the assignment. If given the chance to change this movie reflection assignment in any way, Anais said in her journal that, “I probably would have just made a different response about the movie. Maybe a

social/economic kind of thing, even just a societal kind of thing as opposed to financial.” She wanted to change the content of the topic to reflect something she felt more comfortable writing about, but she did not express a desire to change the assignment from traditional writing to writing with MFR.

Audience was a key factor for Anais in all writing. However, in the case of school writing Anais told me in Interview 2 that her audience was clear: “My teacher. Other teachers. Maybe my class, but mostly the teacher... I mean, I don’t really necessarily care about the teacher on a super-personal level. I may or may not give it my all depending on the weight of the grade, but it’s definitely not going to have a lot of emotional weight behind it and true voice in it. It’s going to be more of what they want to hear.” In the case of school writing, her audience was an outsider or outsiders; her audience was not herself. She did, however, recall one exception to this statement. When writing an essay she truly cared about, meaning she was curious about the topic on which she was writing, she said that her audience was, “[m]yself and my teacher. Myself because I needed to get a good grade on it and I wanted to write a good essay for that one, even though it was turned in late, but I just wanted to make it a good one, you know, for myself to say, ‘Wow, I wrote a good essay,’ and also, for my teacher - meaning for my grade... If it was just for my teacher, ironically I would put less thought into it, just because I kind of know what they want to hear.” Meaning was made through her school writing only when she wanted to make meaning for herself and the assignment was, consequently, more than a presentation of facts to a teacher in order to get a grade.

Because grades are associated with writing, her school audience often had a certain amount of influence and power over her school writing events. When talking

about writing, Anais said that, “I am trying to sound as knowledgeable as possible, which is not working out, but I was writing it just so she wouldn’t think it was wrong and give me a bad grade.” The knowledge that a specific teacher possessed, then, also affected what Anais wrote. She admitted that, “if it was another student I would have added some big words and made up my own little phrases to make myself sound better, but I can’t tell that to the teacher.”

Anais’ experiences with the writing process. Anais’ audiences also proved to be a major factor when she shared with me her experiences with the writing process. These experiences included multiple writing samples from school writing assignments completed during her senior year of high school:

- 1) World Literature Paper for English- This 4-page paper was typed. The audience was her English teacher and the IB Program. The paper was written for a grade and an IB diploma. It was very formal; it was written specifically in Modern Language Association (MLA) format. It was an organized paper, but it lacked voice. The first sentence of the paper demonstrated this: “This World Literature assignment is a comparative study.” It was mostly straight facts presented with a lack of analysis and interpretation. Very little meaning was made through this structure and organization, as was seen in the first sentence of the closing paragraph: “Nora and Blanche are women from very different circumstances and times.” Few new, unique ideas were presented by the writer. Although this was a formal assessment, there was no assignment sheet accompanying this task. Instead, Anais told me that the teacher presented exemplars in class, showing the students what was expected for a “good grade from IB.” Looking at these

exemplars influenced Anais; she wrote her essay in a very formal and structured way, which is what she observed in the exemplars.

- 2) IB Visual Arts Statement- This 1-page paper was typed. The audience was her art teacher and the IB program. The paper was written for a grade and an IB diploma. It was very formal; it was written specifically in MLA format. It was an organized paper, but it once again lacked voice, analysis, interpretation, meaning-making, and original thought. Although this was part of a formal IB assessment, there was no assignment sheet accompanying this task. Anais wrote this statement after a verbal explanation from the art teacher was given to the class. In other words, she wrote the reflection based on what her teacher told her needed to be included in the statement. Since she had no models or exemplars to follow in this case, it can be assumed that Anais chose the format and genre of her statement based on her own interpretation of the teacher's directions. The typing and formality, then, reflected what she believed were expectations of academic writing.
- 3) Movie Reflection for History Class- This 2-page reflection was hand-written. The audience of the reflection was Anais herself and her teacher. New, meaningful ideas were created by making connections across the contexts of history and English class. For example, she wrote, “[The definition of redemption] can also apply to Blanche in the drama *Streetcar Named Desire*... In *Hamlet*, the protagonist finds his own version of redemption.” No assignment sheet accompanied this task, allowing Anais to more easily make her own choices and interpretations about the reflection. In other words, she wrote the reflection based on her experiences of what teachers want in a reflection. While she may have had

more choice in genre or format, Anais stuck with what she knew a reflection to be--an unstructured, journal-like, informal writing piece.

- 4) IB History Notes- These notes were typed and filled 2 pages. The audience of these notes was her history teacher. These notes were typed in a formal structure, using roman numerals and lowercase letters. The notes presented facts. No connections between the typed words were evident and no new meaning was constructed. No assignment sheet accompanied this task. The teacher, according to Anais, dictated the assignment to the students. He was very detailed about what should and should not be included in the outline, and how the outline should be structured (for example, using roman numerals). Therefore, Anais had limited choice and limited room to interpret the assignment in multiple ways.
- 5) *The Stranger* Reflection for English Class- This 2-page handwritten reflection started with a presentation of facts from the novel *The Stranger*. It was not traditional in structure, and there was even a lack of paragraphing and spacing. Meaning was made through this non-traditional structure. This was evident in one of the last sentences of the assignment: “Though this may seem absurd on the surface, Mersault’s character clues the reader into the simplicity and logic of each action.” This reflection was an opinion of the novel that was made by the writer (Anais) and constructed through the non-traditional structure of her text. There was no assignment sheet accompanying this task, allowing Anais to more easily make her own choices and interpretations about the format of the genre of “reflection”. In other words, she wrote the reflection based on her experiences of what teachers want in a reflection. While she may have had more choice in genre

or format, Anais stuck with what she knew a reflection to be, just like she did with her other writing assignments.

Positive writing experiences. Although the next assignment she described in her journal also lacked an element of analysis, Anais did not feel as negatively towards it due to her personal interest in the subject matter. When commenting on this History Outline of Opinions of Reasons for the start of civil war she said, “I don’t mind doing outlines and I like history so I don’t mind this assignment.” The ability of personal interest in making a writing assignment more meaningful was seen once again in the reflections of Anais about a Scholarship Essay. She said, “I don’t mind this essay, it’s not a boring topic, and it gives me a chance to informally write as I wish and write with my ‘voice.’” Her own ideas and her own voice were utilized, and, thus, this writing assignment was one she enjoyed. It was written for a personal purpose.

Personal interest, purpose, and efficiency seemed to be factors in Anais’ writing that lead her to “not mind doing them.” In regard to a History Review Questions Outline she reflected in her journal that, “I love history so I don’t really mind. It’s all very interesting.” She also noted that it was to the point and “not a waste of space.” Again in writing a personal reflection for *The Stranger*, when a personal interest was evoked, the assignment was worthwhile. “I liked the book so I didn’t mind writing this.” Another assignment for this novel, a written commentary, also proved to have a similar response from this adolescent writer. She declared, “I like this assignment because I can use the essay to show what I know and not what I don’t know. I won’t have to load it up with BS.” She was able to write about what she liked in an efficient manner, and this made her happy. However, she did note during an interview that while the assignment was of

interest to her, she would have liked more direction from her teacher in regard to topic, but not in regard to presentation or mode. Anais explained that, “I didn’t mind writing it...it was a little bit more difficult to write something and think of something to write without being too shallow and too on the surface...I would have maybe given a list of topics, just because, I...really struggled with it.” In this case, the presentation of the content didn’t concern Anais, but the content did.

Negative writing experiences. Anais shared writing assignments with me that she did not like. She reflected on these assignments in her journal. For history class she was asked to write a paper comparing the financial situation in the movie *The Pursuit of Happiness* to the current day financial situation in the United States. The teacher asked for this comparison, but no analysis or thoughts regarding them. It should be noted that this was Anais’ interpretation and explanation of the assignment. Anais was not given an assignment sheet from the teacher, only verbal directions. She wrote, “I really didn’t like this assignment. It’s dry.” This may have stemmed from her expectations of what she was expected to do in order to get a good grade: compare, possibly contrast, and finish. However, it is important to realize that the teacher expectations may have actually been different than Anais’ interpretation of the assignment. She had similar sentiments regarding an English assignment reflecting on specific aspects of the novel *Siddhartha*. Once again, the lack of interest in the novel and lack of specificity from the teacher about the assignment itself left her to dislike the writing task. In her own words she told me that, “I hated this book and these assignments are painfully vague.”

Anais shared more thoughts about her experiences with the writing process in the journal she completed as part of this research study. She noted that when researching historical figures and writing about their policies for history class, “It was kind of tedious, but still interesting...I would not make the ideas for research so broad.” This writing was impersonal and allowed Anais no room to identify herself as a writer in her piece. It was, instead, a presentation of facts which lacked meaning. In regard to the completion of Science Global Warming Review Questions, Anais once again expressed her negative feelings toward the assignment due to the lack of meaning-making involved. She said, “[t]his is boring.”

First writing experiences. Although Anais shared many negative writing assignments from school, sprinkled with a few she enjoyed, she really stressed her love of the writing process in general. In her narrative as a writer, she noted that the first writing experience she could recall was one that helped define her as a person. She wrote, “I couldn't have been more than three years old. I vividly remember writing my name on a sheet of paper with a crayon and the careful instruction of my mother...pointing at the paper. That was me, and I existed now not only in sight and noise, but on paper. Besides my physical body, my existence was tangible and proven.” This was her foray into a world of writing. She said that, “[s]ince then, I have always been a fanatic of writing. No matter what it was about, words never ceased to fascinate me.”

Her first experience with writing using MFR, on the other hand, was less personal. Reflecting on this experience, Anais immediately described her experience with a computer to play an educational game in school: “We were taught to play some sort of

little educational game. There was a worm and an apple involved.” However, she had little else to say about writing with MFR when talking about her life as a writer. Instead, she focused on the importance and significance of writing traditionally, with a pen and paper. She even wrote about the sheer importance and emotional involvement she had with postal mail, specifically to and from her family and friends in Greece. When mail arrived to her home, “it was a mutual feeling of love and acceptance that came and went with each little package. It was genuine. You could just feel it in the paper.” For Anais, writing with a pen and paper in a traditional way was tactile; it was real and linked to emotion and memory.

Writing with MFR. Writing for school, on the other hand, was usually not written using a pen and paper. It was accomplished through a very specific process, and Anais was not shy in admitting that it involved “less thinking” and more presenting. She told me in our second interview that, “In school I tend to have to collect research a lot and put that in a certain format and print it out.” Here she implied that writing for school was usually done on a computer and usually comprised of finding facts, placing them together in a document, and printing them out for the teacher.

Anais shared other writing experiences involving the internet which took place outside of school. In our first interview she said that, “I...have a Facebook and I use my email. My email is more so for necessary things, not like leisure things, like I have to email my youth group advisor or this, this, and this – or college emails and stuff, and for Facebook it is purely social almost. I write a lot of inbox messages to my friends and post on my wall, post a picture on their wall, which isn’t really writing I guess. But, I also do Facebook chat a lot.” In other words, email was for business, Facebook was for social

experiences, and neither of these digital writing exercises was “writing.” Her experiences with internet writing were not her only digital writing experiences, and these digital experiences outside of the world wide web also relied upon MFR. Anais explained that, “[for a while] my Dad actually took my Internet [off] my phone. I can’t send picture messages, but I always feel like I need it because there is always things that catch my eye.” MFR writing included writing associated with her Smart Phone. These experiences may not have all been perceived as “writing,” but they were using MFR, and they were contingent on the role of the audience. This dependence on the audience was obvious when Anais stated that, “[f]or people that aren’t my close, close friends, I use totally correct grammar and I just mostly try to get to the point of what I am saying, but if it’s a close friend, I add Z’s to words and make it really weird with stars and... We have an inside joke; I like to post...for example, me and my friend Eddie have an inside joke about Dora the Explorer. So, instead of being like, ‘Ha ha, thinking of Dora...’ I posted a picture of Dora on his Facebook wall...things like that.”

Everyday writing. Anais was quick to reveal that writing helped her in her daily, practical life, not just in her familial and friendly connections. She immediately admitted in our first interview that, “I also write lists and poems and thoughts that come to my mind. It’s easier to be organized that way.” She did not fail to acknowledge, however, that although pen and paper were her preferred mode for making meaning and presenting feelings, new ways of writing which involve MFR were quick and direct venues for easy communications. She even admitted that, “thanks to my new BlackBerry, [BlackBerry Messaging] has engulfed my soul.” She wrote to connect emotionally and make meaning, she wrote to organize, she wrote to receive a grade for school, and she

wrote to communicate. However, all of these writing tasks were accomplished in different ways and through different processes.

Anais' perception of writing processes. Anais's own understanding of how and why these processes were used in her daily life can be divided into two categories: 1) her understanding of writing processes involved with academic writing and 2) her understanding of writing processes *not* involved with academic writing. Both understandings touched upon the differences between writing with MFR and writing traditional print-based texts.

The academic writing process. Much of the school and "obligatory" writing, or writing she was told to do, involved less meaning-making and more "putting together" ideas. For a religious assignment, for example, Anais told me in our first interview that, "I had to use a Bible verse, so I used a Bible. So, I wrote it out and then I opened a Microsoft Word document and my email in another window, started writing the paper out and I would just copy the words from the handwritten onto the computer, just so I could send it." Typing, or creating a document using MFR, denoted a finished product. She explained that the thought process occurred traditionally with a pen and paper, and then digital technology and MFR were simply used to create a finished product: "On everything I still write out an outline in pen and paper and then write the whole essay out in pen and paper, and then when I'm done with that, I move on to a computer and actually type it, and that's only if I have to type it." Anais explained that while digital writing and writing with MFR involved planning, this planning was in the form of construction of a document, not of making meaning. She shared with me in our third and final interview, as she began to understand the process of her own writing more

thoroughly, that, “Something digital...I mean, say if I need to write something on the computer, to actually find the computer and then do that...turn it on, go to the website, go to messages, click ‘compose new,’ then do that, then I can make it less...I can make a cleaner email, add actual structure to what I’m writing and spell check, grammatical check and everything, as well as texting, you have to find your phone, number one - unlock it, menu, messages, new message, recipient...then write your message and hopefully your phone doesn’t shut off in the process, or you drop it... and then, hopefully, you have the right thing and send it to the right person.” Her process, then, revolved around the composition of the physical document, not the composition of new meaning.

