

8-2016

# Designing Place-sensitive Professional Development: A Critical Ethnography of Teaching and Learning Argumentative Writing

Sarah N. Holland

*University of Arkansas, Fayetteville*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Rhetoric Commons](#), and the [Secondary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Holland, Sarah N., "Designing Place-sensitive Professional Development: A Critical Ethnography of Teaching and Learning Argumentative Writing" (2016). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1724.  
<http://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/1724>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact [scholar@uark.edu](mailto:scholar@uark.edu), [ccmiddle@uark.edu](mailto:ccmiddle@uark.edu).

Designing Place-sensitive Professional Development: A Critical Ethnography of Teaching and Learning Argumentative Writing

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in English

by

Sarah N. Holland  
Middlebury College  
Bachelor of Arts in International Studies, 2004  
University of Arkansas  
Master of Arts in English, 2012

August 2016  
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

---

Dr. Elias Dominguez Barajas  
Dissertation Director

---

Dr. Sean Connors  
Committee Member

---

Dr. David Jolliffe  
Committee Member

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the experiences of teachers participating in a two-year professional development program designed by the National Writing Project and funded by a U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) grant. Informed by New Literacy Studies' ideological model of literacy as a social practice and rural literacies' notion of pedagogies of sustainability, this study employs critical ethnography and discourse analysis to analyze the discourse of teachers participating in the College-Ready Writers Program (CRWP) in order to understand how professional development might be adjusted to re-empower teachers. Data sources included field notes, interviews, lesson plans, student writing samples, and reflective vignettes, collected between March of 2013 and January of 2016. Data were analyzed in order to examine how teachers' identities and epistemologies of literacy influenced their resistance or appropriation of the argumentative writing practices targeted by the CRWP professional development series.

Analysis resulted in the identification of three essential themes in the discourse: (1) participating teachers who identified as writers and believed in their own instructional efficacy were more likely to successfully integrate argumentative writing into their curricula than teachers who did not identify readily as writers or had a generally low sense of instructional efficacy; (2) teachers who identified themselves as agents of change articulated and acted on beliefs in the expectancy-value theory, resulting in higher goals and higher expectations for students' writing; and (3) for English language arts teachers working from epistemologies of literacy shaped by the understanding of literacy as a state of grace, the argumentative writing focus of the CRWP was outside of their disciplinary content area, a positioning that made integration challenging. These findings provide supporting evidence for the argument that professional development should

invest in teachers' empowerment through the exploration of their identities and epistemologies as a foundational step in the professional learning process.

## **Acknowledgements**

As a first generation college graduate, I have so many people to thank for fueling my trajectory into academia and helping me to complete this chapter of my professional life. To my Upward Bound family – Christina Abreo, Rickey Booker, Keith Brink, Francesca D’Agrosa, Gina Ervin, Evelyn Fuller, Don Nix, Shauna Sterling, Bryan Winzer, Leslie Yingling, and the late Maureen Hoover – thank you for your roles as peers and as mentors as I bushwhacked my way through high school, college, and the first few years of my professional life. Your impact on me as a student, educator, and human being runs deep.

I am grateful for Nadine and Scott Barnicle – my surrogate family during my years far away from home at Middlebury College – who lent me their children to snuggle and supported me in ways that made me feel like I belonged in a community where I could have easily felt like an outsider. Thank you also to the wonderful friends I made there who continue to influence and inspire me, even from afar.

Over the course of this dissertation project, I have benefitted from the insights and kindnesses of teachers and students across Northwest Arkansas, and I am eternally grateful for their time and generosity of spirit. The project was a pleasure, and I have my teaching colleagues and our students to thank for that.

Rachel Bear, and Linda Dendstaedt, and Beth Rimer, thank you for your work with the College-Ready Writers Project, particularly for the community you helped to create. Tom Fox, thank you in particular for those long phone conversations that helped me to digest and respond to the complex work in which we were engaged.

Thank you as well to Elias Dominguez Barajas, Sean Connors, and David Joliffe, all of whom have been instrumental to my doctoral studies. Dr. Joliffe, thank you for ushering me into

the world of literacy studies, first as a student, and later as director of Razorback Writers. Your confidence in me gave me the courage to apply for the doctoral program, and your work to serve underserved students provides a powerful example of what literacy can do to improve lives. Dr. Connors, thank you for modeling for me and other pre-service and in-service teachers what excellent teaching looks like, and thank you for spending a semester working alongside me in this project. The conversations we had on those long drives out to our site sewed the seeds for this dissertation.

Dr. Dominguez, I had no idea how much I would be asking of you when I asked you to direct my dissertation, and if you did, then thank you even more for agreeing to do so. I am so grateful for the time that you've taken to guide me into the field and specifically for the care you've taken to respond to every question and every draft. You have challenged me and guided me, and I have learned a tremendous amount from you about what it takes to be a professional in this field. Thank you for dedicating the time to do this with me.

Thank you Chris Goering, for encouraging me to pursue this degree and for intervening when I felt I couldn't finish it. Thank you for trusting me to work along side you and to direct the College-Ready Writers Program. Thank you for your mentorship, your music, your sense of humor, your dedication to improving education, and – most of all – your friendship.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my mom, for making me homework before I ever had any and for encouraging me to lug out half the library every time we visited; my dad and Becca for pure love and support in everything I do; my partner, Justin, for taking on way more than his fair share of bed times (and so much more!) to make it possible for me to moonlight a dissertation; and finally, my girls – Blue, Nora, and June – whose collective presence brings meaning and light to all corners of my life.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Research Questions and Outline .....	2
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Methodology.....	8
Purpose and Significance.....	10
Chapter 1: The National Writing Project model, professional development, and the teaching of argumentative writing .....	12
National Writing Project.....	12
Professional Development, Empowerment, and Changing Practice .....	39
Teaching Argumentative Writing .....	43
Chapter 2: Methods and Vignettes.....	62
Research Site and Participants .....	65
Data Collection .....	67
Data Analysis Protocols.....	71
Researcher Reflexivity.....	72
Participant Profiles.....	74
Chapter 3: Identity, Politics, and Pedagogical Implications .....	106
Identity .....	108
Literacy as a Social Good .....	140
Pedagogical Implications for Argumentative Writing.....	150
Chapter 4: Carol, a Telling Case.....	156

Examining a Unit Plan: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer .....	161
Concerns about Argumentative Writing.....	167
Carol’s Reflections.....	170
Chapter 5: Results and Implications .....	175
Promising Results – National & Local Level .....	175
Proposed Adjustments .....	180
Conclusion .....	189
References.....	191
Appendix A: CRWP “Why Argument Writing” Flyer.....	200
Appendix B: Interview Protocol, May 2013.....	201
Appendix C: Full “Rikki Tikki Tavi” Mini-unit Plan.....	202
Appendix D: Analytic Writing Continuum for Source-Based Argument Scoring Attributes ....	205
Appendix E: Student Writing Samples, Mid-year Partnership Meetings 2014, 2015 .....	206
Appendix F: Using Sources Tool Results – November 2014, January 2015.....	210
Appendix G: Student Writing Samples, Extended Researched Arguments .....	214
Appendix H: IRB Approval.....	222



## Introduction

By the time students graduate from high school, they are expected to be effective writers; yet, the multiplicity of understandings we have of what comprises “effective” is staggering. Even among English language arts teachers, to whom the enterprise of “teaching students to write” is most commonly and regularly delegated, there is little consensus. Moreover, writing, as Applebee and Langer (2013) argue in *Writing Instruction that Works*, perhaps more than other school subjects, lacks “a widely accepted framework for discussing what students should know and be able to do” (p.8). Thus, providing professional support to teachers to improve the teaching of writing is complex, as stakeholders can hold a variety of positions regarding priorities and pedagogies of literacy instruction.

In 2012, the National Writing Project (NWP) received a validation grant through the Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund<sup>1</sup> to “improve middle and high school teachers’ practice in the teaching of analytic, informational, and argumentative writing related to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)” by offering rural teachers “learning opportunities that are distinctly place-sensitive” (Gallagher & Woodworth, 2013). The original grant narrative lists four strategies the CRWP would implement to improve the teaching of academic writing:

- increase the amount of time spent on writing instruction and the number of extended writing assignments;
- increase the use of research-based instructional strategies;

---

<sup>1</sup> Established under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the i3 program provides competitive grants to applicants with a record of improving student achievement and attainment. The purpose of the i3 is to invest in innovative practices that are demonstrated to have an impact on “improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, or increasing college enrollment and completion rates” (“Investing in innovation fund (i3)”).

- increase the use of writing to learn strategies as well as the number of more extended assignments involving analyzing and using evidence across the disciplines; and
- improve the quality of writing assignments, increasing their alignment with college and career-ready standards. (Gallagher & Woodworth, 2013)

To enact these strategies, professional development for teams of teachers participating in the grant work would focus on the types of writing outlined in the CCSS (Gallagher & Woodworth, 2013). After the first year of the program – during which several grantees struggled to move teachers beyond narrative and creative writing – the focus of the work narrowed from “analytic, informational, and argument writing” to source-based argumentative writing. Though grantees were not told why the focus was slightly tightened, one can imagine that the challenges of implementing and assessing a large-scale national program with a high degree of fidelity would be eased slightly by focusing sites on a more specific and tangible piece of the puzzle.

### **Research Questions and Outline**

This study explores the following questions, dedicated to understanding the impact of professional development targeting the improved teaching of argumentative writing on teachers’ practice:

- 1) How do teachers’ identities and epistemologies of literacy influence what and how they approach instruction in argumentative writing?
- 2) How do teachers’ identities and epistemologies of literacy influence their resistance or appropriation of professional development?
  - a. For English language arts teachers who privilege personal narratives, how is argumentative writing perceived and integrated into the curriculum?

- 3) What implications do teachers' experiences with the CRWP have on designing professional learning opportunities to support and improve the teaching of writing?

In order to begin addressing those major concerns, Chapter One presents a review of the relevant literature, beginning by examining research on the National Writing Project model, with particular attention to research on inservice programs. I then consider prior research on teacher change, focusing on qualities of professional development that lead to changes in practice. I conclude the literature review by exploring research on the teaching of writing, specifically argumentative writing. This chapter reviews the literature in these three diverse fields, as this study exists at an intersection: while the research related to the design and efficacy of professional development offers perspective on the CRWP as a professional development program for inservice teachers, the research on teaching argumentative writing provides a perspective regarding the specific content focus of the program. Understanding both angles is critical for this study, as teachers' experiences with professional development are influenced both by the way that their identities are engaged as well as by how their epistemologies of literacy relate to the disciplinary approach taken through the PD.

In Chapters Two, Three, and Four consider how teachers' epistemologies of literacy impact their experiences with the CRWP. Chapter Two is devoted to the dual tasks of presenting my methods and presenting vignettes for the seven participants whose data are analyzed in Chapter Three. These vignettes play an important role in the study, as they enact the ethnography, helping the readers to connect to the individuals who comprise the participant base of the CRWP, a critical component of the work because of the concern with how individuals respond to a large-scale, national program. In Chapter Three, I present my analysis of teachers'

discourse about local literacy practices, through which I identify patterns in the epistemologies of participants in several key areas and consider how teachers' identities and epistemologies of literacy impact their resistance or appropriation of source-based argumentative writing as promoted by the CRWP. In Chapter Four, I explore a telling case of one participant who struggled to implement argumentative writing through the CRWP in order to understand what kept some teachers from being willing or able to integrate source-based argumentative writing into their classrooms.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I build on the literature reviews and analysis to discuss several ways in which professional development in writing might operate as a sustaining, mediating mechanism, both, to nurture relationships between school and community and to support teachers' reconciliation of the competing ideologies vying for space in their classrooms. Chapter Five moves beyond description to consider what the study implies for future design of professional learning opportunities.

## **Theoretical Framework**

I frame this study within a New Literacy Studies (NLS) paradigm, a theoretical framework representing a change in perspective regarding the nature of literacy from cognitive to social. Focusing less on the acquisition of skills and more on what it means to think of literacy as a social practice, NLS strives for a broader understanding of literacy practices as they create and are created in their social and cultural contexts (J. P. Gee, 2010; Street, 2003). More specifically, Street explains that NLS operates within the model of literacy as “ideological” rather than the traditional model of literacy as “autonomous.” Within the “autonomous” model of literacy, the assumption is that literacy on its own – autonomously – will lead to positive

economic and social change while the “ideological” model of literacy recognizes that literacy is a social practice that is “always embedded in socially constructed epistemological practices” (Street, 2003, p. 77).

Of specific interest to this project is the perspective that New Literacy Studies offers in regards to understanding that reading and writing are always contested, always rooted in ideologies representing specific world views (Gee, 2015, p.65). In NLS, literacy is always a social act, beginning with the ways that teachers and students interact with one another (Street, 2003, p. 78). NLS also problematizes the notion of what counts as literacy by asking whose and what literacies are dominant and whose and what literacies are marginalized (Street, 2003, p.77).

This study is also informed by rural literacies and the related notion of pedagogies of sustainability. Easily situated within New Literacy Studies, rural literacies offers a more focused lens on the specific relationship between literacy sponsors such as the CRWP and rural communities and makes space for examining tensions between these groups as rooted in different epistemologies of literacy. Promoted, for example, by Donehower, Hogg, and Schell in *Rural Literacies*, pedagogies of sustainability are presented as an alternative to the more pervasive rhetorics of rural literacies: rhetorics of modernization, preservation, or abandonment. Rather than stemming from a rhetoric of lack regarding rural literacies, as these three rhetorics do, a rhetoric or pedagogy of sustainability positions literacy to “both fit the local context and serve to reconfigure the local context, helping the society to adapt and grow instead of remaining static or completely losing its sense of local identity” (Donehower, Hogg, and Schell, 2007, p. 69). Just as rural students deserve a literacy education informed by pedagogies of sustainability that can help them articulate and respond to the contemporary issues of their communities, so do rural teachers need the same empowerment in their teaching communities.