The non-academic writing process. In our second interview Anais commented on the difference between school writing and writing done at home, or more specifically, writing done on her own accord. She said, “I definitely think there is a difference because in school I really have no distractions other than my cell phone or something, so I kind of set my mind to it and I go through what I have to do because this is what I’m here for here in school, to do this. At home, I never do it first. I am always distracted. I purposely distract myself.” Writing done physically in school, then, allows for fewer distractions. This can be further explained by Anais’ admittance that she would much rather write something to a friend, for example, then for a teacher or for school—the writing for the friend would distract her from doing the academic writing. She stated, “say I want to write my friend a letter and I have a paper due tomorrow, I’ll write the letter first just because I want to do it and it’s because it’s my ideas and it’s what I want to say and it’s totally my own doing. There’s no one telling me I have to do it and no one

saying what has to be in it and what has to be used in it, it's just what I want to say. That's that." She does not want to be told what to write, for whom to write, or to whom to write.

The process of writing with a pen and paper was more spontaneous for her; it required less planning in regard to format and product delivery. It did, however, seem to involve more personal connections, emotions, and meaning-making. She explained, "If I'm writing a letter to someone, usually I just find a pen and paper and just go to town. Dear whoever...and then I don't do paragraph structure or anything... If I'm just writing for myself, like lists for example, I'll do...just when the idea comes to me and I'm like, 'Oh I have to fill out that form by June 1st,' find my list of things to do in my bag and write it down, and add it and all that stuff. It's pretty spontaneous. I feel like all my writing with pen and paper is spontaneous and that's why I like it because it just comes to you. There's no backspace button. For example, I was walking to my car after meeting my friend for coffee and I spontaneously ripped a piece of paper out of my bag and wrote, 'I love you' and put it on my friend's windshield wiper. Things like that, I feel like pen and paper really have a lot more realness to it because it can just happen immediately." The authenticity of the writing piece came from the lack of planning for format and lack of prescribed topic.

Anais explained that she was more aware of her entire writing process when writing using a traditional print-based process. With writing using MFR, the end goal was either 1) simply a product, usually to be handed in to a teacher, and "put together" in a word document, or 2) a message to communicate to a friend which involved very little thought; it was simply the delivery of a statement or answer. Traditional writing with a

pen and paper was a process, while writing with MFR was a final product. Traditional writing with a pen and paper was also more authentic. More specifically she said that, “[p]en and paper is where writing began, where it stayed for thousands of years and I feel like the classic-ness and the realness... I feel like that will never really go away because it’s just something that can happen forever and you may not have a document on your computer forever, or a text forever, but a letter you can forever.”

The identity of a writer. Anais explained how she wrote for different purposes and genres, but one fact remained consistent throughout: she identified herself as a writer, and she intended to do so in the future. She acknowledged that, “[o]bviously I’m going to write throughout my life. It’s completely unavoidable. And who knows what I’ll end up writing in the future? Reviews, economic plans, marketing strategies?” To Anais, writing was and always will be a personal, as well as professional or academic, endeavor.

Aslan from The Mother-ship High School Our second adolescent writer believed that to really write, one must be fearless. Aslan was a seventeen-year-old male senior from the same traditional high school in suburban New Jersey. When asked to provide me with a personal pseudonym, he asked, “Can you call me Aslan? I am a Leo and I’m really into lions and I feel like to be somebody who’s like...you have to be kind of fearless and they have a lot of courage.” The name Aslan is a literary reference to a main character, a lion, in C.S. Lewis’s *The Chronicle of Narnia* series.

Aslan was an American born student. He lived in a traditional middle-class household with his mother, father, and 14-year-old sister. Aslan was an average student in regards to literacy, at least by “school standards.” He often procrastinated and turned

assignments in late. However, I observed that his abilities as a writer and reader far exceeded the grades he received on paper. The reality was that when he was interested in what he was asked to do, he did it well; when he was not interested in what he was asked to do, he did the bare minimum to receive an adequate grade. Aslan was in the honors program of his high school.

In addition to his passion for personal writing, Aslan had a passion for music. As an acclaimed youth opera singer, he spent much of his free time in New York City, attending special programs, completing advanced voice classes, and performing. While Aslan was a typical American teenager by school day, after school he balanced a much more adult and mature persona in the world of the opera.

Aslan attended the same school as Anais, but this writer had a more positive perspective toward his school, as expressed in the following statement. When asked to create a pseudonym for his school, Aslan answered, “The Mother-ship...because with a Mom and your relationship with your parents, they don’t give you everything, you kind of have to figure out certain things and I feel like in high school I had a lot of foundation, but I also have a lot of freedom to kind of just grow and be myself.” Aslan shared with me that he valued education, and that he valued the type of school and the type of teacher who provided a balance between support and challenge.

Aslan’s beliefs about writing. When asked about writing, the first thing Aslan told me during our first interview was that, “I just love it. It’s something I will always do because it’s natural. It’s something you feel. You pick up a pen, you go to the computer, you write. It’s a really beautiful thing.” He saw true writing as a means of self-expression, with the self being the most significant audience. In his narrative he

explained this by saying that people, “go through their day repeating a similar cycle like the one of the day before. Inside everyone's head is a chatterbox of continuous words, thought processes, and strategies, but not every person can transform that constant talker inside their heads into expression. As a singer I have played with expression much of my life. I use the stage to transcribe my personal experiences.” Through these words Aslan connected writing to singing. Both, according to him, were ways to express oneself. These same sentiments were expressed in more than one of the writing artifacts, specifically the poems, which he shared with me.

Identity and self-expression. Aslan considered writing, and self-expression as a whole, a part of his identity. In our first interview he explained that, “I think that [your identity] is a huge part in the development of expression... How they manipulate themselves, their minds, their values, and their morals... Often times I think it goes deeper than that.” Writing was also giving of one's self, and thus, as stated above, necessitated courage and a lack of fear. This was because, according to Aslan, true writing was personal; it was meant to express part of one's self. It was not about communication. He admitted that he believed that, “It would be cool if more people wrote down their thoughts and feelings, but I feel like I've been given a little bit of a gift. Maybe not the gift of brilliant writing ability, but the will to write. That's all I really want anyway when it comes to writing.”

Defining writing. Real writing took planning and it took thinking, or awareness. To demonstrate this idea Aslan used the example of taking notes in school. During our second interview he admitted that, “I think that writing is like taking notes in a class. We all participate in class, but not everybody plans as consciously as writers

do... That's the purpose of writing. Just the idea that we all think about our lives all day, but I think writers are the note-takers of the human race. Maybe I write a lot because it helps me plan and fall better into a persona that I like more. I write to rid myself of the ways I want to be that may be unhealthy.” In other words, he believed that writers are observant and aware, and writers create their own identities with the help of writing itself.

Personal Writing. Aslan preferred personal writing. Personal writing was more natural than any other kind of writing. He explained during our second interview that, “Personal writing I think is a lot of what I’m more inclined to do right now... I think that’s really easy because sometimes I’ll go through a couple of pages and... this is already longer than an essay would be. It’s because it’s in my head and I’m just kind of pouring it out.” Personal writing did not dictate a medium, format, or any other specifications. Instead, personal writing allowed Aslan to, “feel charged automatically from an inspiration and just write it down, however, whichever medium. “ He was more inspired to write, and, consequently, chose to write traditionally or using MFR depending on this inspiration. In other words, there was not an outlined structure or genre for personal writing; the mode or genre was chosen by Aslan to fit the expression being created and shared.

Writing preferences. Aslan did, however, note that he preferred digital writing with MFR in certain instances. He said, “I like the computer better... with writing for some reason, I like to see it on the computer. I like to see it like you would open up a book and see it.” He felt that this produced a more polished piece, one that was ready for publication and ready for an audience. He noted that, “rather than sit down with pen and paper, or pencil and paper, I just find using [MFR and digital technology] more

gratifying.” Again, his finished product looked more like a finished product should look. The traditional form of writing with a pen and paper was more “diary-like” for Aslan, while writing digitally and using MFR allowed him to focus on the aesthetics of the piece. He spoke about using MFR in order to publish his writing: “I just like seeing it and I like to be able to move around and I don’t want to have to erase and I think it’s a great thing. Normally, I am very into writing. I think that when I write on pen and paper, that’s more of a diary type thing, or that’s more of me just being narrative about what’s going on rather than... I want it to be nice looking.” To Aslan, pen and paper writing equaled organization and prewriting; this was where meaning was really made. However, when aesthetics were concerned, MFR won out. He told me, “If I were in my mode where I’m organized, I would prefer to write them than type them because to type them, I think, you would have a better sense of organization and that’s how I am. I like it organized. I don’t like it 'scribbly'.”

Although he acknowledged the importance of school writing because of the potential grading process, and he stated in our first interview that interpersonal writing was “fun” because it implied communication between friends (but lack of true meaning-making), he admitted that his favored method of writing was personal. He believed that, “[i]t is more meaningful because it’s just you and it’s a way for you to organize what you feel and nobody’s watching it, unless you want them to watch because I think personal writing can still be like, ‘Here, look what I wrote,’ but I wrote it for me and I’m not writing it for you, I just want you to see what I’m feeling.” Every type of writing had a specific purpose for Aslan and he explained to me, through his journal, artifacts,

interviews, and narrative that he believed that these different types of writing had different processes associated with them.

Audience. The intended recipient of the writing, or the audience, was a big consideration for Aslan, especially in regard to school writing, or writing that was assigned by and graded by teachers. In school writing he told me that the, “audience is the teacher, so...it's funny because my writing style differed a lot from last year. Last year I had a teacher who wanted me to write ...very structured, very like, ‘That has to have a format,’ and this year I kind of have a teacher who’s like, ‘No, you write what you want. Don’t worry about me, just proof it’ ... and actually I have those two sides where it’s kind of like, ‘Well, what do I feel? Here it is.’ But, you know, how to organize it. So, I think both those things are really important.” The audience in this case was the teacher, and, consequently, the style of writing Aslan chose depended not only on his own personal preferences or on the way that he could best make meaning through the text, but also on what the teacher wanted and expected to see. He acknowledged the power the teacher had because of the grade he or she would ultimately assign to his writing. He said, “[y]our audience matters. Especially if your teacher is somebody who you don’t think is going to agree at all... if it’s a school, you are getting graded, what are you going to do? I am hopeful that at that point in your life you are like, I believe in it too much to just say what you think.” When the teacher was the audience, Aslan hoped that he or she would be open-minded and accept his desire to make and express meanings through words in his own way. He worried, “that something is not accepted because then why would I want to write...if you have somebody who is literally going to sit there and be okay with what you’re writing and I know not everybody is, but especially for a teacher. I

want a teacher to know what I want to write about if they want me to write. I don't want a teacher to just be like, 'It has to be what I want you to write about' ... As long as those things are good then I'm open to them... You can't keep everything in and sometimes it's scary. You are turning in something that you don't know how the teacher's going to react, but you do it and whatever the reaction is, it is, but you would at least know that you did it." Here Aslan talked about needing to mature as a writer and a person, as well as needing to face the fear of failure, a failure that could occur when he was expected to write one way by his audience (the teacher), but chose to write another way which was more meaningful and purposeful for him.

The audience of a school writing assignment also had the potential to involve Aslan's classmates. When this was the case, the true entertainer in him emerged. He strove to evoke a reaction from his audience. When describing one specific writing assignment to me, he remembered, "I made everybody laugh really hard and I will always remember it because it was just so funny. Even in all the other classes people talked to me about it, so little stuff like that where I can show my personality and I can just show what's going on in my crazy head and get a response from it. That stuck out to me a lot. " When he had a more authentic audience like this, or one that was not grading him and simply expecting a scripted outcome, he became more personally involved in the text he was writing and valued the meaning he was making. Of this same writing assignment he also stated, "It's funny, because in that class especially, there were a lot of bullies and at that time of my life I was bullied and it just so happened that the stereotyping was on homosexuality, but I used women – lesbians – and I just made it really funny...not that that's funny, I'm just saying the reason. It's funny because I got to make a joke out of

something that isn't really funny," In his journal Aslan talked about the positive reaction he received by presenting this assignment to his peers. Overall, he was ecstatic that his words were powerful enough to evoke the reaction and understanding of his classmates.

During our third interview Aslan showed a better understanding of what affected his own writing processes. He even reflected on the significance that a specific audience could have on a writer and his text. In regard to the audience of personal writing, Aslan said that, "the feel is for myself. I'm not really writing for anybody else. But, if someone else were to read it ...I wouldn't say don't do that. Really I'm just writing because I want to write it." On the contrary, he said that, "I think that if you know you're writing for somebody else, it's easier to want to be heard in a different way, or to think you should be heard in a different way. You kind of get caught up in how is this audience going to react to what I'm saying or what I'm feeling, whereas just to yourself, you would just go and nobody's judging you." Who the audience was did affect the way in which he wrote. He said, "If I'm talking to somebody who I'm really close with, I'm going to write the way I want to write and not think about it too much. For example, today somebody messaged me and wrote, 'Hello. How are you? I was wondering what kind of opera you would think I...' She just wrote it very grammatically – punctuation – formally, and I was kind of like, 'Hmm...' Well, I have two options, I can either copy that style of writing to show that I respect the way she wrote to me, I guess you could say? But, I was like, I am just going to write the way I want to write and be myself and not worry about punctuation because I think your writing reflects who you are."

Aslan's experiences with the writing process. Aslan had told me, as I explained above, that his preferred method of writing was the personal type. This was

proven through the writing experiences he shared with me. While I had initially asked to look at written assignments from school, Aslan, on his own accord, also shared personal writing pieces. These experiences listed below are a sampling of his writing, both personal and academic, from his senior year of high school. His reflections regarding these writing samples, as logged in his journal, are also shared here:

- 1) *Fictional Story*- This story was written for himself, not for school. Aslan admitted that, “I was going to submit a story for [the literary magazine] but I decided to write a crazy one and keep it to myself.” The audience, then, was only Aslan. It was typed, giving it the “polished look” he likes. The story had no formal structure and mirrored stream-of-consciousness writing. He avoided the boundaries and restrictions that writing for the school literary magazine implied; he wanted complete control in his writing.
- 2) *Siddhartha* Response- This response was written for school and was typed, as directed by Aslan’s English teacher. There was no assignment sheet but the typing expectation was verbally explained by the teacher. Other than that one directive, students had choice about how and what to write as long as it reflected the contents of the novel. Aslan chose to write this in a journal-like style as a way to evoke more emotion from his writing. The thoughts were not organized in any formal manner. Connections were made between *Siddhartha* and a character from another literary text.
- 3) *Parasite* Poem- This poem was not written for school, but instead as a means of expressing Aslan’s own feelings; it was written as personal writing for himself. The first draft was brainstormed using pen and paper, while the final product was

presented to me as a typed text. Since it was not an assignment, there were no limitations on Aslan's content or choice of genre, allowing him to write in poetic form, his favorite mode of expressing himself.