In 2007, Theodore Coladarci, outgoing editor of the *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, published a piece addressing the shortcomings in rural education research and strategies for addressing those weaknesses. In the piece, he calls on researchers to describe the context of the research in sufficient detail so as to identify, specifically, what characterizes a study and community as rural. Coladarci also argues that researchers should not offer conclusions about rural education merely based on the fact that the research takes place in a rural school or community (p .2). Instead, researchers must, he writes, “establish warrants, or compelling justifications for the rural-related conclusions they provide” (p. 3). As a critical ethnography, this study offers a rich description of the rural context of the work both through demographic details (as discussed in Chapter Two) as well as through the discourse of teachers who live and teach in the community, discourse that, at times, specifically addresses the rural dimensions of their work.

For the NWP, the motives for rural research are twofold: First, the project is a pragmatic response to funding priorities presented by the U.S. Department of Education’s Race to the Top program, as two of the five absolute priorities focus on rural districts specifically. In addition, the CRWP was designed to address educational inequalities in rural communities. The grant narrative, for example, cites The Rural School and Community Trust (2012), which identified six of the CRWP states as having the highest level of priority for attention to improving education, reporting that NAEP reading scores for rural students, for example, fall well below the national average (Gallagher & Woodworth, 2013). In addition, the narrative points out that only 17 percent of rural adults age twenty-five and older have a college degree, which is half the percentage of urban adults (p.2). Because of this concern with educational inequalities, the

NWP's motive would likely be characterized as rural justice, a motive described by Howley, Howley, and Yahn (2014), that prioritizes ethical issues.

Embedded within the NWP's College-Ready Writers Program, this dissertation should also be characterized as motivated by rural justice, as the goal of making space for the voices of teachers working in the rural districts served by our local CRWP is what brands the study as critical ethnography. Teachers in rural districts struggle to overcome isolation and lack of professional support (Morrison, 2013; Wilson, Ringstaff, & Carr, 2010; Jean-Marie & Moore, 2004). For example, several teachers in our local project comprised English departments on their own. Teachers served by our local CRWP were working in a district without curriculum coordinators, literacy coaches, or any specific instructional support. In addition, not only do teachers in rural districts often miss out on participating in opportunities such as online courses or conferences, but even when they do, presentations are rarely customized to address the needs of teachers and students in rural districts. Because of this, for research delving into the experience of teachers as they make their way through a program of professional development, the consideration of experiences within the frame of rurality becomes a critical move.

This study builds on the New Literacy Studies' position regarding literacy as both an ideological and political phenomenon, and on the view of rural literacies that considers reading and writing as social actions that support and sustain communities, to claim that CRWP participants' feelings of self-efficacy and epistemologies of literacy greatly influenced the degree to which they were able to bring—and remained interested in bringing—work from the CRWP in argumentative writing into their classrooms. This understanding, I argue, has important implications for the content and structures of professional development for educators both within and beyond the College-Ready Writers Program.

## **Methodology**

**Critical ethnography and discourse analysis.** In this project, I employ critical ethnographic discourse analysis as my primary methodology. In order to compose a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the experience of participating teachers in the College-Ready Writers Program, this project integrates work in critical ethnographic and discourse analytical approaches. This dissertation takes up an explicitly ethnographic approach to discourse for two main reasons. First, ethnographic discourse analysis allows for the creation of a constellation of data about participants in order to locate them in their interpersonal, classroom, and community contexts, a move that is particularly important for a project concerned with context as this project is. Second, ethnography also enables observation of both what is said by social actors as well as what is done within a particular socio-cultural context, thus providing a means for exploring the alignments and frictions between teachers’ speech and practice. By including participants’ words, as well as their silences, their laughter, their actions, and the context in which they live and teach, I seek to clarify the epistemes (Foucault, 1972, p.191) organizing the social space of their classrooms and the professional learning environment that constructed and was constructed by our shared experience with the College-Ready Writers Program. While embedded in conventional ethnography, this study is characterized as “critical” because it moves beyond description in order to consider what could be. To make sense of the observations made through the analysis of participating teachers’ discourse, this study looks at what rural teachers’ experiences with professional development in our local CRWP reflect about broader structures of power in education. By aiming to understand the “meanings of meanings” (Thomas, 1993), this study steps into the realm of critical ethnography. For this dissertation, critical ethnography and



discourse analysis provide a methodology for identifying and understanding the tactics (Bourdieu, 1977) that teachers employ as navigate the terrain of professional development.

As a theoretical and methodological perspective on situated practices, ethnography is particularly useful for examining the production of discourse. In this dissertation, the close analysis of teachers' discursive practices around the topic of literacy provides insights into the way that teachers' identities and epistemologies impact how and to what extent teachers integrate argumentative writing practices from the CRWP into their own classrooms.

**Epistemology.** Ingrained in the landscapes of ethnography is the concept of "epistemology," a concept of central significance in this dissertation. Drawing from Foucault's (1972, p. 191) description of "episteme" as "the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems," I use "epistemology" to comprise the body of ideas that shape the perception of knowledge.

In their recent research in the teaching of argumentative writing, Newell, VanDerHeide, Wynhoff Olsen, and the Argumentative Writing Project research team at The Ohio State University employ the term "argumentative epistemology," which they define as "a constellation of beliefs about argumentative writing, beliefs about learning such writing, ways of talking about argumentation, and the sorts of approaches to teaching and assessment that are likely to be associated with these beliefs" (2014, p. 97). This dissertation builds on their use of this term, as it provides a foundation for thinking about how teachers' discourse is constructed and constructs beliefs about writing.

This study differs, however, from Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen's in that, rather than selecting teachers who have been identified as strong teachers of argument, as they

do, this study considers how teachers with less experience with and enthusiasm for argumentative writing, who are mandated participants in a professional development program targeting argumentative writing, make choices about which practices to incorporate into their classrooms. Thus, while my understanding of “epistemology” is in line with Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen’s explanation as “beliefs about how knowledge is constructed,” I apply the term more broadly within the context of literacy. By “epistemology of literacy,” I intend to indicate a constellation of beliefs teachers hold about literacy, beliefs about the purpose of teaching literacy in the classroom, ways of talking about literacy, and the approaches to assessment and teaching that tend to be associated with these beliefs.

### **Purpose and Significance**

The study explores one specific instance of long-term professional development in writing in order to distill the lessons learned and more deliberately create conditions in which changes in understandings and practices related to the teaching of writing might occur. The research has important implications for professional development, for teachers of writing, and for theory.

First, the project contributes to the continuing development and implementation of the College-Ready Writers Program. In October of 2015, the National Writing Project was awarded an extra \$5.5 million from the federal government to expand the College-Ready Writers Program to additional school districts throughout the United States (National Writing Project, 2015). By the spring of 2016, new grants had been awarded to local Writing Project sites around the country. The i3 (CRWP) leadership team, local site directors, and teacher consultants involved in

these continued efforts could benefit from considering the findings and mediating strategies offered in the final chapter.

A second contribution of this project is to more completely describe the role of teachers' epistemologies of literacy on the integration of practices related to the teaching of writing. A researched understanding of the role of teachers' epistemologies on changing practice can help creators and providers of professional development to design professional learning experiences that are genuinely place sensitive and have the capacity to function as mediating structures teachers can use to balance between their own epistemological orientations and the myriad responsibilities and mandates that make their way into the classroom.

Finally, this study has the potential to advance theoretical understandings of the interplay between professional development, teacher change, epistemologies of literacy, and rural literacies, uniting strands of theory in different fields which, to date, have not been in sustained conversation with one another. As a critical ethnography, the purpose of this dissertation is to present teachers' voices as a means of empowerment, and in doing so, contribute to changing the culture of professional learning for educators.

## **Chapter 1: The National Writing Project model, professional development, and the teaching of argumentative writing**

The National Writing Project (NWP) has been a source of professional support for writing teachers for the past forty years. Its well-known model of professional development has established norms and practices that constitute the culture of the organization and has influenced generations of teachers. This chapter examines notions of effective professional development, focusing first on the characteristics of “effective” programs as defined and circulated by the National Writing Project through the Model at Work, a resource designed to capture the thinking of local sites of the NWP in the construction and delivery of professional development programs. The chapter also examines a series of studies central to the professional conversation on teacher change in response to professional development. Finally, I explore the literature on the teaching of argumentative writing. While the study’s findings are applicable to professional development in other disciplines, the specific context of primarily English language arts teachers working within a program targeting argumentative writing is important in what it implies about supporting teachers as they navigate less familiar instructional terrain.

### **National Writing Project**

*“Culture is simply the ensemble of stories we tell ourselves about ourselves.”*  
*Clifford Geertz*

In 2012, the National Writing Project – by many accounts the most successful teacher network in the United States – was awarded \$14.9 million by the federal government’s Investing in Innovation (i3) grant program to work with 40 rural districts across eight states to provide professional development to writing teachers in order to improve the teaching of analytic writing, improve student performance, and increase the number of teacher leaders in rural communities.

However, this award came directly on the heels of a March 2011 bill rescinding all federal funding for the project. Founded in 1974 and funded by the federal government for 20 years, from 1991 to 2011, the NWP entered into the College-Ready Writers Program (CRWP) in an entirely different educational climate than when the organization began as a summer institute in Berkeley, CA. To understand the climate surrounding the design and implementation of the CRWP, it is important to get a sense of the origins of the NWP model and the organization's now forty-two-year history.

In the summer of 1974, twenty-nine high achieving teachers and faculty members from the San Francisco Bay Area came together to spend five weeks sharing research and practice related to the teaching of writing. The Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP), as founded by James Gray, came about in direct response to two needs. First, Gray, a professor of English education, noticed through his supervision of new teachers that the successful teachers he knew in the schools he was visiting were doing inspiring work, but their work was happening “behind the closed doors of their classrooms” (Gray, 2000). He yearned for a structure that would support those teachers' sharing of the theory and strategy of their best work with one another and with the beginning teachers whom Gray was supervising. Second, in the fall of 1973, months before the first official events of the BAWP, *Time Magazine* reported that, judging on the basis of their writing, more than fifty percent of the incoming freshmen students to the UC Berkeley campus would need to be enrolled in remediation (Gray, 2000). Thus, the BAWP was established to address concerns in student performance in writing and, equally, to create a space where teachers could share research and best practices with one another.

Within 2 years of this first Invitational Summer Institute (ISI), the BAWP model had already spread to 14 additional sites in six states, and the National Writing Project had begun.

Now, with a network of nearly 200 national sites and a budding web of international sites, the NWP is one of the most well-known professional development organizations in the country, serving thousands of teachers each year. And while the NWP prides itself on its stance that there is no one “best” approach to teaching writing, there remain some common structures and beliefs shared by NWP sites.

**Defining the model.** First, NWP sites function as university / public school partnerships, directed primarily by professors of English or English education and co-directed by classroom teachers (Gray, 2000; Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Pritchard & Marshall, 1994). This setup still speaks to Gray’s original interest in creating and maintaining dialogue between k-12 teachers and college and university faculty.

Second, most NWP sites host a five-week Invitational Summer Institute (Gray, 2000; Bratcher & Stroble, 1994) for teachers, traditionally those who have been identified as “distinguished local teachers of writing” (Watson, 1981). Participants in the ISI tend to engage in several common practices across sites: teachers (1) present model workshops to demonstrate effective teaching strategies and practice for subsequent school year inservice demonstrations; (2) they participate in response groups where they read and talk about each other’s writing; (3) they read and respond to professional literature, and (4) they write (Gray, 2000).

NWP sites also offer continuity programs to support participating teachers’ continued training and development (Gray, 2000; Bratcher & Stroble, 1994). Typical activities include advanced professional learning workshops, writing groups, writing retreats, and writing marathons. In continuity programs, teachers frequently oscillate between their concerns as teachers and their concerns as writers with many programs making space for both identities, a central feature of NWP professional learning communities.

Finally, most NWP sites also provide in-school inservice programs (Gray, 2000; Bratcher & Stroble, 1994). These inservice programs are typically presented by teacher consultants (the name for teachers who have completed an ISI), and have mostly evolved from single workshops to long-term inservice programs conducted over the course of several months or years.

Through these common components—k-12 / university partnerships, summer institutes, continuity programs, and in-school inservice—several shared values can be framed in terms of the way they approach teacher identity. The central identities nurtured and maintained by the NWP include the following: teacher as *writer*, teacher as *professional*, and teacher as *change agent*.

***Teacher as writer.*** First and foremost, the NWP promotes the idea that writing teachers must themselves be writers (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013; Whitney, 2008, 2009; Singer & Scollay, 2006; Gray, 2000; Gillespie 1991; Watson, 1981; Couillard, 1981). In “*The National Writing Project after 22 years*”, Smith (1996) writes that “to engage in the discipline makes the difference between seeing it from the outside and knowing it in the bones.” Not only does this make teachers more competent as writers, but it also helps them, as Bratcher and Stroble (1994) argue, to become more comfortable and confident. They explain, “...because our teachers often share their students’ trait – a lack of comfort and confidence in the teaching of writing and in their own writing – these words also shaped our concepts for thinking about how to move the Project teachers to greater competence in the teaching of writing.” The NWP model supports the idea of teachers wearing two hats – that of writer and that of teacher – and these values are evident in the activities and tone of the summer institutes in particular.

In addition to promoting the idea that writing teachers must themselves be writers, the NWP model and institute practice emphasize that writing is rhetorically based communication

with a real audience and that writing is a recursive process comprising the acts of prewriting, writing, and revision (Smith, 1996; Hairston, 1982). During institutes, participants are encouraged to focus on determining why the communication occurs before deciding on its form, and participants typically have the opportunity to focus on writing for different audiences and purposes (Couillard, 1981).

In many ways, the original BAWP and subsequently-founded NWP network fit logically within the larger scope of the field of composition. Often linked to the social and educational changes of the 1960s, the writing process movement had emerged, with scholars like Janet Emig (1971) and Maxine Hairston (1982) publishing research aimed at studying students' writing processes. This research differed significantly from that which came before it, as the focus moved from the analysis of the final written product into the composition process itself. The NWP's value of teacher *as writer* emerged from this sense that it would be necessary for teachers themselves to be writers who had experience with the writing process so that they would have the understanding and language of how writing was composed in order to pass those understandings along to their students.