- 4) *The Stranger* Essay- This typed essay was completed for school. It was specifically written as an English class assignment and followed a very formal format and structure (MLA). The teacher allowed students to choose their own topics, but they were told to adhere to MLA format. There was no assignment sheet with this writing task. Consequently, Aslan was able to choose his topic, but not *how* he would write it. Although MLA format only dictates format, however, it seemed that Aslan also felt that it dictated a five-paragraph structure, possibly limiting his meaning-making by forcing the thought/writing process into five definitive paragraphs. Aslan admitted in his journal that, "I don't really know what I should write." His journal entry reflecting on this assignment was short and blunt.
- 6) *The Stranger* Journal Assignment- This assignment was hand-written for school. It was a self-reflection, relating personal experiences to the novel. Emotion was relevant in the connections made by Aslan. Typing was optional and he chose to hand-write this assignment. He noted that his reason for hand-writing it was two-fold: 1) by hand-writing he could "pour the emotions out" and, 2) by hand-writing he could finish it on the way to school on the bus, where he did not have a word processing program handy. The genre of the assignment was actually self-chosen as well. Before deciding to write a reflection, Aslan contemplated in his journal that he would possibly, "...write a response to just being outside and feeling

nature...maybe do a poem or a story?” All of his possible choices reflected his need to make his writing personal. There was no assignment sheet accompanying this task, allowing Aslan to more easily make his own choices and interpretations about the reflection. In other words, he wrote the reflection based on his experiences of what teachers want in a reflection. While he may have had more choice in genre or format, Aslan stuck with what he knew a reflection to be, or what he knew a teacher expected a reflection to be. This was a writing piece similar to a diary and written in a stream-of-consciousness style.

- 5) Creative Story- This fictional story was written for school. It was a favorite assignment of Aslan's. He allowed himself to confront a bullying issue he observed amongst his peers through his writing. This was a personal writing task for him, even though it was assigned in school. Consequently, he chose to hand-write this piece. It was interesting to note that he didn't even hand-write a "clean" final draft; his writing process was evident with crossing out and added details placed in the text with the use of hand-drawn arrows. Aslan did not share an assignment sheet with me, although one may have existed for this assignment. What he told me about the parameters of the assignments were, then, his interpretation of his teacher's directions.

Genre choice. Although I was lucky to see much of Aslan's writing, he admits that he got rid of much of the writing he started during the duration of the study because he did not finish it. He told me in our third and final interview that, "I am very quick to throw something away if I ever get tired of it, so I like to do some short stuff, so I write a lot of poetry. Probably nothing more than twenty lines at the most ...but I do

like to try to do something bigger and hopefully I can keep my attention for something more, but, for now, that's what I write." He realized by this point in our study that his ability to write not only reflected his interests, then, but also what he was capable of accomplishing in the given amount of time he had or in the amount of time he knew that he would be able to focus. In other words, his genre choice was influenced by the circumstances of time and the ability to focus on one task for that duration of time.

The mechanics of writing. Aslan's writing experiences also involved interpersonal writing. He said in our second interview, as well as in many of his journal reflections, that his audience often dictated the mechanics of his communication, especially when it involved MFR and digital writing. He explained that, "[with] instant messaging or emailing...whereas there would be a comma in most sentences, I would probably just press enter so someone could see that and digest... if somebody is just reading and you're writing for a certain audience, obviously then it's going to be more grammatical...But, there's a different voice. You're more based on facts I think in assignment writing, whereas with personal writing you are just doing what you want to do." School writing was more formal than the interpersonal communication between Aslan and his peers.

Aslan's perception of writing processes. When asked about the process of writing, Aslan noted in our third interview that it differed depending on the text he wrote and the audience he was writing for.

Choosing a writing process. His first example of a writing process involved his favorite genre, poetry. He said, "If I want to write a poem, I want to be at a computer because I feel like that's easier to go with, but with pen and paper, that's more

brainstorming things for me. It's just human consciousness...I will just pick up and I'll start scribbling out what I'm feeling and then I can start organizing that into something that I can type." To Aslan, writing with pen and paper equaled brainstorming, while a computer using digital writing and MFR equaled a final product. Aslan also noted that when writing poetry part of the process was choosing the right word to relay the correct message. He explained that, "so, with poetry, I just write and I don't really think...because if I think about it too much, I'm like, 'Why am I writing?' ... I like to use words that are not bigger, but more beautiful...or more ugly depending..." Aslan found the word that relayed the correct meaning of the message to his audience. In this way, he created the appropriate meaning through his writing and relayed it to his readers.

The MFR writing process. Talking more about the process of writing when it involved digital technology, Aslan admitted during our second interview that writing with MFR created a less thoughtful, but quicker, message. He told me that, "... whatever is going through your head, you can quickly write it and you don't have to worry... it's just quicker to format and I like to see it formatted really quickly because I'm impatient." He admitted that the use of technology to write, in many of his own cases, allowed him to quickly make the aesthetics more appealing, but he did not note that it aided in the creation of the meaning of the text at all. This part of the process did not involve meaning-making. Digital writing with MFR was an efficient way to get a message to a larger audience, even if the message was not profound. Aslan explained this when he said, "I Facebook message my friends... to keep in touch with friends...with everything going on...and when something stands out that much in my day, I feel like that's something that digitally I want to represent through writing." He wanted to

represent a message, not create one. Furthermore, Aslan told me in our first interview that he did not limit himself to words as a way of communicating a message when he wrote digitally. He explained that, “I’m very into smilies. I do smilies all the time and just...it’s very characteristic of me, I write ‘yay’ a lot because I like to express that I’m bubbly ...and I always want to be energetic, so I make sure I do a lot of stuff like that.” These non-verbal forms of representation, the emoticons and punctuation, allowed for more thorough tone and emotion to be expressed in the text. Through these examples, Aslan explained that writing using MFR allowed for quick formatting, positive aesthetic appeal, and communication of an already existing message to a larger audience. When emotion was involved, non-verbal forms of representation were often used instead of words as a means of expression.

The school writing process. The process of school writing was yet another separate process of writing described by Aslan. It was a type of writing, as he wrote in his journal, which did not relate to him on a personal level; it was a type of writing which did not demand that he incorporate his identity at all into the final message. He admitted in our third interview that, “for a school assignment that’s like ‘write’ ...that’s not a creative one. I’ll probably do it right before it’s due. I won’t do a bad job on it. I work really well under pressure, especially when I don’t have to put myself into it in that way, but if I have to put myself into it, I want to make sure it’s... But, for school, a writing assignment that’s not ‘me,’ I’ll just do it whenever...I just don’t value it as important as something like an assignment that I can express myself through.” Though Aslan did not value school writing as much as he valued personal writing, he did strive to, “give the teacher what they want[ed].” If a school assignment was expected to

be typed, for example, Aslan would type it. He admitted that he believed most school assignments should be typed, since they are finished products. However, if given the choice to write with a traditional pen and paper or use digital technology and MFR, Aslan based his decision on what was available to him. “I probably will write them on pen and paper because I won’t do them at home.” Because he would be completing these assignments on a bus or in homeroom, typing them was not a possibility. This student, who claimed to love writing, did not love writing for school. What then, this narrative begs the reader to consider, does he love to write?

Paige from Novella Regional High School “Once upon a time, there was a young girl...She loved to make up stories of fairies, princesses, and even what she would be like as a teenager.” This seventeen-year-old who wrote so creatively in her narrative as a writer was Paige, a female senior student from the same traditional New Jersey suburban high school attended by Anais and Aslan. Writing, although important in her life now for multiple reasons, began as a form of play. Her initial writing as a child was dream-like, thinking and hoping about the future. It mirrored the fairy tale voice, tone, and structure of the narrative she wrote about being a writer.

Paige chose her own pseudonym, and this choice revealed much about her personality. She said that she chose the name, “Paige... [because] first of all I like the name, and it was the first name that popped into my head when you said about writing because obviously you write on a page, so... (laughs).” This personable, outgoing, and straightforward high school senior was a committed member of her school’s cheerleading and community service teams and was always surrounded by friends. Although she took Honors English IV during her senior year, she was enrolled in the average classes for the

other subject areas. She was, according to her school, an average student with an affinity for writing. This academically average student with the above average energy level and personality came from a middle-class household. She lived with her single mother, who worked full time at a local army base as a civilian government employee. Paige had no contact with her biological father, and she had one older sister who was away at college and who had graduated from Paige's own high school four years earlier.

Speaking of her high school, Paige's choice of a pseudonym for her high school reflected her respect for school, as well as what she had learned while being there. She told me in an interview that she would name her school, "Novella Regional...I like the word novella, and I never really fully understood what it was until a few years ago." Her affinity for words was revealed through this statement, and more specifically, her affinity for terms related to literacy practices was revealed. Paige shared not only this revelation with me during my research process, but also many others concerning her beliefs about writing and literacy in general.

Paige's beliefs about writing. Paige quickly shared with me her understanding that she was and always would be a writer. In the third-person point of view narrative she wrote detailing her writing experiences, Paige wrote, "[b]ecause of all of the multimedia technologies, smart phones, social networking sites, and other writing outlets, she is a writing machine. She finds herself texting her friends and family every day, writing notes and appointments in her phone and catching up with acquaintances on Facebook. Because of her love of writing and communicating, I'm sure she will continue to express herself using all forms of writing techniques for her entire life." Writing was a part of her culture and society; it surrounded her. Consequently, Paige identified herself

as a writer. Her use of the word “communicating” told me that she viewed many writing tasks as separate from traditional writing. She revealed this to me many times during the course of the research study.

Components of a “good” school writing assignment. When describing one of her teachers, Paige stated in our third interview very bluntly that, “[s]he gives very broad directions. She basically lets us be very creative with all of our projects... it lets us be way more creative than if we were to just sit there and write a paper, and obviously everyone would enjoy writing something creative and fun.” In this case she discussed a creative and fun project versus a paper, implying her belief that creativity and fun do not coexist in a school assignment. Paige also preferred structure for her assignments, but only in regard to time management. She said in our third interview that, “I wait until the last minute to do most of my stuff, so if we had a set schedule for when we had to have certain parts of it due, or a draft, that would probably have made it a better assignment in the end because [the teacher] would have been able to go through it and tell me what I needed to improve on or not improve on.” In other words, by the end of the research study Paige was able to share with me that she believed that feedback for a school assignment from the teacher was helpful, and she believed that a better, more meaningful text could be written with more time, or with better, guided, time management.

Audience. According to Paige, not only time management, but also audience, dictated how a text was written. She explained during our second interview that when she wrote she considered whether others would be privy to the published text. She said, “[d]efinitely my class was the audience... I’m sure if I was writing for myself I’d

have a lot more detail [and emotion] in it about how I felt about it.” When Paige was her own audience, the amount of detail she included in her writing differed from when her audience was someone else or numerous people besides herself. She gave yet another example of this when she described a project she completed for her senior year English class. She said in our last interview that, “we had to pick one of our books and pick a song that reminded us of the book, so I did ‘Man, I Feel Like a Woman’ and I did...I’m not sure what book I did...I’m pretty sure I used ‘A Streetcar Named Desire,’ and I just put the main character in it and said what she was going through in the lyrics and it was really funny... For that assignment I was definitely writing for my class because I wanted them to enjoy it.” In this case, her audience was her class so Paige was more concerned with entertainment than the inclusion of specific, intimate details. She also adjusted her vocabulary and level of analysis based on the ability of this specific audience to comprehend her message. When discussing this same writing assignment presented to the class, Paige stated, “I definitely wasn’t as strict with what I was writing and I wasn’t...like, when I’m writing for a teacher I would sit there and look up better words to describe things and this and that, but when I was writing for my classmates I wasn’t as controlled with my writing and as...have like a big thought process to do it...I probably wasn’t as good as I would have been if I wrote for my teacher.” She made sure her task met the expectations of her audience who, in this case, was not primarily a teacher.

Expectations of post secondary writing. Regarding academic writing and expectations of post secondary writing, Paige did not believe that the creative assignments she completed in high school, such as the assignment where she related the song ‘Man I Feel Like a Woman’ to text, would prepare her for college and for her adult

writing life. She explained that, “[m]y teacher’s very open with our assignments and she really lets us be creative and enjoy what we’re doing rather than sit there and research, and research, and research, which is maybe not the best idea for helping us with college but it was still fun.” Paige shared this belief with me during our last interview, showing me that after having reflected on her academic writing for the duration of the sixteen week study, she did not feel prepared to write beyond high school.

School writing. Paige told me in her narrative that by the, “time she was in 6th grade she started having to write papers and essays for her new teacher. By this time, she was using a computer because it made it easier to research the topics she needed to discuss in the papers.” Here, Paige was talking about school writing, which she seemed to associate with digital technology and which seemed to rely upon the audience of her teacher. She further explained in our second interview that, “School writing would be anything I have to do research for. I mean, sometimes in interpersonal writing I am doing research on lyrics or stuff like that, but mostly I would consider school to be things that I need to research, things that I need to look into a book for or have an actual type of an outline.” Paige also explained this to me in her journal which documented her writing assignments for the duration of the study. For Paige, then, school writing involved research and typing or writing using MFR.

Paige was thorough in explaining that the main audience of school writing, the teacher, often determined how an assignment or message was presented. In her journal, she noted that she followed the directions of the teacher for the writing assignments “very closely” in order to “get a good grade and get into a decent college.” She said in our third interview that, “...mostly the younger teachers like digital schoolwork a lot better, so

that's more PowerPoint (presentations), Wiki's, blogs on Blogster... So, paper writing, I mean, lately you write more papers online (and) you don't really do them in school anymore. You just talk about it and have to do them at home." However, teacher preference aside, some of Paige's school writing used MFR or digital writing in some way, shape, or form. She explained, "When I'm writing for school if it's digitally – normally it's the whole classroom – she'll make it a point for everyone to present their work, whereas if you're writing with pen and paper you don't normally present that to the class – it's just your teacher as your audience. The digital writing is definitely more for your classmates because...I know in the beginning of the year I did a Blogster...and we presented them to our class, so that would probably be mostly the class for the audience." Pen and paper writing was done when the audience was Paige herself and/or her teacher. Paige even explained that her poetry and journals, full of emotion and written only for herself, were usually written with a pen and paper: "I'd rather write essays online but more of my poems or just journal entries, definitely pen and paper." Digital writing, on the other hand, was a product produced for a larger audience.

Personal writing. The opposite of this academic writing for Paige was personal writing. During our second interview she defined personal writing as, "writing in journals, diaries, blogs. Texting could be personal." In her narrative, Paige also acknowledged the fact that personal writing involved emotions and feelings. She explained that after she started writing in elementary school she, "later moved onto writing short poems about things she was feeling...[Paige] soon found herself jotting down lines she had made up in her leather bound notebook her mother had given her." Paige mentioned that personal writing didn't only include words to make meaning. When

asked in what other ways she made meaning in her messages, Paige answered, “[i]t depends on...if you’re doing a blog and you use quotes that mean something to you, or pictures of your friends and family, you could draw pictures in your diary and probably write personal things about your day and things that are important to you.” In this way, Paige was using MFR to create a message when writing personally. The use of both traditional and digital writing allowed her to expand her opportunities to write almost anytime, anywhere, and for any purpose. She expressed these beliefs by stating, “I actually use my phone as a diary, so I write it in notepad in my phone usually and sometimes I’ll do my horoscope if it seems like its really accurate. Sometimes I’ll just do quotes that I am thinking about or lyrics to a song, or just different parts of the day that I don’t want to forget. Sometimes I’ll put a picture in there. I use pen and paper more for drawing and sometimes I’ll draw an instance that I went through with my friends or something.” The audience for personal writing was clear to Paige. Her audience was herself.

Interpersonal writing. This audience was not the same as the audience for interpersonal writing, a type of writing which Paige also reflected upon. Interpersonal writing, according to Paige, “would probably mostly be texting or writing notes to your friends. Me and my friends sometimes write notes back and forth maybe about our weekend on Monday [or] we draw pictures of funny things that happened.” This audience, she said, “would mostly be friends and family. Yeah, I text my mom a lot to communicate rather than talk on the phone or anything else, and with friends I text mostly but sometimes I’ll write them notes.” Interpersonal writing had an audience, but it was an audience selected by this writer herself.

The most important form of writing. When speaking about school writing versus interpersonal writing, Paige explained that, “school is probably the most important but I probably do interpersonal...most often. I think it’s really important to stay in contact with people and it’s so much easier to text my mom than to wait until I see her, so I think that’s probably used most often, but I think school is the most important because, you know, you have to graduate.” Paige claimed that school writing should be the most important form of writing, but it was clear from this statement in our second interview that she was giving the answer that is expected of her, a mature teenager thinking about life beyond high school. In reality, it was clear by reading between the lines that the writing she did the most, interpersonal writing, was most valued by Paige.

Although Paige did not admit that it was the most important form of writing to her, she did, however, acknowledge that interpersonal was the most meaningful form of writing to her. She said, “Interpersonal would probably be the most meaningful because, you know, that’s how you talk to people. That’s how you communicate. Personal is obviously meaningful, but you’re the only one seeing it so it’s really only meaningful to you whereas interpersonal is meaningful to more than one person, so it’s probably the most...maybe I can see it being the most important because you use it all the time.” It was interesting to note that even though, based on her own understanding of interpersonal writing, school writing with the teacher as the audience being communicated to could be considered part of this category, Paige did not look at it this way. She did not reflect on any of her academic writing assignments as interpersonal writing in her interviews, her journal, or her personal narrative as a writer.

Traditional writing vs. writing with MFR. Overall, Paige admitted that she believed she wrote using MFR more than she wrote traditionally. This was because this was how she communicated and communication was the goal of the majority of her writing tasks each day. However, she felt that her digital communication and writing with MFR was less meaningful than the “art” of traditional writing. She explained in her first interview that, “I just use digital a lot more than I use pen and paper, but I think pen and paper is kind of an art, like we don’t write letters anymore. I think that’s kind of important and I think it’s kind of sad that we’re so digitally involved. It’s easier but I think that it loses a little meaning.” Traditional writing with a pen and paper was an art which required more work and more skill. To this teenager, less traditional forms of writing were quicker, easier, and more accessible to the masses, including herself. More time was needed to write this way and, consequently, more thought was put into the deliverance of the message. Paige clarified that, “I just mean that when you contact someone through texting, you know, you could be texting five different people at the same time the same message even, so you kind of lose the whole ‘real’ contact in it, whereas if you’re writing someone a letter it’s personal and it’s just to them. You know that it’s important because you take time out to write a letter whereas with texting it takes like two minutes and you’re done and you have the whole conversation done, whereas with letters it could take weeks to actually get a full conversation.” She admitted that writing with MFR was not actually “writing” to her. She stated in our final interview, “I definitely don’t consider it writing because I don’t really focus on exactly what I’m saying and the structure, but I probably wouldn’t consider it that and I’d probably consider it more of a hobby or a way to get to people faster.” It was revealed here, at the

end of the study, that texting and social networking were ways to get to people, or ways to communicate. They were not ways to “write.”

Paige’s experiences with the writing process. Paige shared multiple academic, writing artifacts with me. She also shared her thoughts about these artifacts in the journal she kept. The following are typical writing assignments Paige encountered in her senior year of high school, accompanied by her feeling about them:

- 1) History Essay Outline - This typed essay outline was completed for school. It followed a traditional, organized outline structure using roman numerals, letters, and numbers. The teacher was the sole audience for this assignment. No assignment sheet accompanied this task. The teacher dictated the assignment to the students. The teacher was very detailed about what should and should not be included in the outline, and how the outline should be structured (for example, using roman numerals). Therefore, Paige had limited choice and limited room to interpret the assignment in multiple ways.
- 2) *Siddhartha* Journal - This journal assignment was typed and completed for school. It was less structured than a traditional essay, lacking a 5-paragraph structure. In this assignment Paige came to some self-realizations. She even wrote, “I wish that my life was less hectic and more clam.” In this way she connected to the text she read and made meaning through the text she wrote. She admitted that, “I love assignments like these when I get to write exactly what I’m thinking without having to follow a structure or a format. I think the[y] show more of your personality and character. I would not change this assignment.” She liked the ability to situate her own personality and voice in her writing, and she liked her

writing events to be less structured. The teacher and Paige were the audiences for this assignment. There was no assignment sheet accompanying this task, allowing Paige to more easily make her own choices and interpretations about the reflection. In other words, she wrote the reflection based on her experiences of what teachers want in a reflection. While she may have had more choice in genre or format, Paige stuck with what she knew a reflection to be. Her reflection resembled a traditional journal, or diary entry, with limited structure.

- 3) *The Stranger* Essay, *Hotel Rwanda* Movie Journal Reflection, *The Killing Fields* Movie Journal Reflection – These writing samples all came to me with little reflection and no explanation. However, it was obvious that they were all typed, they were all for school, they were all for an audience of the teacher, and they all involved summary and lack of original thought or meaning-making through writing. About the journal reflections, Paige did state that, “I liked th[ese] assignment[s] because I enjoyed the film and was interested in the topic.” Here, personal interests made the writing assignment more likeable. There were no assignment sheets accompanying these tasks, allowing Paige to more easily make her own choices and interpretations about the reflections. In other words, she wrote the reflections based on her experiences of what teachers want in a reflection. While she may have had more choice in genre or format, Paige stuck with what she knew a reflection to be.
- 4) Movie Reflection Assignment Sheets- These assignment sheets were typed and completed for school. Most of the writing pieces presented straight facts from movies. Meaning was made through teacher directed structure and teacher

dictated topics for reflection. For example, the last question asked: “Did you enjoy the film? Has it changed your view or understanding of genocide?” The directions on the sheets clearly identified what the teacher expected from the students—fact-oriented and recall responses about the movies. There was no room for Paige to interpret this assignment in any way, or to make any choices about the format in which to present her information.

- 5) Short Answer *Hamlet* Take-Home Essay Test- The teacher was the obvious audience for this structured, short essay, take-home test. The test created by the teacher and the answers supplied by Paige were typed like a finished product. Each essay was structured in a formal 5-paragraph essay structure. The directions on the test clearly identified what the teacher expected from the students—fact-oriented and analytical responses about the novel in short essay forms. There was no room for Paige to interpret this assignment in any other way, or to make any choices about the format.
- 6) History Class Current Event and Globe Trotting Assignment- This writing assignment was completed for school, and the teacher was the audience. This assignment was typed, creating the look of a final product. The format explained on the assignment sheet was utilized and the language was formal. This assignment sheet directed students to “locate a current event article, summarize the event, and provide an in depth analysis focusing on the impact of the event in the world today.” The content, then, of the writing assignment was focused, leaving limited room for choice. The format was dictated, allowing no room for Paige to choose a format she preferred. Paige admitted in her journal that, “I like

these assignments because we can use the internet so it's very fast paced and short and to the point...If I could change it I'd make it more societal current events rather than about politics." She would prefer to incorporate her own personal interests more, but other than that she approved of the assignments' structures and directions. She liked the use of the internet to complete the assignment, and she liked that the assignment was efficient. It should be noted that she did also say, toward the end of the study, that, "I liked these assignments in the beginning of the year but now I find them very tedious and annoying." Redundancy was not seen as a positive attribute of a writing assignment.

- 7) Italian Creative Writing story- For Italian class, Paige used MFR to tell story. She shared with me a picture, or visual, in the outline for a children's story about an elephant and tiger. The outline only showed the picture once; it did not allow for thorough analysis of the visual since it was used as part of an outline, not as a text in which meaning was attempted to be made. Paige believed that this assignment "was really fun and easy." Her teacher orally directed the students to write this story; no assignment sheet was given to them, but the teacher answered questions in class about the assignment as they arose during the in-class writing process. Overall, students had much freedom in choosing the content and genre of this writing assignment.
- 8) Newspaper Movie Review for Journalism Class- This assignment was completed for school. It was typed as a final product. Through this writing assignment, Paige was able to express her opinion in strict journalistic writing style. She said, "I enjoyed writing this review because it was about a movie I enjoyed...if I could

change the assignment I would make it more of a blog and less of a structured review.” Again, the personal appeal of the assignment made it an enjoyable one for our writer. The audience was the teacher only, as it did not make it into the school newspaper. Paige knew that it would not be in the paper before she wrote it. No assignment sheet was distributed for this task, but Paige followed the structured format of a newspaper review which was learned and practiced in class, leaving little room for personal interpretation of genre.

- 9) Journalism Feature Assignment- For this school assignment Paige needed to give up something for a week and write a feature article about the experience. About this typed assignment, Paige said, “I really enjoyed this assignment...I was really excited to see if I could give up Facebook...I liked writing the article because I did a little bit everyday. It was more like a journal with a recap.” Paige compared the assignment to a journal in a positive way, implying that her preference with writing lies in the realm of personal and self reflective writing. The audience was the teacher, and, it seems from her reflections, Paige herself. Again, no assignment sheet was distributed for this task, but Paige followed the structured format of a newspaper feature which was learned and practiced in class, leaving little room for personal interpretation of genre. The content of the feature was self-chosen.

- 10) Questions after Watching a Clip of a *Frontline* Episode in History Class- Paige stated that, “I take assignments like these less seriously.” This hand-written worksheet completed for school, and specifically for her teacher, asked Paige to answer factual, recall questions about a film clip viewed in class. No analysis or

meaning-making was involved. The directions on the sheet clearly identified what the teacher expected from the students—recall responses about the television clip. There was no room for Paige to interpret this assignment in any way, or to make any choices about the format in which to present her information.

Communication as MFR writing. Paige shared other writing experiences with me during our interviews. She explained that, “I probably use my phone the most out of everything because I can really access anything there. I can even Skype with my friends, and that’s not writing but it’s still communicating like that sometimes. I mostly text my friends – we write notes occasionally but most of the time it’s texting, so digitally it’s easier and faster, otherwise I have to wait between periods.” Here we see Paige admitting the importance of communication with MFR. She also speaks about Skype, a digital interfacing/video communication program, and even groups it with writing. It is obvious, then, that she is really talking about communication, which she saw as separate from writing. This is consistent with her observations about digital communication in her narrative of a writer. In her narrative she states that she communicates, not writes, using “texts and Facebook the most.”

This communication as writing pivoted on the need for audience. Paige explained this when she talked about text messaging more in depth during our first interview. She told me that, “I’ve probably been texting since about seventh grade and I text all the time, every day. I actually have a Twitter account but I don’t use it because I’d rather just text people and whatever. Blogging, I’ve started a fashion blog and I like doing it but I had no followers, so that kind of fell through. Yeah, I’m always online on Facebook and all

of that.” Her blog was less successful than her other digital forms of communication and social networking practices due to a lack of followers, or an audience.

Personal writing with MFR. The last experience Paige shared with me is an experience that is personal. When asked what the last thing she had written one day before our last interview was, she replied, “I think the last thing I wrote for myself was probably just like a journal entry and I think it was after I went on vacation with my cousin who I wasn’t very close with so I wrote a journal entry about how that was and what our experiences were and how we got a lot closer... I actually have a journal on my phone.” Here she shared yet another view of the personal, and digital, side of her writing experiences. Digital writing with MFR allowed for convenience in writing, since her phone was always with her.

Paige’s perception of writing processes. We’ve seen through this vignette that Paige had definitive beliefs about writing, as well as extensive experiences with various forms of writing. Now we can look a little more closely about her perception of not *what* she wrote, but *how* she wrote. Paige admitted to me that she had been writing to make meaning, and in the following case to communicate, since she was a young child. In her narrative as a writer she said that she, “loved to write her friend’s letters and leave them in their mailboxes when they had found themselves in a fight... Writing these letters helped her figure out exactly what she was really upset about and how to help her friends understand better without bringing up other issues. These letters then opened her mind up to writing in a journal and how helpful that could be.”

The traditional writing process. Paige looked at the traditional process of writing with a pen and paper more closely by considering a research paper she

wrote for history class. She told me during our third interview that she started this writing process by brainstorming, or by writing stream of consciousness writing. She said, “stream of consciousness...first, it’s probably that and then I pick out the ideas that I like the most and then I’ll put them in an outline or just kind of like a structure...Like, if I’m doing a five-paragraph essay, I’ll pick three parts of my stream of consciousness that I liked and that I think that I can elaborate on, and then I’ll look up each thing on Google or Bing or something like that. I’ll look at those and I’ll put different bullets first under each thing and then I’ll try to construct a paper out of that.”