***Teacher as professional.*** Second, the NWP model of professional development positions teachers as the professionals. Founder James Gray speculates that the “teachers-teaching-teachers” model is the most important component of NWP longevity (qtd. in Gomez, 1990). Deeming the original group a “community of scholars,” James Gray (qtd. in Smith, 1996), and the original creators of the NWP intended to craft a place where teacher lore would be validated. Smith (1996) explains that demonstration lessons during the summer institute function as “the long-awaited movement in their careers when someone has finally asked them what they do and why.” Pritchard and Marshall (1994) take this idea further, noting that when teacher consultants



try out the practices in their own classrooms and have personal evidence of their effectiveness, they “deliver ideas with more confidence, personal examples, and credibility to the teachers in the replication sites” (p. 277). Thus, demonstration lessons function not only to share ideas but also to build teacher confidence in their own practice, an important step towards their professionalization.

Another important component of positioning teachers as professionals through the project is the NWP’s attention to promoting teacher inquiry over information (Smith, 1996). Rather than “force-feeding” teachers with “shrink-wrapped lessons and paint-by-number formulas” (Smith, 1996), the NWP is known for thinking of teachers as autonomous innovative practitioners “rather than as the trainable enactors of others’ ideas” (Whitney, 2008). The NWP works from the starting point of the teachers themselves who make decisions about “where to go and how to get there” (Smith, 1996), avoiding “prepackaged curricula” (Whitney, 2009) and instead viewing teachers as “the best teachers of other teachers” (Watson, 1981) as well as “our best hope to reshape education” (Smith, 1996).

***Teacher as change agent.*** Finally, the traditional structures and practices associated with the NWP communicate the value of teacher as change agent. Opposed to outdated adult learning models that place teachers in the passive passenger role, the NWP positions teachers as drivers (Smith, 1996) and aspires to encourage in teachers an active stance (Watson, 1981). Central to the goals of the NWP is the hope that teachers’ participation in the network will lead to a “reorientation” in the way teachers approach the teaching of writing (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013; Whitney, 2008; Watson, 1981). For example, reflecting on a recent experience with a local site’s ISI, one teacher consultant explained, “Personally, it was transformative in how I think about teaching English and how I structure my units and my classes and how I teach... It seems like

I'm exaggerating everything, but I'm really not. It's fundamentally changed how I think" (Collet, 2015, p. 2). As the workshop delivery model gives way to the more progressive, teacher driven professional learning communities, the NWP site network aspires to support teacher consultants in the construction of PD that works within ongoing professional learning communities as they acquire and construct new knowledge with the power to transform and reorient their classrooms.

**National Writing Project publications.** The NWP website itself serves as a rich record of the organization's culture with links to hundreds of compositions related to organizational history, research, programming, policy, and beyond. The resource topics on the site include the following: professional development; teaching writing; teaching reading; research; teacher research / inquiry; standards and assessment; policy and reform; and being a writer. For the purposes of my review of the literature related to the National Writing Project, I focus only on the topic of professional development. Resource topics included under professional development cover all components of the NWP model – summer institute, inservice, and continuity. My review of these NWP spotlighted materials focuses on resources posted under the three most relevant headings: professional development; NWP model – inservice; and monographs – models of inservice.

I begin by considering the range of topics covered in the resources posted on the general "professional development" page to see which conversations seem to garner the most attention. Next, I look at the resources provided under the specific topic of "inservice," as this is the component of the NWP this project is most interested in studying. Finally, I turn to the NWP monographs, as the monograph series functions as a kind of sharing of best practices. The first set of monographs targets inservice programs specifically, and the nine publications that result from this project provide insight into the core values of the NWP.

As of February of 2016, 92 articles appeared under the professional development resource tab on the NWP website. Publication dates range from 1978 to 2013. The following list represents major topics covered by these 92 publications:

- Continuity (i.e., teacher consultant leadership; involvement after ISI; support for TCs as facilitators), 19
- Site development and networking (i.e., statewide conference, NWP radio; universities & schools), 12
- Legacy of summer institute, 9
- Writing retreat (directors', professional writing, etc.), 8
- History (30 year celebration; 25 year celebration), 6
- Ed reform (advocacy, scaling up and down), 4
- Spotlight on student program, 4
- Annual report, 3
- Book review, 3
- James Gray, 3
- PD design (lessons learned, warnings, workshops), 3
- Annual meeting, 2
- Inquiry, 2
- Teachers teaching teachers, 2
- Announcement, establishment of national network, 1
- Beliefs, teaching, 1
- History of a site, 1
- Importance of collaboration (summer institute), 1
- Investigation of other models, New Hampshire, 1
- New teacher mentoring, 1

- Parents, 1
- Process-centered writing, 1
- Teachers as writers, 1
- Technology, 1
- Writing across the curriculum, 1
- Writing to learn, 1

Of the publications provided by NWP under “resources → professional development,” I identified 10 as potentially relevant to designing and delivering professional development as inservice. To determine relevance, I asked of each publication whether or not this specific resource would help a team to design or provide professional development to participating teachers during the school year.

Two major themes emerge from these articles: (1) that the NWP does not support the presentation generic models of writing, focusing instead on programs that are flexible and response to teachers’ and students’ needs, and (2) that the NWP hopes to empower teachers and to create space and time for teachers to do the work that they deem necessary and important when it comes to writing.

When it comes to the implementation of generic writing systems, the research provided by the NWP on professional development reflects a firm stance against it. Sam Watson, in one of the earliest publications listed on the site (1980), writes about the role of knowledge in the NWP, explaining that “within a Project, there is no set of classroom practices which have become doctrinal and must be followed: for that matter no single theoretical framework is insisted upon” (p. 2). He goes on to argue that “effective change requires a framework which, rooted in experience, becomes conceptual,” and that “without that, even the best institutions will quickly

become useless...or ignored” (p. 2). In other words, Watson is promoting programming designed in response to specific teachers and specific classroom environment.

Healy’s (1995) article on generic “writing systems” picks up on the same thread and presents some of the dangers of generic writing instruction. Namely, she argues that all of these generic programs share a focus on teaching teachers to teach the construction of specific forms of texts, with specific attention on the unvarying steps of their creation, regardless of the context of the school or classroom.

On a similar note, in his 2008 piece on Bronx International High School, Grant Faulkner writes about the role of professional development in increasing student achievement. He writes that in order for a site’s professional development to align with the Writing Project philosophy, it has to start with a teacher’s interest. He explains, “[We don’t] come in with an agenda of packaged goods, but listen, engage the teacher in a dialogue about what is going on in the classroom, and then shape a plan to address the teacher’s and school’s needs and issues.”

Suzanne Linebarger also writes (2010) about the importance of framing the NWP practice of model lessons through inquiry. She also posits that model lessons must be accompanied by structured debrief time so that teachers can have time to make the move from what they observed in the model lesson to what they’d like to try out in their own classroom.

Dixie Dellinger’s 1988 article for the NWP’s journal, *The Quarterly*, echoes Healy’s and Faulkner’s concern about pre-packaged programs and sends a stark message to other teachers about time in the same vein as Linebarger’s (2010): in the current American education system, educators do not have the “space” to explore the teaching of writing as she did when she began. Instead, she writes, “curricular decisions have been made far above the teachers’ heads, largely driven by mass tests and measurements.”

In her piece “Learning about ourselves from looking at others,” Mary Ann Smith writes about her experience shadowing veterinarians who were working together. In the article she explains that what she witnessed was professionals at all levels willing to work together and, importantly, to admit when they ran into something they didn’t understand. She goes on to write that this model might provide for new teachers those habits of mind that align with a teaching career (2003). As a response to Dellinger’s concerns about the loss of both a teacher’s autonomy and the space for “exploring” the teaching of writing, Smith’s piece illustrates the importance of the learning community and the value of that safe space for exploration where professionals can experiment with new ideas and take their time.

Dellinger (1988) also makes the case that the deepest concern of teachers is “the loss of ownership, autonomy, trust, and confidence under the onslaught of the state-mandated reform movements that are sweeping the country” (p.3). Dellinger points out that this is of particular concern to the NWP because of the organization’s focus on building teacher confidence and trust: it’s difficult to enact the value of “the best teachers of teachers are other teachers” when the culture of the system moves to trust teachers less and less. As William Strong writes in his 1988 analysis of the differences between the National Writing Project’s professional development (PD) and other models of PD, the NWP’s approach, unlike that of other programs, is “as much about teacher empowerment as it is about the teaching and learning of writing.” Thus, in many ways, the NWP as an organization positions itself to empower teachers in the face of the loss of “ownership, autonomy, trust, and confidence” that can come from mandates.

Published in *The Quarterly* in 2004, Peter Kittle writes about his experiences delivering a professional development program to teachers of reading across the curriculum. Kittle’s reflexivity in his position as designer and provider of professional development is familiar to me,

as he echoes many of my own reflections on the work of designing PD for and providing PD to inservice teachers. For example, in this piece, Kittle writes about providing professional programming to a large group of teachers through inservice, many of whom have not exactly “opted in” to the program. Reflecting on the relationship between teachers and professional development providers, Kittle writes, “After all, those who impose new standards aren’t in a position to know a specific school’s needs, much less a certain teacher’s classroom population, so it should come as no surprise if teachers don’t wholeheartedly embrace mandated changes.” In the article, Kittle goes on to describe several successful practices in which he and his co-facilitator engage teachers, practices to which I will return in the discussion of potential interventions presented in Chapter Five. In reflecting on the success of their project, Kittle attributes the progress to three elements: (1) the relevance of content to teachers’ needs (with a focus on concrete, research-supported strategies); (2) enough time for teachers to experience the reading and writing firsthand, and (3) the time for teachers to try out ideas and bring them back to the group to share.

Sheridan Blau, member of the NWP Advisory Board and Task Force for over 20 years, had an important text published in *The Quarterly* in the summer of 1999 and in celebration of 25 years of the NWP, which illustrates the connection between reflexive program design and teacher empowerment. In this piece, Blau writes about continuity, about ways to maintain connections with and provide support for teacher consultants who have come through the summer institute. His vision includes advanced and specialized institutes and special interest groups, all of which provide opportunities for continuing professional collaboration and inquiry. In this piece, Blau characterizes schools as “notoriously anti-intellectual places” and worries that the Writing Project will struggle to remain “agnostic” with respect to any approach that may be

offered for school reform or instructional improvement. He writes that NWP founder, Jim Gray, would caution against movements and specific stances, especially when these might suggest “that we are not open to whatever might represent its opposite and might be brought into our community by an experienced and thoughtful classroom teacher” (p. 32). For NWP PD to remain true to the original design, Blau argues, it must not take sides on issues of school reform and improvement, but as Blau predicts, this stance becomes a particular challenge in the face of rapidly changing educational initiatives and changes in funding that thrust the viability of the network in question.

Again, in reviewing the ten professional development texts available on the NWP website with potential implications for PD delivered as inservice, my goal is to outline a tacit set of values present in the NWP’s approach to designing and providing professional development in general. In these ten texts, several themes run throughout: the balance between not having a “set program” while also providing a framework for teachers is difficult. It becomes more difficult in an atmosphere of mandated reform movements, and policy makers and practitioners alike should be wary of programs that present text composition as tidy and context-independent: Professional development providers and NWP site leaders always want to remain open to any ideas that could be brought into the community by an experienced and thoughtful classroom teacher. NWP professional development is about teaching and learning writing, but it’s also about empowering, trusting, and providing supportive learning communities for teachers. Uncovering the values that undergird these publications is an important endeavor, as it helps to establish a model against which the CRWP might be compared.

***Inservice professional development.*** The National Writing Project is a network of sites providing professional development to educators to support the teaching of writing. This



professional development comes in a variety of forms (i.e., workshops, summer institutes, retreats) and serves a range of teachers. The target audience of professional development discussed to this point is that of teachers who have all chosen to participate in their local writing project sites and who are training to become teacher consultants in their local network. In addition to providing support to teachers who have already identified themselves as potential teacher consultants, the local sites of the National Writing Project also provide professional development to teachers in schools, most of whom may not have expressed interest in joining their local site network. These teachers are referred to as “participants” or “participating teachers” and the specific type of professional development activities in which these “participating teachers” are taking part are referred to as “inservice.” The NWP website offers two resources devoted to articulating the model of inservice the NWP supports: 39 articles posted under an “inservice” tab within “resources,” a nine-volume series of monographs published between 2002 and 2006, and an interactive website brought online in 2012 called “The Model at Work,” one component of which speaks directly to the issue of inservice.

Once again, though the first resources listed above (the 39 articles) are placed specifically under the heading of “inservice,” these publications touch on a variety of issues related to professional development. The list below outlines the major topics of each text:

- Models of inservice (reference to NWP monographs), 8
- Inservice model (design, workshops, presentations), 7
- Continuity (i.e. retreat, study groups, publication support), 5
- School partnerships (k-12, community college), 4
- Support for teacher consultants as facilitators, 4
- Teacher centered model, 4
- Writing across the curriculum, 3

- Inservice providers conducting research, 1
- Marshall Plan (PD in tandem with summer programs), 1
- Site development, 1
- School change, 1

Of the 31 publications that were not co-listings of monographs from “The Model at Work,” the major focus of these texts was divided between two foci: (1) supporting teacher consultants (NWP participants who have graduated from a summer institute) either as facilitators of professional development or as participants in continuity efforts such as teacher-led study groups and advanced institutes, and (2) reflections on designing professional development as inservice. Of the seven pieces related to inservice models, four in particular respond to the question of what qualities make for effective inservice that maintains the core values of the NWP.

In the 1979 piece, “Inservice Must Be Teacher Centered,” Leslie Whipp reflects on three features of the Writing Project model that teachers in his department have singled out for praise: according to Whipp, teachers characterize the model as teacher-centered, practical, and building on teacher strength. Whipp describes “teacher-centered” by presenting what he sees as the antithesis – professor-centered, institution-centered and discipline-centered programs in which teachers “are told they need this or that or the other thing.” He explains the characteristic of the model by participants as “practical,” as he understands the Writing Project to speak in the dialect of the teacher rather than the dialect of the university professor. Finally, he points to the NWP model’s focus on teachers teaching teachers “by using strategies and lessons which have been proven successful within their own classrooms: someone has been able to write better because of the use of these strategies.” He goes on to note that participants are “working with the kinds of

topics they want to be working with, writing about what they know, and expressing things that they have wanted to express.”