The MFR writing process. Academic writing started with traditional pen and paper writing to make meaning and brainstorm, but quickly moved to the digital realm of “finding” information to “put together.” When she sat down to write an essay using MFR, Paige said that, “probably the first thing I would do is open up Google and then I’d probably open up dictionary.com. I’d go to my school website and open up the different helpers...like if you go to the website EBSCO host...I’d probably open up them and I’d open up a Word document and start looking up different information. I try not to copy and paste and go under it, but sometimes I’ll just do that and take out little blurbs and cite them.” Paige used digital resources to help gather information, but admitted that this often lead her to simply taking someone else’s words and using them as her own. However, she still felt that, “It’s a lot easier to write my essays online because I can form what I’m going to write and what I have the most information on based on what information I am getting from the internet.” Paige was a 21st Century teenager who had grown up with the ability to understand digital texts. She even told me that, “I am definitely more focused and I’d rather be able to read things off the internet like different

information, different websites, and just transfer them right to a Word document rather than having to go to a book and write down on pen and paper.” This was the same process Paige described in her journal when she reflected on completing a History Class Current Event assignment. MFR was a faster method of relaying a message; information was at her fingertips. This method involved a process of “putting the pieces together” instead of creating new, original meaning.

Writing using MFR took on a similar process when it involved communicating with friends. During our second interview, Paige said that when interacting with peers and acquaintances, “I definitely use a lot of pictures and video clips. Even when I’m writing on one of my friends’ [Facebook] walls, I’d probably put a video clip before I’d start writing her a long message. If I was going to write her a long message I’d probably just text her or something like that.” This was similar to the process she utilized when writing on social networking sites such as Facebook. She told me that, “If I’m on Facebook I’ll probably either just write a story or something about how I want to hang out with my friend. I don’t really have a process for that and it depends on the person. When I’m writing a journal or something like that, I usually start it with a quote that means something to me or that has reminded me of what I want to write in my journal. Or, I’ll draw a picture of something.” This led Paige to discuss her process for writing personal writing. In this scenario, it was clear that traditional writing practices with pen and paper allowed for more planning and organization in Paige’s world. Unfortunately, these processes were not utilized in most of the academic assignments she gave to me as artifacts or in the academic assignments she reflected on in her journal. Instead, she

mostly wrote about simply finding information online, and plugging it into a structured, teacher-directed format.

When talking about the process she utilized to complete one specific school writing assignment, Paige explained to me in our last interview that, “I started out looking up different information like the plotline and all of the characters, and I was looking up different information I could find on each of them, and then I probably copied and pasted into the Word document and it went down to a new page and I was writing from how I was interpreting each section. I would start writing and then I’d go and look up the time period and what women were like in each period – because they were in different periods of time – and then I’d go and compare those and I’d go back and look at different...or I’d go to a search engine and they’d have of this and like plotline or whatever, and I’d go and I’d look up and see the similarities I could find and the differences and start writing from there.” School writing equaled planning, organization, MFR, and typing, at least according to Paige. Paige even admitted that she believed the Internet dictated what she wrote. She shared this when she said, “[th]e more information I can find on certain things that’s how I am going to put the order and that’s how I am going to design how many paragraphs for each section I’m going to write about. Yeah, so the internet definitely kind of tells me how I’m going to write my paper.” This statement showed the digital influence exerted on academic writing for Paige. In the case of this particular adolescent, it allowed for little to no meaning-making and high levels of structure.

Saying Goodbye to Three Adolescent Writers

This narrative, composed of three vignettes, has presented the writing lives and writing processes of three typical high school students, who are reflective of most New Jersey suburban adolescents. As I say goodbye now to these three students, I acknowledge that each adolescent has shared unique life-experiences with writing. However, a few facts seem true for each of them to me: Anais, Aslan, and Paige each see themselves as writers; Anais, Aslan, and Paige each write using the ever-changing tools of their culture and the writing processes which accompany these tools; and Anais, Aslan, and Paige, each know that they will be writers in their futures.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Writing is composed by today's adolescents in multiple contexts, and when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing which uses MFR, I found that there is much to observe. I have organized the discussion of these findings below by presenting each of my research questions as a topic. The more specific sub questions (A and B) are addressed first, followed by the general research inquiry.

What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR?

The data from this study demonstrated that the writing “process” is actually the writing “processes”; in other words, different steps are utilized to write for various audiences in various genres for various purposes. My interpretation of the findings identified two academic writing processes utilized by adolescents: 1) the process involved in composing academic print-based texts and 2) the process involved in composing academic texts with MFR. As seen in the following chart, the process involved in composing academic print-based texts typically involved the following steps: choosing or being given a topic; considering what the audience expects and accepts from the writer; brainstorming with pen and paper in either a traditional outline form or a more casual “bulleted notes” form; taking out, adding, and moving information around in order to transact with the text or transform the genre—this taking out, adding, and/or moving, were contingent upon who the audience was and created a more fluent, meaningful text; possibly publishing the text using a digital resource/program such as PowerPoint or Microsoft Word; and, lastly, printing out the text to hand in for a grade. The process

involved in composing academic texts with MFR usually involved the following steps: choosing or being given a topic; considering what the audience expects and accepts from the writer; searching the internet via computer, smartphone, etc. in an effort to find information about the topic; “plugging in” this found information in a pre-formatted genre, such as a traditional PowerPoint Presentation, or an essay outline provided by the teacher; and, finally, printing out the text to hand in for a grade.

Writing Processes Overview

Academic Print-Based Texts	Academic Texts with MFR
Choosing or being given a topic	Choosing or being given a topic
Considering what the audience expects and accepts	Considering what the audience expects and accepts
Brainstorming with pen and paper in either a traditional outline form or a more casual “bulleted notes” form	Searching the internet via computer, smartphone, etc. in an effort to find information about the topic
Taking out, adding, and moving information around in order to transact with the text or transform the genre	“Plugging in” this found information in a pre-formatted genre, such as a traditional PowerPoint Presentation, or an essay outline provided by the teacher
Possibly publishing the text using a digital resource/program such as PowerPoint or Microsoft Word	Printing out the text to hand in for a grade
Printing out the text to hand in for a grade	

The print-based writing process. All three participants noted at one point during the research process that when they wanted to do more than *communicate* a message, or do more than deliver an already existing message to a specific person or audience, they wrote in print-based methods using a print-based process. To demonstrate this, the participants of the study discussed note-taking, one form of print-based text, and Anais admitted that she preferred to hand-write her notes when she was permitted to do so, “in whatever way I want...like, not in outline form.” She made meaning through her writing, understanding the concept by writing it on paper. This meaning-making through traditional print-based writing methods transferred from note-taking to essay writing as well. In other words, when they infused their interests and emotions, print-based writing was usually, if not always, their writing mode of choice. They felt that in this way ideas were formulated, organized, combined, and meaning was ultimately made. They were transacting with the text by incorporating personal feelings and they were transforming the text by choosing the genre or form of presenting the message.

By “real writing,” then, I see that my participants were referring to the process of an authentic experience of creating a text with unique ideas (transaction) in a genre of their choice (transformation). They talked about “coming up with ideas”, “using my own ideas”, and “putting it together myself.” They seemed more aware of the thought process involved with constructing an idea through writing and all three participants noted over and over again that in this way traditional writing was equal to brainstorming. They acknowledged traditional writing with a pen and paper using a print-based writing process as, in Paige’s own words, “real writing.” This was not the communication of already existing ideas to a friend or a teacher; this was an authentic experience of creating

a text with unique ideas, infused with personal interests, and organizing and presenting the information in a genre of their own choosing.

When given the opportunity to transact with text, participants usually utilized a print-based writing process. These adolescents wrote print-based texts to create new ideas and make meaning, as opposed to “plug information” into an already established format. In the print-based genres which allowed for more meaning-making, such as print-based journal entries, handwritten essays, and brainstorming notes, personal connections were fostered in this writing process, leading to true transaction. Aslan even mentioned that his note taking in history class, which involved copying notes down exactly like the teacher presented them in a strict outline format, was not “real” writing because it required no thought and no connection to him—in other words, no transaction occurred. I agree with these sentiments. If we consider the definition of the writing process from Chapter 1, *Introduction*, then note-taking is not necessarily involved in this process. I defined the writing process as the steps a student takes in order to not only know something new, but to also create and communicate a message about this new meaning. This process involves actions and changes which lead to the creation of a meaningful message from the writer to his or her audience. Note-taking in this case did not involve creating and communicating a message with new meaning. It also did not involve the writer considering his or her connections to the information, or transacting with it. It was, instead, simply writing down alphabetic semiotics as instructed to do so by the teacher, not necessarily allowing for new learning to occur. This is unlike the note-taking event experienced and described by Anais, who was given the opportunity to transact with and transform her notes, consequently learning from the process.

The connection between transaction, transformation, and personal writing were very apparent, and they were usually described as elements resulting in print-based writing processes. This speaks to the transaction described by Rosenblatt (1978) where personal connections are required for meaning to be made through a text. Aslan explained that personal writing usually produced a longer text than writing an essay for school because, “it’s just in my head and its pouring out”—in other words, transaction is a natural process stifled by much of academic writing. Additionally, the participants each admitted to doing any personal writing they wanted to do before completing academic writing—the personal writing was more engaging and appealing due to the personal interest involved which allowed for this transaction to occur and, therefore, took precedent. The process of writing with a pen and paper was more spontaneous, required less planning or pre-determined formatting (transformation), involved more personal connections and emotions (transaction), and, thus, made a meaningful text.

The MFR writing process. The MFR writing process involved components not seen in the description of the traditional print-based writing process. In Chapter 1, *Introduction*, I initially defined the writing process as the steps a student takes in order to not only know something new, but to also create and communicate a message about this new meaning. Unlike this original definition of the broadly defined “writing process”, the writing process with MFR does not always include knowing something new. Instead, it is usually the *communication*, or re-presentation of already existing knowledge or an already existing message from one person to another, or from the writer to the audience. Writing using MFR created a product, a message to deliver; MFR created a quick, more efficient text which did not require making new meaning. For example, texting a quick

hello, posting on a Facebook wall about where and when to meet, or typing out already hand-written meaningful ideas and essays, occurred with MFR. These texts were each written to relay an already existing message to a specific audience, not to create new meaning.

This *publication*, or finalized presentation of a text, was the most significant component of the MFR writing process for my adolescent participants. Paige even explained that she was concerned that her academic writing assignments would, “look how the teacher wanted [them] to look.” My participants thoroughly enjoyed seeing their work in its finished, published state, even, in the words of Aslan, having it look “like a book.” While Rosenblatt, Kress, and I agree that the meaning created in the text, whether that meaning comes from transaction, transformation, or a combination of both, is the most vital aspect of any writing process, my participants saw the publication as the most vital aspect of their academic writing.

The participants wanted academic assignments which were very specific. They did not seek freedom of genre—they would rather have a prescribed plan, or process, for a piece of writing requiring no transformation. For school assignments, they did not want the option to transact with their text if they were not interested in the topic of the assignment. The MFR writing process fit these needs.

School writing actually had its own process altogether. School writing involved less thinking and more “putting information together,” typically in the form of a Microsoft Word document, a program allowing for the use of MFR and an MFR writing process. I would even argue that using MFR very often allowed students to bypass the need to make new meaning through writing. By omitting transaction and transformation

from the process of writing, using MFR became a means of publishing information that already existed in a manner expected from the teacher. These findings contradict the findings of Lewis and Fabos (2005) who claim that IM and other digital writing using MFR forces students to take their writing to the next level of the writing process where they rely not only on content, but also on the tone, or emotion, that is relayed. Instead, I found that the adolescent participants wrote using MFR to put together already existing ideas in one document. The participants concentrated on finding information, usually online, and plugging it into a pre-determined format or genre. This pre-determination was usually dictated by the teacher. I found that digital communications, which often use MFR including emoticons and punctuation, allowed only for the delivery of a short, direct message which lacked meaning derived from transaction and transformation. The writer was not asked to transact with the text or to transform the text, and the genre had been pre-determined. The use of tone, or emotion, described by Lewis and Fabos (2005), while important, did not allow new meaning to be made or new knowledge to be learned, and, consequently, did not advance students to the next stages of the writing process.

Lack of meaning-making is also evident in much of social networking, a mode which utilizes MFR. Based on his own findings, Jenkins (2009) argues that, “[Social] Networking... involves a process of synthesis, during which multiple resources are combined to produce new knowledge” (p. 94). He asserts that these tools allow new knowledge to be created most effectively. I agree with the fact that a message is created, but I do not agree with the fact that the message is new. In considering this contradictory data, I pose the following question: In a time and place where the concept of plagiarism and the process of creating a text and a message needs to be revisited, is it even possible

to embrace multimodality before accepting that society, education, and literacy as a whole, is changing rapidly? This concept of plagiarism became even more muddled when looking at the process of my participants' academic writing using MFR. The "cut and paste" method of "putting information together" to create a published document may not have been perceived as plagiarism by them, but as they are not creating new meaning through their texts, aren't they just stealing someone else's ideas? By definition, they are in fact plagiarizing if they are not paraphrasing or citing this information, and in this way the MFR writing process is simply allowing the writer to use other peoples' knowledge, not create their own. Thinking more critically about the topic of plagiarism raised here, I would argue that Rosenblatt (1978) would disagree with the classification of this as plagiarism, based on the fact that every writer, as well as every reader and every audience, transacts with a text, consequently making it his or her own. The transaction leads to a new, unique message created by the reader. If that reader uses the new text ("new" meaning the text that he or she has transacted with and derived new meaning from), then it is a new text, with new meaning that the reader can now utilize as a writer and incorporate into his or her own unique, meaningful text. In the same way, Kress (2010) would see the transformation of this message as a means of making new meaning with it, and, consequently, the writer making it his or her own unique, meaningful text. The concept of plagiarism is seen as an evolving concept in the wake of digital technologies and writing processes, especially those which utilize MFR.

I found in my own data that the concept of plagiarism was not an issue if the participants were interested in the topic of any of their school assignments. In these cases they did in fact express a desire to transact and transform the text, and they did not want

to take information from other sources such as the internet. They did not mind a more complicated task of meaning-making if they enjoyed the topic. These issues were not a reflection of the participants' writing abilities—all three participants demonstrated the ability to transact with and transform text that they were personally interested in at an appropriate academic level. These issues were, on the contrary, a reflection of the participants' desire and motivation to succeed. All three participants stated that their teachers had specific expectations of what should be included in a writing assignment, and these participants did what they perceived they needed to do in order to succeed, where success was defined as getting a “good” grade, not as creating new meaning or learning through writing. In these cases they needed to provide the teacher with exactly what he or she expected, which was not new meaning in text. They expected, my participants believed, a very specific meaning to be made through the text, not a new one. For my participants, this was one of the outcomes of the MFR writing process.