In 1986, the NWP’s research journal, *The Quarterly*, published the introductory remarks of Lee Davis, at the time a fellow of the Central California Writing Project. Davis begins by cautioning attendees about “fall[ing] into the trap of thinking that we have some unshakable truths, some great understandings, that we will hand over to you....” He explains that the goal of the workshop goes beyond providing teachers with practical strategies “to use in the classroom tomorrow” towards inviting attendees to “initiate a resolve” to create opportunities in the classroom for students to write and share their writing frequently, to pursue conversations with colleagues about the teaching of writing, and to write often themselves (p. 1). He addresses the fact that many attendees may be reluctant writers and invites them to confront why that might be and consider ways to change that.

The “NWP at Rutgers: What We've Learned About School Partnerships” (2009) piece by director Kim Lanza begins by defining partnerships as “a formal collaboration between a writing project site and a school or district that includes shared goal-setting, planning, and reflection/assessment with the intent to offer a variety of learning opportunities and a commitment to work together long-term (a year or more).” A partnership normally includes the commitment of significant resources on the part of the participating school or district, and services that are offered by the site evolve over time and are responsive to the changing needs and status of the teachers and students in the school or district. The team at Rutgers goes on to share some of the lessons learned through these long-term collaborations. First, they echo much of the other literature, explaining that if the goal is to collaborate with teachers to improve the quality of instruction and the quality of student writing, one-shot workshops don’t work. They

also make the point that leadership opportunities are much harder to cultivate in short-term PD. The Rutgers team learns that administrators need to be a part of the conversation, but so do teachers, especially in the planning stages. They also remark on the importance of engaging a voluntary cohort of teachers to participate in the PD, and that even when participation is voluntary, programming needs to be flexible and adaptable to students' and teachers' needs. Finally, this team explains that reflection is a necessary component of the PD, as teachers need the time and space to make plans to transfer their thinking from the PD sessions into their classrooms.

I conclude this analysis of the texts presented by the NWP on inservice with Kathleen O'Shaughnessy's 2000 piece, "Do Workshops Work?" because, of all the research I have consumed related to NWP professional development, this one speaks to my own experience as a teacher consultant and professional development provider most directly. O'Shaughnessy opens the piece with a story about getting lost in London and, as she explains it, "allow[ing] her fear to cheat [her] out of the triumph of finding [her] own way." The parallel she draws between this story and her experience as a PD provider bears repeating:

I often relive this experience when I present workshops for teachers, but now I'm the kind stranger pointing the way and they're the frightened jogger, disconcerted by unfamiliar territory, afraid of making a wrong turn, embarrassed to ask for help but desperately grateful when it's offered, and unaware of the feeling of power and freedom that comes from finding one's own way. A teacher who can find her own way knows her territory – her students, her school culture, her understanding about how kids learn... finding one's own way is the essence of teacher empowerment. It's the necessary prerequisite for becoming a reflective practitioner. It's what distinguishes the National Writing Project model from the dizzying parade of prepackaged, teacher-proof programs our school districts view as staff development...

In all of the NWP literature that I have reviewed O'Shaughnessy's piece resonates deeply with me, as she confronts her positionality as professional development provider in a way that is underrepresented in the research. When she writes about the difference between her

understandings of a workshop (teachers teaching teachers, inquiry, teaching stories, etc.) and the participants' experiences with PD (i.e. "be[ing] magically transformed by a well-paid motivational speaker who manipulates his audience's emotions as smoothly as he manages his overhead projector – but never says one specific thing about how to teach anything any better"), I see my own situation as parallel. She writes,

Caught between our conflicting paradigms, I struggle with my role. I want to do more than silently point the way but less than take the teachers' hands and walk them all the way to their destinations. The teachers I meet have too many people holding their hands already. I don't want to be just another workshop leader with just another big fat handout of reproducible stuff to cram into an already overcrowded and disjointed teaching day. I've presented more workshops than I can count, and in the past year or so I've been wrestling with a different struggle... It's the struggle not to become exactly what I say I despise – a one-way conveyor of tidy, simplistic answers to intensely complicated questions.

In designing Project Outreach, a team of 18 Writing Project sites of which O'Shaughnessy was a part, the team made a few changes to traditional models of staff development: first, no teachers were required to participate. Second, sessions would engage teachers in experiencing and experimenting with different classroom strategies. Finally, participants were encouraged to keep a journal where they would write about new strategies, successes and failures, questions and concerns. She writes about how effective these journals were in establishing where teachers were coming from. She asks, "How effective can any staff development program be if it doesn't take into account the experiences and attitudes of the participants? How often in the past have these or any teachers been asked what they know, what they want to know, or how they feel about the topic being presented to them? When these questions aren't asked, the unspoken message is that teachers' voices aren't important... They aren't the experts." In the end, O'Shaughnessy explains, "No workshop will be transformative

for a teacher who isn't looking for a new and better way." I will return to these critical ideas in subsequent chapters.

*Models of inservice – monographs.* To complete my review of the literature on the NWP provided by the NWP through their extensive website, I look to the monographs. The NWP's Project at Work monograph series serves as a documentation of how the NWP model is designed and implemented at local sites in the national network. The monograph series includes documents related to three main components of the NWP model – continuity, inservice, and summer institute. In this review, I look only to the models of inservice monographs, as they focus on the component of the model with which this dissertation is centrally concerned.

Monographs included in this series were published from 2002 to 2006 and profile nine projects, giving voice to site leaders and teacher consultants as they work to plan, implement, and refine inservice programs for teachers.

To identify themes present across the series, the nine publications were coded first with the codes of "challenges" and "qualities of successful programs." In this first round, 23 passages were identified as representative of "challenges" faced, and 133 passages were coded as "qualities of successful programs." From here, text selections were analyzed for themes. What follows is my discussion of challenges and of qualities of successful programs, as emerged from the monograph publications. Looking across all nine monographs, clear themes emerge both in the challenges that programs faced and in terms of the qualities deemed characteristic of successful programs.

Challenges addressed by monograph writers fell under four main categories: training and supporting teacher consultants; working with reticent participating teachers; working with minimal support from participating districts; and navigating the sometimes conflicting roles of

teacher consultant and PD provider. I will address common themes within each of the categories, presenting the main challenges provided by monograph writers as they describe their successful PD programs.

In *The Story of SCORE*, Cassandria Hansbrough and Lynette Herring-Harris write that they struggled to prepare teacher consultants to work with teachers. For example, facilitators made the assumption that teacher consultants themselves are (and consider themselves to be) effective teachers of reading and writing, but that assumption proved problematic, as teacher consultants needed training and support before they could confidently go out and work with other teachers. Several sites found that teacher consultants needed to participate in training in order to work with teachers, and for many, this was a step they had not anticipated.

In addition to the challenge of working to prepare teacher consultants to take on leadership roles in writing, sites encountered several additional layers of challenges as they attempted to work with participating districts. First, several schools profiled in the monographs have high teacher turnover rates, a fact that leads the writers to wonder if the work can “take hold” in this environment. Monograph writers also make the point that programs are weaker when they receive little support from administrators and dwindling release for PD time. Most importantly, nearly every monograph touches on the problems associated with standardized testing. This focus on testing and test scores commonly takes away focus from writing and ultimately can lead schools and teachers to oversimplify and “teach to the test” (Koch, Roop, and Setter, 2006.) Ultimately, one of the biggest challenges that PD providers faced was the fact that teachers and administrators were distracted by too many initiatives and uncoordinated efforts. Their time and loyalties were fading.

The monographs came together to present a clear picture of challenging circumstances for PD providers when it came to participating teachers: first, workshops could be challenging, as PD providers found the need to create a third space where teachers could talk to one another about issues of common interest that were outside of the scope of the PD while not losing sight of the specific goal of the PD. Several monographs (Remington & McGinty, 2005; Boykin, Scrivner, & Robbins, 2005; Herring-Harris & Hansbrough, 2002; McGonegal & Watson, 2002) mention the difficulty of working with teachers who felt they didn't have time to practice writing in classrooms or to write alongside their students. In "Story of Score," Cassandra Hansbrough quotes a participating teacher who, in an exit ticket, writes, "Implementing these strategies will take too much time. I have a lot of concepts to cover each grading period" (p.16).

In addition, in "The fledgling years," Anne Watson explains an experience their site had when working with teachers on persona writing: "[p]ersona writing was an unknown area for teachers. In spite of Suzanne's modeling, it was too difficult a leap for the majority of teachers to make" (p.13). Further, working with teachers whose decision-making had been limited by standards-based reforms was a challenge. Correspondingly, working with participants whose attendance had been mandated caused problems for all sites profiled in the monograph series. For example, in "The Saginaw teacher study group movement," Mary Calliari writes, "Teachers who welcomed the [inquiry] groups shared beliefs and benefited. Teachers who felt coerced, or who lacked commitment and shared philosophy, simply put in their time and did not change" (p.14).

Interestingly, the monographs are some of the only publications, outside of O'Shaughnessy's piece surrounding the NWP that delve into the experience of the PD provider. In "On-site consulting: New York City Writing Project," Nancy Mintz (2002) writes about her



experience transitioning from her own classroom to becoming an on-site teacher consultant in New York City middle school classrooms. She shares some of the questions she confronted regarding her new role:

How do I help teachers take risks and expand their practices? How do I develop relationships that are truly collaborative? How do I avoid the image of “outside expert” while translating all I know and value from my experience teaching children, so it appropriately fits with this new kind of teaching? How do I stay true to the things that I value, while working in schools where contrary values predominate? (p. 5)

Patricia McGonegal, teacher consultant with the Vermont Writing Project and co-author of “The fledgling years,” also addresses this challenge explaining that when PD providers position themselves as experts, even in the spirit of “you people are tired, and overworked,” they lose engagement, power, and responsibility. “. . .we see many more folded arms and less interest from teachers,” she writes (pp. 6-7).

In addition to presenting the challenges for site directors and teacher consultants involved in designing and providing professional development inservice, this set of monographs paints an extensive picture of the shared qualities in inservice programs that are successful. And, once again, these components are repeated across programs, a fact that makes the distillation of a set of categories shared by successful programs quite clear. The following figures provide a representation of those patterns across the nine texts in the monograph set. The first figure is a word cloud produced from the 133 codes for “qualities of successful programs” identified in the first round of coding. The next figure is a mind map illustrating qualities and practices of successful programs, as noted by the writers of the monographs.



successful professional development. “Leadership” is another of the larger words in the cloud, thus confirming the focus on the creation of leadership opportunities for teacher consultants. The word “time” is also notably larger than many other words in the cloud, and this is logical, as several of the monograph writers addressed the importance of professional development creating time for teachers to plan, practice, and reflect.

Similar to the word cloud, the mind map also functions as a visual representation of the qualities discussed throughout the monographs as those present in successful, effective professional development. Articulating the qualities of successful professional development as defined and presented by the NWP is important, as the language generated here becomes the standard against which the inservice provided as a part of the College-Ready Writers Program is held, analyzed, and discussed in the following chapters.

***National Writing Project Model at Work.*** In 2012, the NWP re-launched the Model at Work project, moving this time from formal publications to a less formal blog post and response model. This interactive website provides a series of “channels” on different topics where site leaders can post and respond to issues related to implementing NWP programming on a local level. I looked specifically to the channel on “programs and practices” and conducted a search for the term “inservice,” which resulted in 21 pages of posts. To create a manageable body of work while still getting a sense of content, I chose to read the top article from each page. Figure 3 provides a screenshot of one of the 21 posts included in the analysis below.

The screenshot shows the National Writing Project website. The header includes the NWP logo, the title "The Model at Work", a search bar with "Hi. Search the site here." and a "GO" button, and navigation links for Home, About, Current Issue, Past Issues, Channels, and Posts. A "LOGIN/JOIN" button is also present. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "Channels", lists several categories: "About the Invitational", "Programs and practices", "Supporting leaders/ supporting leadership", "University connections", and "Schools, partners, and others we work with". The right column, titled "Programs and practices", features a search bar with "inservice" entered and an "Apply" button. Below the search bar, a post titled "TX San Antonio Writing Project Offers Vital Professional Development To Texas Teachers" is displayed. The post is attributed to "benbates" on "Mon, 2015-12-14 20:36" with "0 comments". It is categorized under "channels" as "programs and practices" and has several tags: "building capacity", "conference", "continuity", "district", "financial strategies", "latina/latino", "professional development", "recruitment", "service area", "visibility", and "writing instruction". The post text begins with "Supported by a growing roster of bilingual teacher consultants, a continuing, characteristic focus on teaching English Language Learners, a record of in-service activities including an annual teachers' conference, and professional development contracts with a number of regional school districts, the San Antonio Writing Project".

Figure 3: The Model at Work

Entries under “programs and practices” that were flagged as “inservice” spanned from 2012 to December of 2015 and covered the following topics:

- Designing workshops and institutes to support TCs as PD facilitators, 4
- Positioning sites at the forefront of CCSS PD, 4
  - PD in argumentative writing (support for CCSS), 2
- Building relationships, 3
  - P-16 alliances
  - Shifting partnerships from school-based to outside organizations
- Designing PD as long-term, in collaboration with teacher leaders, 3
- Using logic models to “hone planning” and make a “tighter cycle of PD”
- Designing inservice to support state writing assessments
- Using MOOCs (book study – *The Writing Thief*)
- Designing writing marathons and writing contests for students

- Implementing Saturday sessions on diverse topics (from digital writing and writing about bullying to conference planning and celebrating)
- Designing institutes targeting the teaching of literature, information, and argumentative writing
- Rethinking a site's core values and SI practices

In many ways, these entries echo the themes of the original Model at Work series: effective PD is *empowering* and provides a *safe space* for teacher *collaboration*. However, they also represent a greater emphasis on professional development in response to standards and assessments. Interestingly, the approach to CCSS specifically varies by site: while some sites position themselves as supporters, “at the forefront of CCSS PD,” other sites work from a different direction, inviting teachers to “apply expertise to understanding the CCSS... which represent another educational mandate imposed from the top down without teacher buy-in” (Knowles, 2013b).

Another important presence in these entries is the specific focus on a type of writing, a change from the original Model at Work series. The post from the Red Cedar Writing Project in October of 2013, “MI Red Cedar WP Provides Inservices Focused on Writing Argument at High-Needs School,” describes a professional development program in argumentative writing that “assuming an inquiry stance, invited teachers to look critically at the way they were currently teaching persuasion and argument, and to read and discuss new approaches[...].” (Knowles, 2013a).

Similarly, and of particular relevance to this project, the LA Northwestern State University Writing Project posts about a four-day institute they created with the following objectives: (1) to share informational and classical literature resources with connections to contemporary literature and real world events; (2) to build text sets targeting the teaching of

argument as outlined in the CCSS and Louisiana ELA guidebooks; (3) to explore strategies that combine literature and informational texts into one cohesive unit; and (4) to read, write, think, and share classroom literature and writing ideas. As an i3 site operating a CRWP program, this post represents one of the many tactics that local sites employed in an effort to help participating teachers balance the argumentative writing focus of the CRWP with the reading and writing that were already the focus of their classrooms. In this post, site leaders write that one of the main goals of this workshop series was to “build an SI-like community in smaller chunks of time” (Perry, 2014).

On March 4, 2012, the Rhode Island WP posted this series of seafaring metaphors to describe the function of their site as “a buoy for drowning teachers; an anchor for teachers who feel un-tethered and unsupported; a sea of tranquility to offset the churning flotsam and jetsam of current reform efforts; a pirate ship of subversives who question the status quo” (Patmon, 2012). Across the NWP publications, the themes that emerge in terms of effective professional development reinforce this metaphor. For teacher consultants and site leaders who participate in professional development provided by local sites of the NWP, this metaphor seems to capture the components of safety, space and time for exploration and experimentation, and opportunities for teacher collaboration and empowerment. The only missing piece in the literature on NWP inservice is that of the perspective of participants in the programs. NWP local site leaders and other providers of professional development can learn a tremendous amount about inservice program design and implementation from other site leaders and participating teacher consultants, but the voices of the school-based teachers who participate in the programs go unheard.

## **Professional Development, Empowerment, and Changing Practice**

Over the past few decades, a considerable body of literature has emerged regarding professional development, teacher learning, and teacher change; and when it comes to this topic, untangling the threads of teacher identity, efficacy, empowerment, and agency from one another is a formidable task, as the presence or absence of one frequently determines the presence or absence of another. Though the literature is substantial, with several distinctive topics interwoven into one conversation, themes of successful professional development leading to teacher change do emerge, and what emerges supports the findings surrounding effective professional development within the National Writing Project.

First, professional development that is provided over time is more likely to result in long term change than short, single-run workshops (Gerard, Varma, Corliss, & Linn, 2011; Banilower, Heck, & Weiss, 2007), as programs without the opportunity to oscillate between learning and practicing, between doing and reflecting, have little potential for long term impact (Spillane, 2002).

Effective PD programs also engage teachers in active learning (Allen, 2004). In the literature, observations, practice in the classroom, analyzing student work, participating in discussions with colleagues, and experiencing activities as students, are all common examples of active learning opportunities that can have positive impact on teacher growth (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

Teachers' content knowledge also plays a large role in the success of PD, and PD developed with a content focus more commonly leads to teacher knowledge and teacher change (Desimone, 2009; Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009; Desimone, et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001).

Teachers also need to feel they are working in a safe space where risk taking will be met with understanding and collaboration rather than judgment (Cambourne, 1995), where they can feel confident and effective (Bandura, 1993).

Effective professional development also creates opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles (Collet, 2012), to work in collaboration with PD providers (Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009; Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996), and to engage in practices that recognize the expertise of the teachers in the room (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007). Effective PD programs also give teachers voice – as Allen (2004) characterizes it – a voting voice, a delegated voice, an advisory voice, and a dialogical voice, each of which build towards teacher empowerment and participation in decision making in meaningful ways.

PD resulting in teacher change and empowerment is supported by school and district leaders who are integrated into program design, delivery, and experience (Galen, 2005). In addition, it is designed for and attended by groups of teachers rather than teachers on their own (Garet et al., 2001).

Coherence is another important component of successful professional development. PD should be aligned with policies and standards (Desimone, 2009; Garet et al., 2001) and should engage participants in activities that transfer easily into their classrooms (Kinnucan-Welsh, Rosemary, & Grogan, 2006; Garet et al., 2001). Coherence is also a precursor to teachers' ability to integrate new information with prior beliefs: effective PD has been found to engage teachers in examining and reflecting on their theoretical orientations, values, and beliefs (Heller et al., 2012; Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009; Spillane, 2000).

Putman, Smith, and Cassady's piece, "Promoting change through professional development: The place of teacher intentionality in reading instruction," discusses the Intentional



Teaching Model (INTENT), which was created as a way to provide PD aimed at promoting changes in the instructional practices of reading teachers. Interestingly, this PD aimed to function as an interlocutor between teachers and the challenges they confront in terms of responding to changing legislation and student needs. The program involves teachers in four phases: Phase 1, individual theory articulation, invites teachers to articulate their beliefs and to compare those beliefs with practices; Phase 2, preparation, involves teachers in working collaboratively to set goals, form teams, and establish committees to begin working towards those goals; in Phase 3, active change, teachers are expected to begin to initiate activities into their classrooms. By the time they move to Phase 4, sustainability, teachers can apply new techniques to diverse situations and are able to maintain the changes they adopted. This piece is relevant to the current project, as the INTENT program articulates a need teachers have in terms of professional development, which is support bridging between mandates and standards to their own classroom practices. In this study, Putman, Smith, and Cassady note the important role beliefs play within the context of implementing new knowledge into existing practices and argue, “Before teachers can successfully integrate new information with prior beliefs, they need to actively examine and reflect on the underlying theoretical orientations that drive their practices” (p. 209).

The importance of competence and confidence exists as a thread throughout the literature on effective professional development. Collet’s 2012 study of the impact of the gradual increase of responsibility (GIR) model provides a clear example of how coaching as professional development provides important scaffolding for teachers within the context of use. In this study, support provided by coaches changed in quantity and quality as the semester progressed with a decrease in the amount of support provided as teachers increased in competence and confidence.

Of central importance to the analysis offered in Chapters Three and Four is the body of research addressing the relationships between self-efficacy, professional development, and teacher empowerment. Integral to the conversation and to the project of this dissertation is Bandura's (1993) article, "Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning" in which he considers the diverse ways that teachers' perceived self-efficacy impacts cognitive development and functioning. The effects of self-efficacy beliefs, Bandura argues, are far ranging. For example, Bandura finds that those with higher perceived self-efficacy set higher goals for themselves and are more committed to those goals than people with lower perceived self-efficacy. People with higher perceived self-efficacy are more likely to view their environments as controllable and tend to be more motivated. Teachers with high perceived self-efficacy are better positioned to cope with environmental stressors, while those with lower perceived self-efficacy are more likely to try to avoid dealing with academic problems. Similarly, teachers with high perceived self-efficacy are more likely to "create mastery experiences for their students," while those beset by doubt are much more likely to undermine students' sense of efficacy. Within the frame of professional development, Bandura's study of the influences of feelings of self-efficacy make a strong case for the design and delivery of professional development in a way that creates environments that nurture teachers' sense of effectiveness. He writes, "Teachers' beliefs in the personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning affect the types of learning environments they create and the level of academic progress their students achieve."

Along the same lines as Bandura's 1993 article on self-efficacy, Dierking and Fox's (2013) article, "Changing the way I teach: Building teacher knowledge, confidence, and autonomy" looked specifically at the effect of a National Writing Project professional

development model on a group of middle school writing teachers. Noticing that teachers' sense of authority and power seemed to shrink within the context of professional development (p.129), Dierking and Fox asked the following research question: How do teachers renew themselves for the classroom? Their findings fell within four themes:

1. Knowledge can affect teacher power and confidence.
2. Teachers' voices can indicate some degree of confidence and empowerment.
3. Support and encouragement can strengthen teachers' sense of power.
4. Some forces can disempower teachers' actions.

Echoing Bandura's findings regarding the impact of teachers' perceived self-beliefs on classroom instruction, Dierking and Fox's research reiterates the potency of teacher empowerment for teacher change. This study is in part a response to their call for more research on teacher empowerment and the effect professional development like the literacy academies – the focus of their work – has on a teacher's identity and, by extension, their classrooms.

### **Teaching Argumentative Writing**

Ask any group of English teachers if they consider themselves to be readers, and the answer will be a resounding yes. Ask the same group if they consider themselves to be writers, and note the pause. A lot is contained in that pause – How much do I write? Am I a good writer? Have I been published? – Teachers tend to struggle with many of the same feelings doubts and insecurities about writing as our students do. Most teachers engage our English language arts students in plenty of reading, but research shows that teacher attention to writing is not commensurate (Applebee and Langer, 2013, p. 13). The reasons for that are multiple and contested.

Over the past several decades, scholars interested in the teaching of writing have often come to many of the same conclusions about the status of writing in schools. While progress has been made, and writing instruction continues to garner more attention, many complex issues regarding writing instruction are still being confronted. Namely, (1) students don't do much writing in school, and when they do, what they write is often lacking in depth and breadth (Applebee & Langer, 2011, 2013; McCarthy, 2008); (2) teachers are the primary audience for student writing (Applebee & Langer, 2011, 2013); and (3) high-stakes tests drive much of the curriculum (Applebee & Langer, 2013). Though these observations have typically been offered in respect to the broader field of writing pedagogy, they carry direct and significant implications for the teaching of argumentative writing.

Across the literature regarding the teaching and learning of argumentative reading and writing, three central questions regarding complexity, power, and identity shape the discussion:

- Complexity: How do the practices and discourses of standardization (e.g., testing) impact the teaching and learning of argumentative writing?
- Power: How are institutionalized structures of power articulated in the classroom, and what do these articulations illustrate about the teaching of argumentative writing?
- Identity: What role do teachers' epistemologies have on their conceptualization and enactment of the teaching of argumentative writing?

In the pages to follow, I discuss and review several studies in which these driving questions have received some attention.

**Discourses of Standardization / Discourses of Complexity.** Researchers across the field are engaged in considering how the practices and discourses of standardization – particularly in the case of testing – impact the teaching and learning of argumentative writing. It is rare in contemporary research on teaching argumentative writing to come across a study that does not discuss the impact of standardization on writing, especially in the form of standardized

testing. In the last hundred years of schooling in the United States, the pendulum has swung repeatedly from error analysis to process writing and back again, impacting all aspects of how writing is taught, learned, and evaluated. In their study of the relationship between writing theory and assessment practices, Behizadeh & Engelhard (2011) notice specifically how writing theory and assessment begin to diverge significantly in the 1970s and 80s. Though cognitive research led to the exploration of process writing in practice, evaluation practices remained stagnant. Behizadeh & Engelhard write, “Writing theory changed dramatically during this period, while measurement and writing assessment changed very little, highlighting the weak influence writing theory had on writing assessment in the United States” (p. 202). This bifurcation between writing theory and assessment practice continues today, as the sociocultural context of research bears little impact on the popularity of standardized testing. From the challenge of squeezing long-term argumentative writing units between assessments to the challenge of preparing students for on-demand writing while also encouraging them to problematize their engagement with issues – demands on teachers in this era of standardized testing are often in conflict with one another.

Research shows that testing creates powerful momentum away from the teaching of writing and often leads to an overemphasis on formulaic approaches (Applebee & Langer 2011, 2013; McCarthy, 2008; McCarthy & Mkhize, 2013). Practitioners don’t need research to identify this tension: testing is necessarily tidy; thinking is often not. In their 2005 survey of high school students’ writing experiences, Scherff & Piazza write that teachers want to engage students in a process that defines a quality product “not as a formula for passing tests, but as a means of satisfying purpose, audience, genre, and other complex aims” (p. 292). Unfortunately, when educators and policy-makers define writing instruction by testing, they argue, they limit

writing in the classroom to a “narrow band of functions” that cannot support students’ engagement in the complexity of authentic dialogue.

As Langer and Applebee (2007) point out in their study, *How writing shapes thinking*, when students are writing to be evaluated, they stick to what is safe. When they perceive their writing as part of an “ongoing instructional dialogue” they are more likely to use it to explore new ideas and take risks (p. 71). In an era of high-stakes testing, writing as a way to construct knowledge or generate new understanding is rare (Langer, 2011). In short, many teachers feel that there is no time for writing outside of testing and are left to figure out how to support student writers without stifling them and how to prepare students for the eventual reality of standardized tests while also recognizing testing’s inauthenticity as an out-of-school literacy practice. Given these teachers’ sentiments, Dellinger’s aforementioned concerns about changes in schooling that have led to decreased time and space for exploration and practice are further confirmed. In “Where does the NWP end and the real world begin?,” Dellinger championed the NWP for “do[ing] more than any other reform movement to build up teacher confidence and professional trust,” but she expressed this sentiment with the caveat that it had done so “during a period when the classroom teacher was relatively free to experiment and try such methods as she saw fit” as opposed to the “current” situation; although her piece was published in 1988, it still rings true today as teachers struggle to protect space and time for student inquiry through writing.

Karen Lunsford’s (2002) study on teaching argumentation using the Toulmin model provides an illustration of one way that teachers might attempt to support students’ grappling with complex inquiry through writing. The purpose of Lunsford’s study was to explore how classroom contexts mediate students’ and teachers’ understanding of Toulmin’s model of argumentation (Table 1). More specifically, Lunsford takes on the question of how to support

students' construction of complex arguments without stifling them and focuses her inquiry on teaching the Toulmin model of argument. In this study, Lunsford employs an ethnographic, case study approach, writing a thick description focused on a six-week summer writing course she was teaching for high school students. Responding to research (e.g. Boyer Commission, 1998; Slattery, 1991) suggesting that neither high school students nor college freshmen could write complex arguments, Lunsford and a colleague decided to teach students a Toulminian model of argumentation in the hopes that this would help problematize students' construction of arguments.