The MFR writing process as communication. I mentioned at the start of this chapter that when the participants wanted to do more than communicate a message, or deliver an already existing message to a specific person or audience, they wrote in print-based methods using a print-based writing process. On the other hand, the MFR writing process was often used in order to communicate, usually interpersonally. The process of personal and interpersonal writing using MFR, often perceived as this communication described above, did incorporate the selection of genre to fit the purpose of the text. For example, all three participants noted that texting, one genre using MFR, was reserved for quick messages to acquaintances, usually not requiring much thinking. It was utilized for the delivery of a message, not for making new meaning. The participants transformed the

message, but they did not transact with the text. This example sheds light on my conclusion that in order for “writing” which involves meaning-making to occur, both transaction and transformation need to occur. Texting here was communication, not “writing”. Texting was utilized to deliver an already existing message to another person or audience. It was not used to create new meaning through transaction and transformation.

The data also highlights the fact that on some level, my participants realized that some “writing” is not making new meaning; they understood that they were simply employing the field of semiotics and writing down words that they heard. Using the text message example above, they had no reason to create new meaning; they were simply relaying information which already existed. Therefore, it can be understood why the participants may not have considered this writing with MFR to be writing at all. “Writing” involved meaning-making. “Communication”, which they saw this as, involved moving an already existing message from one person to another, or from the writer to the audience. Much of the MFR writing and the MFR writing process examples that were included in my data were in fact what my participants perceived to be “communication”, and were in fact not making any new knowledge. This included the writing assignments completed for school using MFR; these writing pieces generally presented already existing information to the teacher in a formal, prescribed format. In other words, the participants did not transact with or transform the text and no new knowledge was made.

My findings revealed that interpersonal writing, although often intended for one other person, had become a community writing event for these adolescents with the

advent of Facebook wall posts, blogs, etc. Yi (2008) would agree with my data; he found that writing in, with, and for a community is a natural practice for our adolescents. However, Yi may not agree with my research which reveals that this interpersonal “writing” using MFR is perceived as “communicating” and less as “writing”. This type of writing requires a very specific process which differs from traditional print-based writing, and even from what is perceived as academic writing.

Similarities between the two processes. Common steps for these two processes, the process of traditional print-based writing and the process of writing with MFR, included choosing or being given a topic; considering what the audience expects and accepts from the writer; publishing the text; and printing out the text to hand in for a grade. Both processes relied heavily on the role of the audience. This audience dictated the specific genre chosen by the writer; each genre was used to serve a particular purpose and, consequently, was chosen to fit the needs of the particular audience. I agree with Jewitt (2005) when she states that, "different modes offer specific resources for meaning-making, and the ways in which modes contribute to people's meaning-making vary" (p. 316). Jewitt, in turn, would agree with me that these modes are each tailored to the expectations of a specific audience. Based on what the message is, what the best way of organizing and presenting the message is, and what the audience will expect and accept from the writer, an adolescent decides which genre he or she will utilize to present his or her ideas in writing.

The argument. The process involved in composing traditional academic print-based texts involves transaction and transformation. This process relies upon making meaning through transaction and transformation. It involves making personal connections

when permitted by the teacher and choosing the genre based on the audience when permitted by the teacher.

The process of composing academic texts with MFR does not often involve transaction and/or transformation. This process is one defined by “putting together”; adolescent writers “put together” the pieces they have, whether they come from subsequent brainstorming in print-based form, from teacher lectures, or from internet resources. In this same way, the process of writing using MFR is employed to communicate simple messages. The writer is simply relaying information that already exists from one person to another or from the writer to the audience.

How does audience mediate the content in a specific writing event, considering the design of a specific genre?

Impact of the audience.

Audience is always, or should always be, a consideration when creating a text. A writer often creates a message to share with others. These “others”, described by Kitsis (2008) as those who see and understand the writer, because they are outside of the writer, are the audience. Researchers such as Yancey (2009) recognize the audience as one of the most driving forces in the motivation of the writer. I found that audience does in fact mediate the content of a writing event, and that while the specific genre of the text also plays a part, this audience is much more influential. The audience matters because the writer wants to be heard in a specific way, and, thus, the writer writes in whichever context will allow him or her to be heard in this manner. Aslan even admitted to, “get[ting] caught up in how the audience is going to react.” He, along with my other two participants, used the context as a catalyst for this reaction. The participants chose the

context, traditional print-based or MFR, which would most likely get the desired reaction from the audience. If they wanted a quick answer to a practical question such as “How are you?” they wrote a text message. If they wanted an academic assignment grade and lengthy comments from a writing instructor about how they could improve this grade, they wrote in the context the teacher desired, such as a traditional print-based 5-paragraph essay during an in-class essay test.

To further prove the influence of audience on the writing process, it is significant to note that in my data Paige expressed her beliefs that school writing *should* be the most important type of writing. However, two of the three participants, including Paige herself, expressed the belief that interpersonal writing was actually the most important type of writing. This was due to the audience being part of the interpersonal writing process, and the significance of the validity created by the audience in interpersonal writing events. Also, this was because the text produced by the author had an effect on this audience, making it influential and authentic. Teacher as audience proved to be a less-authentic experience in the writing process.

Teacher as audience and his or her influence on the writing processes.

Specific audiences may have more influence on writers than others. When the three adolescent participants were talking about school writing, the most influential audience, and often the only audience, was the teacher. What the teacher expected dictated the genre and content of the writing assignment. The participants admitted that even when given a choice in genre, they “fell back” into the prescribed form that they associated with academic writing—usually a 5-paragraph essay-- even if it was not the preference of the participant or the teacher. For example, they would use the genre of a standard essay

even when a scrapbook or diary project was an option for an assignment because even though the teacher allowed for variance, their preconceived notion of what a teacher expected won out. Preconceived notions of teacher expectations, specific teacher expectations, and school in general, trumped teacher discussion of a particular assignment. In these cases, transaction and transformation were not options—they were not necessary to meet the needs of the teachers. I would argue, then, that real writing did not take place. The definition of the writing process includes making new meaning. Here, no new meaning is made. An already existing meaning is simply communicated to a teacher in a genre that the adolescent assumes that the teacher expects.

The teacher as audience mediated the content of the text. When the teachers insisted that students use the print-based genre for the writing assignment in a very strict way, it seemed that, according to my participants, they were also dictating content. In other words, students simply “plugged in” the information that they assumed the teacher expected in the stringent genre, outline, format, etc. Rosenblatt’s (1978) Reader’s Response Theory states that readers are active, not blank tapes registering ready-made messages. Writers are also active, making choices in genre and content. Furthermore, Readers Response Theory asserts that making meaning occurs naturally and often as a process, not as an event that happens perfectly the first time. Making meaning does not happen by “plugging in” information in the place it is “supposed” to go.

Rosenblatt (1978) also states that form, or genre, in the response to a text, or in writing a text itself for the purposes of this research, should not be dictated if a response transaction is to be authentic. When a teacher, as audience, dictates a specific writing structure and format for a print-based writing task for the participants, this structure and

format is used as a way to make meaning; in this circumstance, less meaning is made than if a student was given the opportunity to format the writing in any way and choose the genre and structure that he or she felt met the purpose of the text. Instead, the dictated format is simply followed; information is plugged in where it is “supposed” to go and limited or no new meaning is made through this writing process. By dictating a mode and genre, then, teachers are not allowing adolescent writers to make their own new knowledge. In this way, audience mediates content, as well as the meaning made with this content through transformation and transaction, or the lack thereof.

Print-based writing audience. For my participants, the audience of a print-based text was a more personal audience, for the most part. Print-based texts involved more emotions due to transaction, and, consequently, the three adolescent writers preferred that their audience be “open-minded” and accepting of what they had to say when reading their print-based texts. These texts were more personal and more “them.” Looking more closely at the relationship between transaction and audience, we can consider the fact that Anais wanted her friends and family to hold her print-based letter in their hands. It was “real” writing to her; it was tactile. Consequently, it deserved real emotion and “to put herself into it.” In other words, it deserved transaction.

There is no audience more personal than the audience of one’s self. When the self was the audience, the participants were able to “pour [the writing] out.” There was no limit on content or genre. The self-audience was much different than any other audience—detail, emotions, and personal connections were enhanced, making the text even more meaningful. This was achieved through writing with MFR, such as the journal Paige kept on her smart phone, but usually occurred in print-based writing, where the

normative process is one of transaction and transformation, and not simply “putting together” ideas without making new meaning. In the situations where my participants were their only audiences, they maintained complete power over transaction and transformation decisions. In this way, it can be seen once again through my data that the influence of the audience, even when it was one’s self, affected the genre and content of the writer’s text.

MFR writing audience. When considering the audience of MFR writing, my research participants were hyper-aware of the fact that even if the message was intended for one recipient, many other people would be able to view the message in online fora such as Facebook and blogs. This affected the content of the message-- although it was intended to be received by one recipient, as noted above, the message needed to be appropriate for a larger audience. For this reason, transaction was limited. This allowed for a less meaningful message. However, the participants also noted that interpersonal writing with MFR involved a lack of prescribed format, allowing for more transformation to take place. The format, or genre, was not prescribed. The writer could choose the best genre to meet the needs of the message and audience in this interpersonal writing. Because of this, the participants wrote using MFR for communication with friends, usually in a digital realm. The participants had choice and control over their writing. These formats included but were not limited to video and audio clips. Looking more closely at the mechanics of writing in MFR texts, the participants revealed that the audience dictated the mechanics of the text, especially when it involved MFR writing. All participants specifically noted the use of punctuation, slang, text language, and emoticons in unique ways, used to relay a message to a specific type of people.

This “specific type of people” was a real audience, and the writing events were real writing situations. Researchers such as Leu and Leu (2000), Agee and Altarriba (2009), and Tarasiuk (2010) agree that a “real world” writing community adds to a writer’s identity and enhances a writer’s audience, while the literacies using MFR allow for a process ending in the communication of a specific message to this community. However, a writer reserves the right to limit the transaction and transformation associated with a high level, meaningful writing process. The writer makes the choice about what to share and what not to share with the writing community.

Impact of the genre. When discussing the impact of genre selection, the role of the audience is often interwoven. This was especially true of the academic writing my participants completed during the study. Participants actually preferred efficient writing assignments in genres that did not allow for much transaction or transformation; in other words, when the writing was not personal, but instead school writing, they wanted to give the teacher what he or she wanted and they wanted to be done. When allowed to choose their own genre, the participants strove to use a genre which met their needs of relaying school information back to the teacher in an efficient manner, with no concern for transaction and true meaning-making. This aligns with the theory of Kress (2010) who states that modes are culturally and socially transformed or used for a specific reason and given a specific task in a specific culture and society. In the case of adolescent writing for school, the specific task in a specific culture and society was academic writing. The specific reason was to relay back to the teacher exactly what he or she expects to see, not to make new meaning through writing.

Participants also revealed that they did not believe the genres associated with more creative academic writing assignments using MFR, such as writing and digitally illustrating storybooks, crafting short stories on wikis, or creating creative PowerPoint Presentations, would prepare them for college writing—creative assignments were not what their college and adult audiences, or teachers, would want. Instead, my participants showed me that writing done for the school audience needed to be efficient. It did not need to involve transaction; it did, however, involve transformation.

The perceived expectations of the audience, specifically the genre that the audience expected, influenced the majority of the writing my participants completed for their teachers and brought to light the issue of power as it applies to academic writing in schools. The teacher exerted power over the students unknowingly, or at least unintentionally, when assigning a writing task. Since a grade is almost always attached to an academic writing task, the writing task itself represented a grade for the student. In addition, the teacher-student relationship itself involved issues of power. The teacher was the authority figure and naturally had more power than the student. Consequently, the student writer was aiming to give the teacher what he or she wanted in order to receive a good grade, but not necessarily make a new, unique meaning through writing.

The tendency to shy away from transaction and transformation only proved to be true with academic writing. From the perspective of my adolescent participants, creativity of genre was a good thing for interpersonal writing. It allowed for the infusion of self, even if only in a limited manner; in other words, it allowed for transformation and transaction. However, when writing academically, specifically when the audience was the teacher, my participants did not desire a choice. They did not desire to transact or

transform—they simply wanted to complete their task, which, in this case, meant finishing their homework. When the self was the audience, on the other hand, the participants were able to “pour...it out.” There was no limit on content or genre, allowing for thorough transaction and transformation. This was achieved through writing with MFR genres, such as the journal that Paige kept on hand on her smart phone, but usually occurred in print-based writing genres, where the normative process was one of transaction and transformation, and not simply “putting together” ideas without making new meaning.

During the research study, participants used Facebook to communicate with me. Although I gave them the option of email or phone calls, they chose to communicate in the genre that most fit the specific need of the situation. My participants demonstrated what Kress (2010) meant when he stated that specific cultural tools and genres were used to accomplish specific tasks by the members of the given society; Facebook was their genre of choice for casual communication used to relay a simple, straightforward message such as “I can still meet you on Wednesday at 3PM. OK?” Here it is seen that writing using MFR was used to relay a message that involved no transaction or further transformation. My participants used email only when it was not possible to use Facebook (for example, when they could not attach their narratives as a writer as a file in a Facebook message or post). Again, they wrote with MFR to communicate a message. However, the writing which included transaction and transformation, the narrative itself, was composed first by hand, and then typed as a finished copy and attached to this means of communication, the email. In this case the message was composed using MFR, while the narrative was composed using traditional print-based text and attached to the

message. These two different modes of writing with two different processes were kept separate even up to their delivery to the audience, me. As the audience, my expectations were also separate for these two very different genres of writing, the email and the narrative. The email was a means for my participant to communicate a message to me, the audience. This message did not require transaction or further transformation—it was simply a means of letting me know a direct, already existing message, “the narrative is complete.” This was much different than my expectations for the narrative itself. I expected transaction and transformation to have occurred as a means of each participant relaying a new, unique message with meaning. Both expectations were met as my participants chose a genre which fulfilled the needs of both the writer (the participant) and the audience (me).

Furthermore, participants used traditional writing with a pen and paper to complete journal entries for this study, even though they were given the choice to complete these entries on a wiki. The journal allowed them to express their feelings and present information to me that was “a work in progress”—the entries were laden with cross-outs, scribbles, jotted notes, doodles, and obvious meaning-making as ideas came together in an unstructured pattern that somehow worked for each participant in a personal way. In this way the participants transacted with the text. They wrote in a mode which allowed them to connect personal beliefs and background information, and thus also allowed for transaction. This ability to connect with the text through transaction, coupled with the transformation of choosing a genre which served their need of connecting their beliefs and background to their texts, allowed meaning to be made in a new, unique document.

The argument. Audience is the largest determinant of the content and genre of text in regard to academic writing. Genre hinges on the idea of audience. A specific genre is chosen by the writer to meet the needs and expectations of the audience. For example, even when a teacher gave the participants the choice to write using MFR, print based writing was chosen in order to “give the teacher what they wanted so I can get a good grade.” Preconceived notions of teacher needs and expectations, even when discredited by the teacher him or herself, trumped personal choice in regard to the genre of a writing assignment.

Just as many of the steps of the process for traditional print-based writing differ from the steps of the process of writing using MFR, so do the audiences and genres of each context. Traditional print-based writing is usually for a self audience. It involves a complex process of writing incorporating transaction and transformation. It is occasionally written for an audience which involves the self and the teacher. The genre for this type of writing is typically a reflection, brainstorming, or a journal, as all three allow for transaction. Writing using MFR, on the other hand, has a much larger and much less personal audience. Writing using MFR lends itself mainly to communication. These texts composed to communicate a message tend to lack transaction and transformation. The genre is typically more efficient, or short and “user-friendly”, ranging from a blog post or Facebook wall post to a text message, or a standard format, such as a 5-paragraph essay structure, for typing a school writing assignment, making it an effective way to communicate an already existing message.

What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR?

When adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR 1) the purpose of the text has changed from writing to communication and 2) less new meaning or knowledge is being created by the writer.

Writing vs. communication. Writing, making new meaning through text, and communication, relaying an already existing meaning or message to another person or persons, are not stagnate cultural events. These acts and processes change based on the culture they are a part of, and my participants showed me that in today's culture, they are two very different events from one another.

The idea of writing is an amorphous one, changing as the cultural tools employed with the practice change. Paige admits that at a much later time in her life when MFR became “the norm” for writing, “the internet definitely kind of [told] me how I’m going to write my paper.” This statement shows the digital influence exerted on school writing for Paige. In the case of this particular adolescent, it allowed for little to no meaning-making through typing, and it allowed for high levels of structure due to the mode of the writing. Paige simply “did” what the internet told her to do—she used information from the internet to fill in the writing template provided by her teacher. She did not transact with or transform the text, and she created no new meaning. This parallels Kress’ (2010) Theory of Modes, where he states that specific modes are employed to complete specific tasks in writing. In this case, Paige is communicating a message, not writing one. Consequently, the mode she chose was one that allowed for this delivery. She chose to write using MFR, including internet resources, in a teacher-directed format. She delivered

the already-existing message the teacher expected to see. She did not create her own new meaning or message.

Modes involving MFR were not limited to those which involved writing. When asked about writing using MFR, Paige actually mentioned the use of Skype, an online messaging system involving talking to and looking at another person through a computer screen and interface. Skype, for the purposes of this dissertation, is considered a mode of communication with MFR. The forms of representation associated with Skype include video, audio, and even text. The inclusion of this mode in the realm of “writing” further illustrates Kress’s (2010) theory, showing that specific modes such as Skype are employed to complete specific tasks in “writing” or “communicating”. The participants’ “writing” using MFR is not necessarily “writing”; it is much more a process of “communicating”. Here, the already existing message moved to another person or persons, the audience, but no new meaning is made and no transaction or further transformation occurred. The participants admittedly wrote more on a daily basis when using MFR, but they were quick to note that this was because it was their method of communication. They didn’t even refer to the practices of communicating messages using print-based text and MFR as “writing”—it was a communication process first and foremost that even included genres not associated with writing, such as Skype.

To my participants, using MFR became a publishing, or presentation, process; it was a means of communicating an already existing message to the audience. It happened *after* the thinking and meaning-making, if meaning was made at all. MFR allowed the participants to take already existing messages and texts, whether they were from the internet or from the lecture of a teacher, and re-present them in a manner they believed

was expected. This manner allowed them to get a “good grade.” They did not, however, transact with or transform the text or message at all. For this reason, MFR was simply a way to publish the final document. MFR publishing ranged from PowerPoint Presentations to the use of Microsoft Publisher for storybooks. This publication process was yet another means of communicating an already existing message which originally came from the internet, from a teacher, or in a few cases, from the meaning the writer made him or herself by first writing in a traditional print-based form.

“Real” writing involves making new meaning. “Writing” and “real writing” appeared to be two separate events for the participants of my study. I found that when adolescents were using MFR they sometimes felt that they were “writing.” This writing was synonymous with the communication described above. They “pulled together” information to complete the writing task. Many times the pieces of information gathered from various sources, such as the teacher or the internet, were simply placed next to each other in paragraph form. This constituted what Paige referred to as, “research, research, research.” No transaction or transformation was required for this type of “writing.” In other words, no new meaning was created, and my participants never expected to make new meaning. Instead, they were doing exactly what their teachers wanted, according to the participants. They were giving them the information they asked for and they were doing it in a polished, published manner, typing or presenting the text using a digital resource such as Microsoft Word or PowerPoint.

According to my three participants, “real writing” for school came in the genres of journals and reflections, where the participant was permitted to transact with their text. These were print-based and written traditionally by hand. When given the chance, then,

to incorporate personal background and interests, thus making a text with new meaning, the participants chose to write in a traditional, print-based manner. “Real writing” was accomplished with a pen and paper, while “writing or communicating, occurred when the text shifted to MFR.

The argument. Research tells us that even though it has been revealed that adolescents do not meet post-secondary expectations as writers, we know that students do engage in their world through writing (Faulkner, 2005; Williams, 2006). My own research concurs, and it leads to possible contributing factors of why adolescents do not meet these post-secondary needs. If students are not transacting and transforming text, then they are not “really” writing. They are instead simply publishing, presenting, or communicating information that already exists. When adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR it shifts from “writing” to “communication,” and it shifts from making new meaning (“real writing”) to simply presenting already existing meanings (“writing” or “communication”). What this means is that it becomes already existing information presented, as opposed to information that is new, meaningful, and unique. Whether this writing with MFR is a text to communicate a meeting time to a friend, or an academic essay written using Microsoft Word in a format prescribed by a teacher, the writing piece presents information which already exists. It does not create new meaning or knowledge.

Transaction and Transformation in Writing Processes

The current research in the fields of education, literacy, writing, digital literacies and literacies using MFR, and adolescents only begins to touch the surface of the

complex processes of writing and writing instruction. This vast body of research on writing tells us what our students need to know in order to be successful writers in a traditional, elementary classroom; however it often fails to apply these skills to adolescent writers in the 21st Century, to secondary level classrooms, and to the processes of writing itself. Numerous respected researchers such as Hidi and Boscolo (2006), Spandel (2005), Fletcher (1993), and Tolchinsky (2006) have begun the exploration of these writing processes. Their research regarding the isolated basic skills of the writing process, coupled with my own findings and application of Rosenblatt's (1978) and Kress's (2010) theories, gives new and substantial depth to the understanding of how adolescents write, and even more specifically, how adolescents write academically using traditional print-based writing and/or writing with MFR.

By connecting the processes of adolescent writing to The Readers Response Theory, and specifically transaction, of Rosenblatt (2005) I have offered educators and researchers a new dimension of the writing process to consider. Whether this consideration be for research purposes or for practical classroom applications, researchers and educators alike now have another component of a complex process to explore, and ultimately to teach. This depth of understanding for academic adolescent writing processes comes from my application of transaction and transformation. Transaction is a term that has long been associated with the reading process, not the writing process. The process of transaction has long described the meaning a reader makes when reading a text. I have applied this idea of transacting with a text when writing it, as opposed to reading it, as a way of making meaning and not simply reiterating already existing ideas. I have found that this specific component of reading which gives meaning to a text is also

a component of the writing process which gives meaning to a text. I have created a new approach to teaching writing through the use of my visual (seen below), and I have presented a way for writing instructors to help students consciously connect to their writing through transaction and transformation (also below).

My research has connected the processes of transaction and transformation to each other. My research has highlighted their connected place in the writing process as a whole, as well as the individual writing processes of print-based text and text written using MFR. This added dimension to writing education allows for a fresh perspective, a fresh understanding, and ultimately a fresh approach to teaching adolescent writers what it means to write, and the processes that this task entails.

Applying Rosenblatt's principle of transaction and Kress's principle of transformation to academic writing processes of adolescents in both print-based forms and forms with MFR gets researchers to think differently about writing processes. With added components in the process of composition, researchers can now consider how these components help students to succeed or allow students to fail in regard to academic writing assignments, standardized test writing prompts, and real writing experiences. The application also allows educators to teach differently. Transact and transform are not terms that writing instructors currently use in writing lessons. With these added components, students may be able to better understand how their own writing creates meaning, not simply how to follow a format and "plug in" information. They will better understand not only how to write, but also how writing may or may not vary from communication and publication.

Limitations of Findings

The findings of my qualitative study were not intended to, and do not, focus on the audience in the writing processes. When constructing my own research questions and developing the methodology for this study, my focus was on the processes of adolescent writing in multiple forms, putting the same onus on adolescent selection of genre and incorporation of background information, hence the focus on the theories of Kress (2010) and Rosenblatt (1978). I never anticipated that audience would prove to be more crucial than genre selection or background information of the writer, or that genre selection would be determined by the audience so profoundly, allowing preconceived notions of audience expectations to override actual audience expectations or wants. I simply strived to look at the part audience played in writing processes. Therefore, although audience was found to be immensely profound in the writing process, it was not a focal point of this study. I therefore provided less information about the topic than is available, leading to a limitation of this dissertation.

Another limitation which presents itself in the wake of educational reform is the notion of the “Common Core,” scheduled to be implemented in the country within the 2012-2013 school year. As explained by the Common Core (2011) themselves, “The Common Core (CCR) State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (“the Standards”) are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the charge issued by the states to create the next generation of K–12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school. The present work, led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National

Governors Association (NGA), builds on the foundation laid by states in their decades-long work on crafting high-quality education standards” (p. 1). These standards are divided by subject area and grades or bands. The CCR, “use two-year bands in grades 9–12 to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design” (*Common Core*, 4). While the CCR dictates skills to be taught in classrooms and benchmarks for students to meet, it does not acknowledge the difference between traditional writing and writing using MFR. In fact, it involves a testing component which includes a writing assignment to be completed completely on a computer. This is contradictory to my findings. More importantly, the CCR may serve as a limitation to the application of my findings in the classroom. If state testing demands that students be able to write with MFR, then where is the room to expose students to the process of print-based writing within this practice, or, even more generally, within a classroom focused on more test results? Based on my findings, the earliest stages of writing should be completed with traditional pen and paper, allowing for transaction, transformation, and, consequently, meaning-making to occur. Standardized writing testing done solely on a computer will not allow for such a practice.

Implications

Implications for practice. Writers have a complex task at hand, and consequently, so do writing educators who must try and instruct students in these complex, somewhat abstract, processes. Coker and Lewis (2008) explain that, “[w]hen reading a text, individuals form mental representations of words produced by others, usually outside of the immediate reading context. In contrast, writers not only have to

formulate their own thoughts, but also organize and transcribe those mental representations into words that can transcend time and place, a process that few people would describe as undemanding.” The following implications for practice may help assist writing instructors to teach their adolescent student writers. Topics include considering the role of the audience; considering the objective of the assignment as well as which mode will best meet this objective; considering whether writing instructors are asking students to write, communicate, or publish; teaching students that writing involves transaction and transformation; addressing the need to assist teachers in light of resistance to change writing instruction due to lack of knowledge; and addressing teacher assistance in lieu of the Common Core.

Considering the role of the audience. Whether the audience of a specific text be a teacher, a peer, or multiple, nameless faces on the internet, it is up to a writing instructor to educate his or her students about the influence of this audience. The audience plays a substantial part in the writing processes, regardless of whether the writing is print-based or with MFR. What this audience means to the writer indicates the content and genre of the text. This is a notion that may seem obvious to an educator, but may be a part of the writing processes that an adolescent writer may not have considered. Yes, adolescent writers define “audience,” but do they really reflect on how this audience will influence their text, in ways that they may not even consciously realize? As educators, we can teach our students to reflect on and consider the following questions before engaging in any writing process: Who is the audience of the assignment and how will this audience influence the final writing piece? What do they expect? What am I

willing to share with them? What genre is most appropriate to meet the needs of my audience?

Considering the objective of the assignment, and which mode will best meet this objective. Students may or may not know that a particular genre may better meet the needs of an audience or of an assignment in general. This is a skill they must be challenged to consider before being expected to transform a text. Three questions that students can be encouraged to consider are: Who is your audience? What do you want them to know? Can you tell them this in the best way possible using print-based text or text with MFR? Then, the teacher should ask him or herself the next question: If print-based or writing with MFR is best suited to meet the needs of the particular writer at this particular time with this particular goal, or objective, then which writing process needs to occur, and possibly be taught? Considering these questions together, the students(s) and teacher can begin to consider the objective of the assignment and which mode and genre will best meet this objective.

In addition, the teacher can influence the student's success in creating meaning by assigning particular types of genres that allow for more revision. In other words, if the objective of the writing assignment is practice in meaning-making, the allowance of revision is a point that needs consideration. For example, the teacher might consider requiring more traditional print-based writing in the brainstorming stages of a writing process since it was found that more meaning is made in this mode. However, more often than not teachers do not require print-based writing. They allow for writing with MFR in the final draft that is handed in, often never knowing if any brainstorming was done at all. Incorporating more traditional print-based writing practices and assignments in the

classroom will allow students to do more than simply repeat information back to the teacher.

Considering whether writing instructors are asking students to write, to communicate, or to publish. If a writing instructor is asking a student to write, then he or she is asking a student to transact with and transform a text in order to create a new meaning. That writing instructor is then expecting to receive an original text as a final draft. The teacher is also allowing the adolescent writer to not only consider personal beliefs and background information when writing, but to also choose a genre which he or she believes meets the needs of their audience and the needs of their assignment. Since the teacher is this audience, he or she needs to be clear about his or her expectations. And if he or she truly wants the adolescent writer to transact and transform, the teachers need to make sure that the adolescent writer is aware that teacher expectations deal with assignment topic only, not with genre or specific content details,

If a writing instructor plans to assign a writing piece using MFR, on the other hand, then this writing educator should understand that the adolescent writer may simply be communicating a message, and not transacting with and transforming the text in an effort to make new meaning. This writer may simply be re-stating information that the teacher had given to him or her at one time. To these students this is not writing and does not warrant the same thorough process. It is, instead, the communication of an already existing message.