Claim:	The overall thesis the writer will argue for
Data:	Evidence gathered to support the claim
Warrant:	Explanation of why or how the data supports the claim
Backing:	Additional logic that may be necessary to support the warrant
Counterclaim:	A claim that negates or disagrees with the thesis/claim
Rebuttal:	Evidence that negates or disagrees with the counterclaim

Table 1. Toulmin model of argumentation

Though a common presence in the composition classroom, the Toulmin model, Lunsford argues, is often presented as acontextual. Teachers' focus on the heuristic and neglect of context is particularly problematic, she argues, because of Toulmin's own attention to context. Lunsford writes that according to Toulmin, utterances must be "assessed with one eye on ... context" and that arguments are "field-dependent." In Toulmin's model, *field* is the primary attribute impacting what and how information is presented (p. 113). In this study, Lunsford attempts to correct what she sees as a common misstep by studying how micro-level attributes (such as discipline or genre) impact students' and teachers' appropriation of Toulminian models through the lens of two additional theories. First, she brings in Wegner's (1998) work to contextualize Toulminian models as situated acts of *reification* and *participation* in a *community of practice* (p.

121). Additionally, Lunsford looks to Bakhtin to study how participants take up each other's language in their immediate, local discourse community (p. 123), focusing specifically on data collected regarding a disagreement over one student's claim.

Interestingly, though Lunsford uses Wegner and Bakhtin to add context to her own work as a researcher, this problematization of Toulmin remains tacit in classroom interactions. In her conclusions, Lunsford argues that the Toulminian model should be presented more fluidly: it should function in various forms, depending on goals; it should be applied and assessed differently, depending on context. She writes, "... the challenge for legitimate peripheral participants, as well as for more established participants, is not to learn the standard warrants of a stable community, but to enter into the complex, entangled social practices that construct them" (p. 161). However, though Lunsford is correct in pointing to the importance of understanding argumentative writing as the articulation of complex, fluid, context-dependent social practices, her findings are impractical: the main reasons that teachers in the study only take up the Toulmin model as a template are relatively straightforward. First, few teachers have experience with Toulmin, so they are already on shaky ground, even using the more simplified, acontextual model. In addition, teachers are looking for scaffolding they can provide to students as they make their way through arguments. Thus, it's not surprising that the tidy aspect of Toulmin's work (the model) would be taken up more often than the more complex aspect of context. Teachers also need to assess student work, and abstracting the Toulminian elements as objective and standardized creates a space for that where contextualized and subjective elements make assessment much more challenging. Thus, while Lunsford's work responding to the acontextualized presentation of Toulmin's model of argumentation is fair, she fails to offer any practical solutions to the issue, which perpetuates the struggle. With structural factors common



to institutions – e.g. large cohorts and standardized assessments – at play, the suggestion that teachers need to engage students in complex discussions by applying argumentative tools like the Toulmin model ignores the factors that create the situation in which teachers retreat to the most objective elements in the model in the first place.

In “High school English language arts teachers’ argumentative epistemologies for teaching writing,” Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen (2014) take a different angle, focusing less on the practices of teaching argument or the potential structural factors, and look instead at how teachers’ identities impact how and why teachers take certain instructional approaches. While I will come back to their larger project in the final chapter, it is important to see this study within the discussion of standardization. In their research, Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen define argumentative epistemologies as “a constellation of beliefs about argumentative writing, beliefs about teaching and learning such writing, ways of talking about argumentation, and approaches to teaching and assessment that are likely to be associated with these beliefs” (p. 97). They go on to identify three main argumentative epistemologies – structural, ideational, and social practice. And while they don’t go as far as to evaluate whether or not one epistemology is better for teaching argument than another, their presentation on social practice illustrates a level of alignment with this epistemology.

In their case study of “Clark,” a teacher who enacts a social practice epistemology in his classroom, Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen note that this teacher’s primary concern was “that his students learn to orchestrate their arguments not as set structures or as providing information for teacher evaluation, but as a social practice shaped by whom one addresses in a particular context” (p. 113). Clark was concerned with students’ understanding of rhetorical contexts for arguments but was also careful not to reduce the project to a formula. Even so,

Clark, like the teachers to whom Lunsford alludes in her study, uses several scaffolds to help students construct their arguments, notably the rhetorical triangle and Joseph Harris' (2006) writerly "moves."<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, just as McCarthey predicted in her 2008 study of the impact of the socioeconomic status of the school on teacher practice, at the time of the study, Clark, who self-identified as a rhetorician, was teaching an 11<sup>th</sup>-grade college prep English class in a relatively wealthy, supportive, suburban district. One wonders how Clark's discourse and practice might have been challenged or changed had he been teaching in a different context.

In her recent research, Sarah McCarthey (2008) and McCarthey and Mkhize (2013) study the impact of teachers' beliefs on writing instruction, focusing specifically on how these beliefs play out in high-income versus low-income schools. In her 2008 study, McCarthey interviews and observes 18 teachers in order to understand the impact of No Child Left Behind on teachers' writing instruction. Through the lens of Foucault's concept of *governmentality*, McCarthey compares teachers' attitudes and writing instruction in high- and low-income schools. Similarly, in 2013, McCarthey and Mkhize study 29 teachers from four states to investigate more broadly teachers' orientation towards writing in high income versus low-income schools. In both studies, findings reveal that the curriculum at high-income schools (those making Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP]) is much more complex than that at low-income schools. While data shows that teachers in high-income schools more often value rhetorical style, voice, and reading-writing connections, McCarthey and McCarthey and Mkhize find that teachers in low-income schools tend to focus on grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure.

Both of McCarthey's studies illustrate how the discourse and practices of standardized testing have direct impact on what and how students learn: when schools are deemed

---

<sup>2</sup> In *Rewriting: How to do things with texts*, Joseph Harris uses the term "moves" to talk about the way that writers of academic texts write in response to the work of others as they come to terms with, forward, and counter ideas.

“achieving,” teachers feel freer to teach writing as they wish, because their schools are making AYP. Teachers in “failing” schools, however, are swimming in what Hillocks (1999) calls “pessimistic” discourse. Often, in these schools, the discourse is that students cannot do serious work because they cannot do it correctly (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986). This idea that students cannot be trusted to deal with complexity until they learn “the basics,” while not universal, is ubiquitous. And this idea’s impact on argumentative writing in particular is strong: because argumentative writing demands opportunities to think and write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames, for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences, it is perceived by some teachers – especially those operating under the discourse of failure – as too advanced for students to tackle.

While McCarthy’s and McCarthy and Mkhize’s data reveal interesting patterns, it is also important to note the limitations of the studies. In both instances, sample size was small. While McCarthy and Mkhize’s study collected data from one 45-minute interview with each of the 29 participating teachers, McCarthy’s 2008 study only observed one class meeting for each of the 18 participating teachers. In many ways, this dearth of observations is a serious flaw, as judging a teacher’s practice based on only one interview or one class period is problematic. Future studies could test out McCarthy’s observation on a more plausible sample over a longer period of time.

Finally, as Behizadeh & Engelhard (2011) point out, the inherent theory of writing as enacted through standardized writing assessments in the U.S. is more aligned with writing as a cognitive skill rather than writing as occurring within a larger sociocultural context for the purpose of producing meaning (p. 206). In other words, while writing theory has coalesced around sociocultural understandings of learning, standardized assessments in this country

continue to ignore the social and cultural contexts at play inside and beyond our schools. The resulting high-stakes, win/lose discourse perpetuates an atmosphere in which curriculum is often contracted, students' energy is squandered on basic skills, and teacher-centered pedagogy remains firmly in place. Finding the time and freedom for argumentative writing in this context proves challenging.

**Argumentative writing and classroom power dynamics.** A second and equally pressing question for researchers in the field of argumentative writing pedagogy asks how structures of power are articulated in the classroom and what impact these articulations have on the teaching of argumentative writing. Thirty years ago, in *Research on Written Composition*, Hillocks (1986) made the case that there are three modes of instruction – presentational, natural process, and environmental – and that the environmental mode is most effective because it brings teachers, students, and materials more nearly into balance. Since then, practitioners have promoted the rejection of “sage on the stage” in exchange for the “guide on the side,” as a metaphor for teachers' stance.

Although the disciplinary consensus seems to be that practitioners should be trying to balance power in the classroom, constraints to changing practice – namely testing, textbooks, conditions of instruction – keep many teachers from making these changes. As Langer and Applebee (2007) note, teachers still struggle to move away from seeing the teacher as transmitter of knowledge and evaluator of performance.

In his study, *Because we live here: Sponsoring literacy beyond the college curriculum*, Eli Golblatt (2007) writes about his attempts to connect the college curriculum to the high school curriculum in the hope of “enact[ing] democratic values through literacy education” (p. 15). Predictably, this project becomes immediately problematized when Golblatt finds himself trying

to “sell” college to students who were “very skeptical” of what they might need to learn (p. 53). Eventually, Goldblatt begins to discover some of the undercurrents at work. First, many students and teachers exist in a world where school teaches “obedience to external authority” and where writing assignments are “mere extensions of the rule of law” (p. 74). Goldblatt goes on to note that “in working-class and poor schools, literacy is highly linked to control and a certain restricted type of mastery” (p. 118). In other words, as McCarthy (2008) pointed out in her study of the differing impact of testing on high and low income schools, the way that power is articulated depends greatly on social class and context.

In Goldblatt’s work, the articulation of power structures through the specific lens of social class directly impacts whether or not students even attempt to take on the writing projects assigned. For example, Goldblatt encounters one student whose shop teacher assigns a five-page paper as a punishment for a rowdy class. The assignment of writing as an extension of “the rule of law” is clear in this case, and while this practice was not experienced often by the honors and Advanced Placement students in Goldblatt’s cohort, it was much more common for struggling students or students in regular track courses. Goldblatt’s study, then, reveals some of the problematic ways that power structures are abused in the classroom: when students are taught to perceive writing instruction as a punishment, as an empty and pointless activity, their engagement in any type of writing becomes much more difficult to cultivate.

Beyond some students’ experience of the assignment of writing as a clear exercise of control, more subtle power dynamics are at play across contexts. For example, in their 1986 study of basic writing at the college level, Bartholomae & Petrosky grapple with the sentiment that students should be kept from doing serious work until they are able to do it “correctly.” In their study – which engages basic writing students in meaningful, substantive writing and

thinking—Bartholomae and Petrosky challenge this line of deficit thinking, positing that when students are unable to respond to a reading, it could be a problem of “status and authority” (p. 6). When students aren’t empowered in schools, how can they feel authorized to offer a “reading” of a text, Bartholomae and Petrosky rightly ask (p. 6), and they further add that “[t]he overriding pedagogical problem with the concept of a single, identifiable main idea that all readers can agree upon is that it denies readers their own transaction with a text, and it denies them the understanding that reading is such a transaction rather than an attempt to guess at a meaning that belongs to someone else” (p. 12). For Bartholomae and Petrosky, the goal of their course is to develop an “enabling language” that will return power to students so that they begin to see themselves as authorized readers and writers (p. 15). In regards to the teaching of argumentative writing specifically, Bartholomae and Petrosky’s work paves the way for empowering students to take a stance, make a claim, and consider opposing viewpoints. If students don’t feel authorized as readers, it’s unlikely that they would feel that their positions on controversial policy issues, for example, would have any place in the classroom. And if it is the case that students cannot position themselves as authorized speakers, the teaching of argumentation becomes excessively challenging.

As one way to bring Bartholomae and Petrosky’s concept of “enabling language” into the realm of argumentative writing, many scholars have looked to Bakhtin and dialogism. As Ferretti and Lewis (2013) note in their review of best practices in the teaching of argumentative writing, dialogue is important to argumentation specifically because an argument is “a communicative act that depends on the actual or imagined involvement of other people” (p. 114). In “Beyond *Writing Next*,” Coker and Lewis (2012) point to the inauthentic nature of many in-school writing assignments – which are often written without real purpose or audience beyond

the teacher – as potentially undermining of students’ abilities to anticipate other people’s perspectives and think critically about the information presented by their sources. By engaging students in explicit activities promoting dialogic discourse and practices, teachers can attempt to counter this trend.

In their study of using chat rooms to develop middle school students’ argumentative writing abilities, for example, Morgan and Beaumont (2003) devise and enact a series of strategies – role-play, the staged performance of a collaborative discussion, and a series of online chat-room discussions – in order to analyze the ways in which these dialogic approaches help to bridge students from verbal to written argument. Implicit in the first part of their research question – “Are 12-year-old students ready to be introduced to cogently argued and rhetorically persuasive speech and writing?” – is the dynamic challenged by other scholars such as Bartholomae and Petrosky that places teachers in the position of deciding whether or not students have the capacity to think in certain ways. However, early in the study, Morgan and Beaumont adjust their stance to take into account the “rich discourse skills of children and adolescents in non-school settings” (p.147). In their discussion, Morgan and Beaumont argue that the outcomes of the dialogic learning strategies indicated that students were able to compose stronger claims and to support those claims with more logical reasons. While data do point to this outcome, and the reasons that Morgan and Beaumont offer to explain this result are fair (essentially that students are able to transfer verbal skills to writing more easily and that they simply have more practice), there are also power structures at play here that go virtually unexamined, namely the democratizing shift from teacher to student dialogue to student to student conversations.

While Morgan and Beaumont do point to the importance of helping students to see argument as dialogic in order to help them to develop purpose and work with a sense of

audience, they neglect to identify that the move toward dialogue is also empowering in that it gives value to students' voices. While interacting with their peers in chat rooms may have been "decentering," as Morgan and Beaumont point out, to students' own arguments, the dynamic of peer interaction also carries the potential to empower students by allowing them to participate in substantial class discussions with one another.

This was not just another exercise of students producing content for a teacher to consume and evaluate. Rather, students were participating in democratic discussions with one another. As Morgan and Beaumont conclude, students who have participated in dialogic activities seem better prepared to accept and incorporate the voices of others in their own texts. However, the more important factor inherent in the setup that Morgan and Beaumont employed in the teaching of argumentative writing was the empowerment of students. It would be interesting in further studies to examine whether or not similar improvements would occur in situations where students were explicitly placed in dialogue with the teacher. What kinds of dialogues are most impactful, and how important is it that students feel empowered?

Like Morgan and Beaumont, Nussbaum and Schraw (2007) explore methods for promoting the development of complex arguments and the integration of counterarguments. However, they do so from a cognitive perspective, focusing on how specific interventions activate different argumentation schema in students. In their discussion, they attempt to make sense of the results of their study, which show how two different interventions (criterion instruction v. graphic organizers) produced markedly different results in the way students constructed arguments. Ultimately, they decide that the graphic organizer – which led to less balanced reasoning – should be replaced with a less structured intervention with a more explicit goal (p. 84). Interestingly, Nussbaum and Schraw trace the failure of the graphic organizer back



to the point that argumentation is typically cast by teachers as persuasive writing rather than analytic writing (p. 81). Students, they argue, work through the graphic organizer activity differently when they interpret their task as one of persuasion than if they interpret their work as inquiry-based. This is a salient point that again loops back to the first discussion of complexity in the classroom. In many ways, argumentation as persuasion is much more straightforward than argumentation as analysis. In either case, unless students feel empowered to take a stance on an issue, to offer, as Bartholomae and Petrosky would call it, a “reading” of the issue, teachers will continue to struggle to support students’ deep engagement in argumentation.

Considering that, as Beck (2006) argues, “[e]nforcing norms has always been a focus of institutions...” (p. 455), stakeholders must be aware of how institutional power structures impact our instructional practices and goals. In Nussbaum and Schraw’s study, students may learn what their teachers expect of them, but the question remains of whether or not they will be empowered to repeat these performances beyond the scope of the provided graphic organizer. And while researchers seem to be taking up the challenge of incorporating dialogism, articulation of this practice of dialogism in the classroom remains uncommon (Applebee & Langer, 2013).

With teachers positioned as transmitters of information, students evaluated based on declarative rather than procedural knowledge, and assessments remaining largely summative over formative, hurdles to changing practice loom large. However, just as the research abounds with patterns of challenges, it also teems with examples of schools and teachers bucking trends and reconceiving traditionally institutionalized power structures to teach writing in ways that are meaningful and important to themselves and their communities. For example, in her 2008 study, McCarthy studies one teacher from a low-income school who demonstrates a potential for resistance in the way that she negotiates her own writing instruction under the demands of

NCLB. As Langer and Applebee (2007) point out in their study, “The extent to which [teachers] made such changes was governed by several factors, all related to their ideas of their roles as teachers and the students’ roles as learners: what it means to teach, what it means to learn...” (p. 85). In fact, teachers’ morale, epistemologies, and identities may be seen as equally if not more powerful than the institutional constraints that surround them.

**Teachers’ epistemologies and the teaching of argumentative writing.** Hillocks’ (1999) study of the impact of teacher identity on teaching is oft quoted by researchers in the field. In this study, Hillocks argues that educational change must always be mediated through teachers. He explains that most of the teachers in his sample are articulating Freire’s banking model of education, what Moje (2008) calls the “pedagogy of telling,” and in doing so, they anticipate being able to transfer ideas directly from their minds to their students’ minds. When the ideas don’t transfer, however, teachers who position themselves this way are likely to blame students for not applying themselves (Hillocks, 1999, p. 93). Once again, this idea returns to the earlier discussion of power structures, as in this vision of the classroom, the teacher is the bearer of knowledge, students mere repositories.

Similar to Bartholomae and Petrosky, Hillocks argues that teachers who are not optimistic objectivists think this: “[b]ecause the students are weak, they cannot be expected to learn very much. Therefore, they require simplified formulas and are likely to have difficulty even with them” (p. 133). Even more poignantly, Hillocks argues that because this type of teaching is presentational, the possibilities for reflection are limited: “[t]eaching writing under these assumptions becomes a protected activity. There is no need to call assumptions or methods into question, no need to try something new, no reason to doubt one’s teaching methods” (p. 133). It’s no mystery why teachers who occupy this stance might be less open to change. However, it

is important to think about how this stance comes about, as teaching argumentation at all from this stance, in which student perspective is not valued, is an unlikely prospect.

In several of the studies previously mentioned, teacher identity plays an important role in the discussion. In McCarthy (2008) and McCarthy and Mkhize's (2013) studies, for example, we see institutional factors of poverty and the corresponding discourse of testing in the way that these factors impact how writing is taught: while high income school teachers focus on higher level issues of rhetorical style and voice, low income school teachers focus on grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure. The implications for argumentative writing here are clear: if argument even makes it into the curriculum, argumentative writing has little chance of being presented by teachers in struggling schools as a complex exercise in considering purpose, genre, audience. Rather, the more likely situation of teachers paying more attention to the form than the content of students' arguments becomes the reality. Those of us in the classroom see this practiced ubiquitously.

Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen's study of teachers' argumentative epistemologies – in many ways an argument-focused, more current articulation of Hillocks' (1999) project in *Ways of Thinking, Ways of Teaching* – locates decisions about how and why argumentative writing is taught in teacher identity, a generative move that helps us to see beyond the enactment of practices and strategies into the undergirding of teachers' moves.

In their work, Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen spend less time considering the origin of teachers' epistemologies and focus instead on the impact that teachers' beliefs have on the way that they teach argumentation. Their study is unique in that – even though other studies have commented on teacher identity – Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen, like Hillocks (1999), focus their attention on teacher identity as a means for exploring how and why teachers

choose to adopt particular approaches to teaching argumentative writing. In doing so, they get closer to the heart of how and why some practices are integrated into the classroom and others are not. They write, "...we believe that how and why teachers take up instructional products and processes are more nuanced and complex than simply learning a new teaching strategy or method" (p. 97). What is implicit here is that studying the effectiveness of certain strategies and institutional factors only scratches the surface of how and why change happens in the way that argumentative writing is taught in classrooms.

Missing from Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen's study is the exploration of what happens when teachers don't seem to be teaching from a belief system at all. While not suggesting that teachers come to the classroom without experiences that frame their teaching, many teachers do come to the classroom without clearly developed teaching philosophies, purposes, or goals. Defining what it is that students who leave their classrooms will know and be able to do is not easy for some. When this is the case, what impact do these teachers' lack of articulated epistemologies have on the teaching of argumentative writing?

In conversations with teachers, discussions often loop back to one foundational question: what is the purpose of schooling? As Csikszentmihalyi (1997) argues, we haven't come to a conclusion as a society about the task of education: are we trying to help people reach material goals? Do we want to help them attain happiness? Can we collectively or individually articulate our goals as educators? While we should continue to reject the promotion of a universal epistemology, designers and providers of professional development might, as Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen suggest, need to consider providing more specific support to teachers in developing their own justifications for what and how they teach.

**Conclusions.** While a wide range of studies of the teaching of writing exists, studies focusing on middle and high school, and particularly studies addressing argumentative writing specifically are less common. Even so, whether articulated as specifically related to argumentative writing or not, there are three central issues that emerge across the research in the field: finding a place for the complex, long-term work of argumentative writing in an atmosphere of standardization; negotiating institutionalized power to create space for students to engage in argumentative writing; and considering the impact that teachers' beliefs, especially pertaining to what and how writing should be taught, have on students' argumentative writing.

Especially if the Common Core State Standards (or the minor variations that have replaced them in some states) remain in place, argumentative writing will certainly continue to demand the attention of practitioners and scholars around the country. What is not often enough voiced, however, is the enormous shift that this focus on argumentative writing represents for English language arts teachers in particular: the act of equally distributing reading and writing assignments between fiction and nonfiction is a major move for many teachers whose love of literature—as opposed to their love of argumentative writing—is what drew them to the field. To begin to address the issues of complexity, power, and identity that are at play in the discipline, stakeholders need to acknowledge the major shifts being requested of teachers as they attempt to navigate constantly shifting terrain.

## Chapter 2: Methods and Vignettes

On March 2, 2011, President Obama signed a spending bill aimed at providing a temporary reprieve from a government shutdown, eliminating direct federal funding for the National Writing Project (NWP). After 20 years of support through the Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the NWP struggled to locate alternative funding sources, moving to securing support from private foundations and competitive government grant programs, which have a tendency to be purpose- and outcome-driven (Whitney & Friedrich, 2013) in a way that the NWP had not been to date. For example, for our local Writing Project site, topics of professional development tended to emerge in response to direct requests from administrators and teachers in area schools. Rather than opting in to a pre-created program, schools identified areas of growth and requested assistance from the Writing Project in creating programming to address those needs.

The NWP's search for alternative funding bore fruit almost immediately, as the organization received a highly competitive government grant in 2012 of \$14.9 million through the Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) to support the College-Ready Writers Program (CRWP). Established as a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the i3 program was created to support local educational agencies (LEAs) and nonprofits in partnership with public schools. The stated purpose of the program was to invest in innovative practices that have a demonstrated impact on improving student achievement, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, increasing high school graduation rates, and increasing college enrollment and completion rates (Investing in Innovation Fund (i3), 2016). The NWP's College-Ready Writers Program fit within the "Improving Rural Achievement" priority.

Designed to offer professional development for rural middle and high school teachers in order to improve the teaching of writing aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the CRWP illustrates an important moment for the NWP as the network evolves in response to a funding climate producing purpose- and outcome-driven programs unlike the programs embraced and promoted by the NWP prior to that point. The goals of previous projects such as the English Language Learners Network; Rural Sites Network; Teacher Inquiry Communities; New Teacher Initiative; and Technology Initiative stated a very different set of goals than the CRWP and other purpose- and outcome-driven programs that came afterwards. Consider the stated goals of the Rural Sites Network versus the original goals of the CRWP:

Rural Sites Network:

- Support teacher research into rural educational contexts and issues and provide opportunities for teacher-researchers to disseminate their findings
- Document the work of your site and its teachers in order to enhance the public's understanding of rural education
- Begin a new program, or enhance a developing program, for delivering professional development or providing continuity in the rural areas you serve
- Expand and/or diversify the leadership base at your site
- Collaborate with other networks, programs, initiatives, or individual sites within the NWP.

(Rural site networks: Request for proposals, 2011)

College-Ready Writers Program:

- Improve middle and high school teachers' practice in the teaching of academic writing
- Improve middle and high school student academic writing achievement
- Increase the number of rural teacher-leaders in participating schools and districts

(Gallagher & Woodworth, 2013)

The Rural Site Network and the CRWP's goals overlapped in one area – expanding teacher leadership. Beyond that, the goals are quite different. While the Rural Site Network grant supported “teacher research” and the building of new programs, it did not specify the content of the research or the type of program that sites would build. The CRWP, on the other hand, has a specific focus on a type of writing – academic – that becomes even more focused as the grant progressed. This contrast between the broad support offered by the NWP's previous programs and the narrow support of the CRWP became more evident as the years went on.

By the second year of the CRWP grant, the goals of the program were re-circulated to site leaders via a two-page flyer titled “Why Argument Writing,” (see Appendix A) which provided two main justifications for the narrowing of focus from academic writing to argument writing. First, “a goal of education is to expand students’ sense of their possibilities and roles in the world. Argument writing plays a role in students’ identities in their careers, as college students, and as citizens.” Second, “developing skills in argument writing is not just about students’ future. By practicing arguments, students become more thoughtful citizens of their school, better learners, and more capable test-takers.” The stated expectation for Writing Project sites was to “support teachers’ implementing argument writing.” By the third year of the grant, the focus narrowed once more. The 2015-16 website for the CRWP explains that the central goal of the program was “to help students become skilled at writing arguments *from non-fiction sources*” (emphasis my own) (National Writing Project, 2016). Both the evolution from “academic writing” to “writing arguments from non-fiction sources” and the contrast between prior NWP initiatives and high-stakes grants like the CRWP that were funded following the NWP's loss of direct federal funding illustrate the strong influence of the funding climate on the nature of the CRWP grant's goals.



## Research Site and Participants

**White Clover Valley School District.** This study examines the experience of the first cohort of teachers with the College-Ready Writers Program. The first cohort of teachers in the early start district participated in the CRWP for two full academic years from 2013 through 2015. Our early start district, located in a rural area in the northwest corner of our state, is one of the two county seats. With a population of 5375 as of July 2014 (United States Census Bureau, 2015) and with a district enrollment topping 2000, the town of White Clover Valley revolves around its schools.

In White Clover Valley, 77% of residents hold a high school degree or higher, and only 11% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. The most common industry in town, employing 37% of the workforce is manufacturing, much of which happens at a chicken processing plant directly across the street from the middle school campus. The town's population has grown rapidly since 2000. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 936 people moved to the White Clover Valley between 2000 and 2013, many coming to the area for opportunities in the manufacturing sector, marking a rise of 23% percent rise in the town's population (City-data.com, 2016). White Clover Valley's demographics have also changed dramatically during this time, with 25% of the current population now being Hispanic and 20% of the school district attendees deemed to have limited English proficiency (Arkansas Department of Education, 2015).

As we had been encouraged to do by the NWP's i3 leadership team, a colleague and I headed out to White Clover Valley for the first time one afternoon in late April of 2013 to speak to the entire faculty at an afterschool meeting in order to introduce the College-Ready Writers Program and invite teachers to attend a series of information gathering meetings. On May 14, 2013, we drove out to the Mountaintop Café and spent the entire day drinking coffee and eating

chicken and pie with teachers from White Clover Valley Middle School and High School. Our questions were simple: (1) What is it like to be a student in White Clover Valley, AR and (2) What is it like to be a teacher in White Clover Valley, AR? The full protocol, including sub-questions is available in Appendix B.

Attendees to the May 2013 meeting came from a range of disciplines and grades. However, when we asked what writing students were engaged in, most responses came from English teachers. The following includes all genres and purposes for writing that were offered by White Clover Valley teachers in those first meetings:

- Quick writes and journal entries
- Creative writing
- Writing about literature
- Annual research projects
- Essays as a part of The Learning Institute (TLI) assessments
- Argument / analysis / synthesis (12<sup>th</sup> ELA only)

In addition to information about students' writing practices, the challenges that teachers shared also became guiding lights for the design and implementation of the professional development, especially in the first year. Most teachers agreed on the main challenges they faced:

- 1) The Learning Institute (TLI) – The district had recently purchased a testing program that teachers were expected to implement, and stress about the pre-created units and mandatory tests abounded.
- 2) Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) – The district had also recently unveiled a new teacher evaluation system, and teachers were nervous about the new requirements and regulations.

- 3) Time to work together – Teachers didn't know one another. High school teachers had never met middle school teachers, and, even in the same building, teachers struggled to find time to collaborate.
- 4) Technology – Teachers felt they needed improved access to technology and improved training.
- 5) Student apathy – The most frequently stated concern in our initial meetings was that students were “apathetic,” that they didn't turn in work, that there was “no culture of reading,” that kids “want answers given to them,” and that they are “sloppy and lazy.”