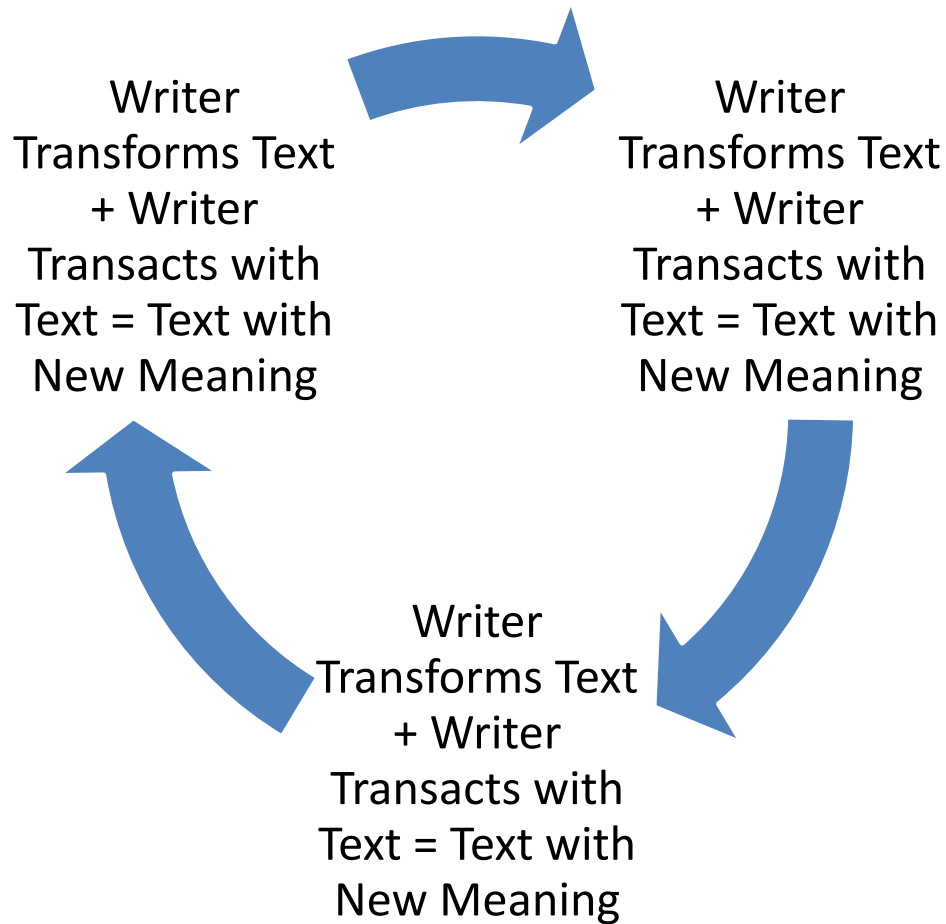
A writing instructor needs to be aware that a writing assignment may be perceived as a publication assignment by a student. Writing which utilizes MFR is often what occurs as a publishing process, not a meaning-making process. When a text was viewed

as a published piece or a message to be communicated, the concern of the writers in my study was aesthetics and formatting. This information implies that educators need to be aware, when planning, that before it is time to publish a text students would benefit from writing in a print-based fashion when composing. In other words, students should be encouraged to write in a traditional print-based manner through multiple revisions, until a clear message or new knowledge or meaning has been constructed. It would be most effective if students utilize MFR to publish a text only after traditional print-based writing has occurred in at least the brainstorming stage of writing.

Teaching students that writing involves transaction and transformation.

Writing involves constant transaction and transformation, heavily dependent upon the background (for transaction) and cultural knowledge and norms (for transformation) of each student. Is it, then, the role of the educator to expand either background knowledge or skill about cultural tools in order to assist students in making new knowledge through their written texts? Is the role of the teacher to make sure a student understands how he or she makes meaning through writing, and that transaction and transformation play a part in this process? If this is in fact the role of the educator, then how exactly can he or she accomplish such a task? I propose the use of my visual from Chapter 2, also seen below.

The Process of Transformation and Transaction



This flowchart can not only assist educators in understanding how their students create meaning through text, but it can also allow these students to understand their own writing processes. Moreover, it can serve as a guide for creating, or writing, an essay, blog, journal, research paper, response, etc. The guide may be used in the following way:

- 1) Teacher writes sample piece of text.

- 2) Teacher defines transformation; students come up with ways to transform sample piece of text as a whole group with teacher, determining which mode and genre will work best based on audience and purpose.
- 3) Teacher defines transaction; students come up with ways to transform sample piece of text as a whole group with teacher, giving special consideration to pertinent background knowledge and information of the writer. In this case the writer would be the teacher.
- 4) Teacher assigns students a writing piece, having a careful discussion with them about the audience and purpose of the text.
- 5) Students publish first draft of text.
- 6) Students individually transform text with teacher guidance as needed as part of the revision process.
- 7) Students individually transact with text, with teacher guidance as needed as part of the revision process.
- 8) Students publish second draft of text.
- 9) OPTIONAL: Students and teacher refer to chart after revision is complete. Student transforms and transacts with text once again as part of the revision process.

In this way, more meaningful writing is created with a clear purpose and a defined audience.

Addressing the need to assist teachers. Many educators may be resistant to change writing instruction due to lack of knowledge about traditional writing vs. writing using MFR, as well as a lack of knowledge about transaction and transformation. The

school districts can address the necessity of assisting educators by providing workshops, as well as time, for teachers to learn and apply these methods to their own lesson plans.

Addressing teacher assistance in lieu of the Common Core. The Common Core (2011) stresses the need for literacy education, including writing education, across all content areas. Teachers can be educated in using transaction and transformation to introduce the writing process in a way which can be applied to each content area. Transaction allows the teacher and student writers to rely upon their own knowledge bases and areas of expertise in order to make meaning in a text, while transformation acknowledges the various formats and multimodal ways of presenting information in each specific content area.

Implications for further research. My research data presented me with multiple surprises which this study was not prepared to address. These ideas included: 1) academic writing as a separate writing process and 2) the results of multiple perspectives. The fact that these unanticipated results emerged from my data and may allow for other areas of research to be examined further proves not just the success of my study, but also the significance of it.

Academic writing as a separate writing process. Academic writing was perceived by my participants as a separate process, falling somewhere between “real” writing and communication. It is a process of “putting together” the pieces. These pieces are often either 1) ideas taken from internet resources and/or 2) formats prescribed by a specific teacher. The ideas taken from the internet are not perceived as “plagiarized” by these students, although the taking of information and using it as one’s own is the definition of plagiarism. In regard to filling the prescribed formats given by teachers, the

students do not seem to perceive this as a limitation to their ability to make meaning; they instead look at it as an efficient way of meeting the requirements of a specific assignment. These observations can lead to further research inquiries including: Why is academic writing perceived as separate from other types of writing? What does the process of academic writing look like? Does plagiarism have a new definition in the wake of current technology, and if so, what does it look like? Is using a teacher-prescribed writing format as effective for learning as using a self-selected writing format?

Multiple perspectives. This research study was comprised of only three adolescent writers. When looking at a larger number of adolescent writers, or a larger number of case studies, it is safe to assume that the results may not be the same. A larger and more varied pool of participants, including those who do not necessarily meet my own list of criteria, have the possibility of deviating from the findings of this particular study. The following questions could then be considered: How do a larger number of adolescent participants make meaning in different contexts and forms, and are these contexts and forms chosen for specific purposes? How do the case studies differ, and why?

Conclusion

I agree with researchers such as Albers (2006) and Ranker (2008) who state that if students are going to be active citizens of the world, they need to be able to tell their own stories and communicate their own messages using writing, visuals, technology, and other varying modes. They need to be proficient in both traditional print-based literacy practices and modes, and literacy practices and modes with MFR. Moreover, they often

need to be proficient in them simultaneously. Based on my own research, I dare to add that adolescent writers need to be aware of the various processes associated with writing, especially in a culture involving both print-based writing and writing with MFR. Adolescent writers need to understand that through the processes of transaction and transformation, they can create new knowledge with their texts. It is the educators' responsibilities to teach them how to write in both contexts and how to recognize the best context of writing for a specific purpose, genre, and audience.

Today, literacy is more than simple reading or writing; today being literate involves reading and writing in multiple contexts. As this research study has proven, being a literate adolescent writer today, among other things, involves: functioning and writing in a world where writing comes in many shapes and sizes; functioning and writing in a world where many various audiences with various needs and expectations exist; functioning and writing in a world where writing is not always considered "writing"; and functioning and writing in a world where there is a separate process for making meaning when writing in either a traditional print-based context or a context with MFR.

Appendix A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview 1

Date:

Start time:

End time:

Purpose: To explore the following research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR?

Description of Interviewee:

Interview Setting:

Introduction: Today we are going to talk about the types of writing you do on pen and paper, and the types of writing you do online and digitally. We are also going to focus on the process of writing in both ways.

Interview Questions:

- 1) What kinds of writing do you do?
- 2) When I say "writing with a pen and paper", what comes to mind?
 - What types of writing?
 - In what setting?
 - How do you go about the process of writing like this?
- 3) What is your experience with digital writing like blogging, texting, and tweeting?

- How long have you used it?
 - What do you use it for?
- 4) Where are your favorite places to write digitally? For example, where do you go online?
- What sites have you visited in order to write?
 - What medium do you use to write on them? In other words, what type of short hand or vocabulary do you use and what do you do to express yourself?
- 5) Can you think of the last thing you wrote for yourself?
- Was it by hand or on the computer?
 - What is your process for writing for yourself? Why?
 - What is the length?
 - What do you include? (ex: words, pictures, audio clips, diagrams, etc)
- 6) What is your process for completing writing assignments for school?
- Can you explain one writing assignment you recently completed for school?
 - What was your process, or plan, for completing it?

Reflection on Interview:

Interview 2

Date:

Start time:

End time:

Purpose: To explore the following research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? How does audience mediate content and design?

Description of Interviewee:

Interview Setting:

Introduction: Today we are going to talk more about the differences between the writing you do with a pen and paper and the writing you do online, or digitally. We are going to also focus on the audience of your writing.

Interview Questions:

- 1) What do you consider personal writing?
 - What do you write about?
 - What modes, or types of communication, do you use to get your point across? (Ex: words, pictures, audio, layout, etc)
 - Do you write this on a computer, on a phone, with pen and paper, or other ways?
 - Who is your audience?
- 2) What do you consider interpersonal writing?

- What do you write about?
 - What modes, or types of communication, do you use to get your point across? (Ex: words, pictures, audio, layout, etc)
 - Do you write this on a computer, on a phone, with pen and paper, or other ways?
 - Who is your audience?
- 3) What do you consider school writing?
- What do you write about?
 - What modes, or types of communication, do you use to get your point across? (Ex: words, pictures, audio, layout, etc)
 - Do you write this on a computer, on a phone, with pen and paper, or other ways?
 - Who is your audience?
- 4) Which type of writing is more important to you? School , personal, or interpersonal?
- Why?
- 5) What makes it more meaningful to you?
- Why?
- 6) How do you express your ideas by writing with a pen and paper? In other words, what is the process?
- 7) How do you express your ideas writing in other ways? For example, online, text messages, using pictures, etc. In other words, what is the process?

Reflection on Interview:

Interview 3

Date:

Start time:

End time:

Purposes: 1) To explore the following research questions: What happens when adolescent writing shifts from print-based academic writing to academic writing with MFR? What are the processes involved in composing academic print-based writing texts, and what are the processes involved in composing texts with MFR? How does audience mediate content and design? 2) To discuss details of this research study.

Description of Interviewee:

Interview Setting:

Introduction: Today we are going to talk about one or more of your recent writing assignments for school, and a little about how I will be writing up my research.

Interview Questions:

1) Can you describe a recent writing assignment that you completed for school?

Perhaps can you recall your favorite or least favorite assignment?

2) What did you like about: the assignment itself?

3) What did you like about the directions given by the teacher?

4) How would you have changed the assignment if you were able to do so? For example, would the process you had to take to complete it be different? Would the final product be different?

- 5) Who did you write this assignment for? In other words, who do you feel was your audience? Did this affect the way you wrote it?
- 6) Would you like to talk about another writing assignment? (If so, then ask questions 1-3 again)
- 7) For the purposes of the final written report of my research, what pseudonym would you like to be called? Can you pick a name that reminds you of writing, or which relates to writing? Why did you choose this name?
- 8) For the purposes of the final written report of my research, what pseudonym should be given to your school? Can you pick a name that reminds you of writing, or which relates to how writing is viewed or used in your school? Why did you choose this name?

Reflection on Interview:

Appendix B: NARRATIVE PROTOCOL

Narrative Assignment

Date Assigned:

Directions to the Participant: Your job is to write a personal narrative, but not just any personal narrative! I want to know the story of how you have become a writer. You have a whole week to finish this, so that means I need to have it by:

DATE _____

You can choose to either:

1) Write your narrative in a traditional, spiral bound notebook using a pen, markers, stickers, colored paper, crayons...anything! I will give you the notebook and any supplies you request.

OR

2) Write your narrative on a wiki at wikispaces.com. I will show you how to set this up and you can use any means/mode to tell your story this way too: music clips, pictures, links, etc.

Your narrative may be any length, but please be sure to include the following in your story. You do not need to answer these in a specific order; they just need to be a part of your story:

- Why did you choose to write this narrative in a notebook or on a wiki?

- When is the first time you remember writing, EVER? Can you describe it?
Why were you writing it?
- When is the first time you remember writing for school? Can you describe what you were writing and why?
- When is the first time you remember writing on a computer?
- Can you tell me a specific story or two about times when writing something, whether it was for school or for personal reasons (like a letter to a friend) really affected you? How and why do you think it affected you?
- Describe yourself as a writer TODAY--what do you write? who do you write to? what types of writing do you do on a daily basis? (school assignments, notes, writing down your homework, texting, lists, FB, etc all count!)
- Do you see yourself writing as an adult? How?

Finally, remember that this is a story! Have fun telling it and don't worry about format or formal writing--just pretend you are talking to a friend about writing and above all, make it YOU!

Reflection on Narrative:

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