My field notes from the May interviews indicated the following: “Students are apathetic, but as Leah noted, there are probably pretty substantive reasons for that (i.e., lack of choice, authentic audience, etc.). Teachers are open to bringing writing to their classrooms, but they don't know how. We need to help teachers to create interesting research projects and to update the research process. English teachers need help balancing between literature and composition” (field notes, May 2013).

**Participating teachers.** From the fall of 2013 through the spring of 2015, the CRWP worked with 6 middle school English language arts teachers, 5 high school English language arts teachers, and one middle school career orientation and family and consumer sciences teacher. For the purposes of this study, I present seven profiles representative of major roles enacted among the full cohort of twelve teachers. Five of the seven profiles represent individual teachers; two profiles are composites of two teachers working together at the same grade level whose values, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching were closely aligned.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for the project began in March of 2013 and continued through the early spring of 2016. From September of 2013 through May of 2015, I met with participants once per week during their planning periods to discuss the CRWP work and make plans for next

instructional steps. Classroom observations of all twelve teachers were conducted intermittently from the fall of 2014 through the spring of 2015 with each teacher being observed at least twice. Student writing was collected from participants occasionally from the fall of 2013 through the spring of 2015. Exit interviews were conducted with 9 of the 12 participants in April and May of 2015.<sup>3</sup> Lesson plans were posted online by teachers each week beginning in the fall of 2014. A final round of reflective vignettes was collected from participants in the winter of 2015 - 2016. Figure 4 includes the interview protocol used for all individual interviews in the spring of 2015. Figure 5 illustrates the reflective vignette prompt disseminated to all cohort 1 participants in December of 2015.

#### Demographic information

- 1) How / when / where did you earn your teaching license?
- 2) How long have you been teaching?
- 3) How long have you been teaching in this district?
- 4) Have you noticed any changes in the field over the course of your career? What changes have you made in response?
- 5) Have you always taught English?
- 6) What drew you to teaching English?

#### Curriculum

- 7) Tell me about the lesson I observed today. What are the goals?
- 8) How does this lesson fit into your curriculum for the year?
- 9) By the end of the year, what do you hope your students will know and be able to do?
- 10) How do you decide what students will read?
- 11) How often do students write in your classroom? What do they write? How do you decide

---

<sup>3</sup> I was unable to schedule interviews with three participants due to logistics and challenges in scheduling during the last few weeks of school.

what students will write?

12) Where do your ideas for teaching come from?

Testing

13) How do you prepare for standardized tests?

14) How do you tend to assess your students' work?

Perception

15) Do you consider yourself to be a reader? A writer?

16) Please tell me a success story about something important that has happened between you and a student this year

17) Please tell me about a favorite moment from this year, the kind of moment that inspires you to keep teaching

18) Why did you decide to become a teacher?

19) What do you want to tell me that I haven't asked about yet?

Figure 4: Interview protocol April / May 2015

Colleagues,

We were excited to learn a few weeks ago that the National Writing Project has received additional grant funding to sustain and expand the work of the College-Ready Writers Program. As part of the learning process, we are studying the experience of teachers who have participated in the first cohort of the project from the fall of 2013 through the spring of 2015. We hope that you might help us build your perspective in more formally by adding your voices to the project through two brief stories.

In a few pages, please tell us two stories – one describing and reflecting on a successful experience and one describing and reflecting on a challenge or tension you are still working to address – related to the teaching of argumentative writing. Feel free to focus on any aspect of the process – from planning and teaching to assessing student work or collaborating with your colleagues.

To frame your stories, please include the following –

- What you were hoping would happen or be accomplished
- The context in which the work occurred
- Why you think this success / failure happened
- What feels most important about this experience for you and why

Please feel free to conclude your writing with any overall reflections, critiques, or comments regarding your experience with the College-Ready Writers Program.

Information you submit will be added to the data collected as a part of the CRWP. Any vignettes that are used in future publications will be anonymous. If you have any questions about the research, contact me X or the Office of Research Compliance at X.

Figure 5: Vignette prompt December 2015

My data corpus comprises a range of sources including audio recorded interviews, field notes for all weekly meetings and observations, and a wide range of written artifacts from participating teachers and their students. While much of the data was collected in a general effort to track progress, the exit interviews and reflective vignettes were conducted for the specific purpose of building understanding of why some teachers chose to integrate argumentative writing into their classrooms and why others did not. The exit interview questions were designed to provide information about teachers' values, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching in order to sketch a picture of teachers' epistemologies of literacy. Background questions were designed to collect information about how teachers' past experiences with schooling and training impacted their epistemologies. Questions about teachers' goals were designed to unearth values undergirding decisions about what to teach and how. Questions regarding teachers' assessment practices were designed to articulate teachers' attitudes towards testing, attitudes that might provide insight into teachers' perception of power structures at work in their classrooms. Finally, the perception questions were included in an effort to consider how teachers' identities and teachers' epistemologies might impact their stance towards the CRWP. Questions were ordered with an awareness of the fact that, as Briggs (1986) points out in *Learning how to ask* the communicative structure of the entire interview affects the meaning of each utterance. For this reason, questions were ordered from objective to subjective in order to help teachers interpret the experience as both personal and safe.

The reflective vignettes, on the other hand, were modeled after the approach taken by Ann Lieberman and Linda Friedrich in the National Writing Project's publication, *How teachers become leaders: Learning from practice and research*. Featuring reflective vignettes written by K – 12 teachers describing their evolution as teacher leaders, Lieberman and Friedrich's text uses teachers' stories to identify major themes that emerge as teachers move into leadership roles. Similarly, participants in the first cohort of the CRWP were asked to tell two stories about their experiences with the program to further identify values comprising their epistemologies of literacy and impacting their decisions to resist or integrate the practices introduced by and associated with the College-Ready Writers Program.

### Data Analysis Protocols

**Transcription.** After the data set was complete, interview data were analyzed systematically. First, all interviews were listened to again, and notes of major themes were made for each. Next, interviews were played again at 30 percent speed using the InqScribe software, and transcriptions were made. Interviews were played one final time in order to be broken into lines by intonation units and transcribed using an adaptation of DuBois' 2013 transcription conventions indicating tone, speed, nonverbal cues, and other important discourse markers.

Table 2 provides the full list of conventions employed in the transcriptions.

Transcription Conventions	
.	Indicates falling / final intonation contour
-	Indicates truncated intonation unit
?	Indicates rising intonation (not necessarily a question)
,	Indicates micropause of less than 0.2 seconds
...	Indicates a pause lasting more than 0.2 seconds
(1.2)	Indicates silence, measured by tenths of a second
No wa::y	Indicates prolongation of sound preceding them
Unnecessary	Indicates stress or emphasis by increased loudness or pitch
@that's @right	Indicates words said while laughing

☺	Indicates words said while smiling
(Cough)	Indicates vocalism (i.e. yawn, sniff, sob)
~Kim	Indicates name change to maintain anonymity
Kim = students	Indicates speaker speaking in role of another

Table 2: Transcription Conventions

After interviews were transcribed, transcriptions were coded using MAXQDA software. Interviews were first coded descriptively. In the second round of coding, in vivo coding was used in an effort to value teachers' voices by using their actual words to determine the categories, sub-categories, and themes (Saldana, 2013, p. 91). Finally, in vivo codes were coded once more and organized into categories, subcategories, and themes related specifically to expressed values, attitudes, and beliefs. The coding of values was chosen as the final cycle of coding because of the study's concern with the cultural values, identities, and experiences of the participating teachers. As Briggs (1986) explains, the identification of the utterances that address the subject in question – teachers' values, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching – allows the analysis to focus in on how these specific utterances fit into the broader experience (p. 105). In Chapter Four, I look at two specific aspects of participants' epistemologies of literacy as they relate to their identities as readers, writers, and teachers, and as they relate to teachers' understanding of what counts a social good regarding literacy events and literacy acquisition.

### **Researcher Reflexivity**

As Heath and Street (2008) point out, reflexivity was an essential component of this research, as it allowed me to see my research as situated within the “historical and structural constraints that result from asymmetrical power distributions” (p. 123). My perspective in White Clover Valley was at once both insider and outsider. Particularly during the first year, I was acutely aware of the tensions that Donehower, Hogg, and Schell mention in *Rural Literacies* that often exist between rural people and outside education “professionals” (p.24). I, myself, was



finishing up a professional development series in a neighboring district that hadn't gone well, which, in my estimation, was primarily due to exactly this tension and the resulting sense from teachers that the University was coming into their community to tell teachers what they were doing wrong. I began the CRWP highly sensitive to the complex relationships that exist between literacy sponsors and their sponsored, especially in the case of perceived unequal balances of power, such as relationships between land grant universities and the rural areas in which they are typically embedded.

Rather than being perceived as an outsider coming in to "fix" local practices, I hoped to create a relationship of exchange, similar to what Edmondson suggests in her study of rural literacy practices in a small community in Minnesota (Edmondson, 2003, p.15). I spent one day each week at school with teachers, working alongside them in their classrooms and planning with them during their planning periods. For each monthly all group meeting, I made meals for the group to share, as I felt it was important to bring healthy, high-quality, homemade food to the community of teachers in order to cultivate an environment of care. I also find it important to note that I was pregnant during the first year of the project, a quality that provided some inroads for me with participating teachers who were also parents as well as with teachers outside of the program who were interested in chatting about my pregnancy while I was on campus in White Clover Valley. In this small community, even as an outsider, my new child provided an easy topic of conversation that helped the development of my insider status.

Finally, teachers were also aware of the fact that I was sensitive to their struggles to match the content in argumentative writing with their own epistemologies of literacy. With both the exit interviews and the reflective vignettes, I attempted to play as objective a role as possible. However, as a participant observer, I was both an insider and an outsider. As an outsider, I was

representative of the National Writing Project and the University. As an insider and colleague, I was empathetic towards some teachers' concerns about the singular emphasis on argumentative writing. In some ways, these roles may have balanced teachers' responses – they were speaking and writing to me about a program for which I was the “boots on the ground,” so they were compelled to be kind so as not to hurt my feelings. However, they were also aware of my own willingness to grapple with some of the practices, and conversations that we'd been conducting informally for months were sometimes re-articulated in interviews and vignettes. When collecting vignettes, I briefly considered sending the request for reflections via a more neutral source – a graduate student who was working with the program for the year – but ultimately decided that action would have been misleading. Thus, I decided to send requests for reflections directly, even though I was aware that there was some possibility that teachers could interpret the request as a request for an evaluation of my own role with the project.

Towards the end of her exit interview, as Nicole worked to express her feelings about all of the responsibilities teachers juggled, in addition to the actual teaching of their subject matter, she remarked, “Well, you're a teacher. You know.” Her sentiment and the way it included me as a teacher, rather than merely a professional development provider or researcher, illustrates the relationship I had hoped to – and believe I did – cultivate with participating teachers.

### **Participant Profiles**

Framed as it is by New Literacy Studies and the conception of literacy as social practice always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles, this dissertation invites readers to consider how teachers' identities and conceptions of literacy build their epistemologies of literacy. Chapters Two, Three, and Four of this dissertation describe and analyze participants' discourse, considering how both identity and differing understandings of literacy as a social good

reveal ideologies and undergird the decisions they make in their classrooms about why, how, and what to teach. In the remaining pages of this chapter, I present profiles of the CRWP participants as a way of introducing them to the reader. These same responses will then be subjected to more detailed analysis in the following chapter in order to reveal how they articulate some of the driving conceptions of knowledge, identity, purpose, and literacy that teachers bring with them to the community of educators.

**Leah.** *“It gives them that platform [...] to feel like they’re contributing something to society.”*

I have a strong memory of the first time I met Leah. It was the spring of 2013, and a colleague and I had been invited out to White Clover Valley for an after school staff meeting to tell teachers about the grant we had received and to invite them to sign up for more information. Leah lingered at the end of the line. Small and energetic, she stuck around while we packed up after the session, peppering us with questions and telling us how excited she was that we would be working with her school. I remember the purple butterfly dress she was wearing, not because I have an excellent memory for those kinds of details, but because I thought of the day often. As the months progressed and we prepared to launch the program, I held on to Leah’s energy and good will as a sign of positive things to come.

When we began this project in the spring of 2013, we were finishing a professional development series that hadn’t gone very well, and I was feeling anxious about how well received our new grant would be in this new district. It was nice to feel from the first day that we had advocates in our new district who wanted us to be there.

Leah proved to be an amazing ally for the CRWP. A gifted and purposeful teacher, Leah was well respected by her colleagues, but she was also quite approachable. While her colleagues were sometimes intimidated by her methods, they couldn't be intimidated by her gentle presence.

As the senior English teacher at White Clover Valley High School, Leah was best known for her senior CAPstone project, through which students were invited to research a topic of interest and implement a related community service project. Here's how Leah explained the goals of this work:

I have five, five big ideas, those are my goals.  
 Um, and.. the first one is  
 Students will understand that, number one,  
 self directed learning opens doors  
 for authentic and meaningful acquiring of knowledge and skills.  
 Number two, problem solving should be a habit that empowers them  
 to solve not only their own problems,  
 but the challenges of their schools, communities,  
 and maybe even the world.  
 Number three, by working with peers, collaboration,  
 they take full responsibility for building knowledge together,  
 changing and evolving together, and improving together.  
 Number four, they possess the ability to change lives  
 through the power of their voice,  
 which is our capstone theme for the year,  
 which worked really well.  
 And number five, good writing.. dare I say doing.. is a reflective process.

Ultimately, Leah described the goal of her CAPstone project as giving students the opportunity “to master, or at least attempt to master... the skills that they can transfer into other facets of their lives, professionally and personally.” She also voiced the project's goal as giving students agency. She explained that CAPstone allowed students to “utilize skills that they have learned throughout their educational career.. into this one project.. a project they care about and that they want to succeed in. It gives them that platform, that space, that place... to feel like they're contributing something to society.” Leah's dedication to helping student develop a sense

of responsibility and agency were illustrative of her positive epistemological orientation regarding student capacity as well as her orientation towards understanding literacy as power, a metaphor that I will explore in more depth later in this chapter.

Of all of the teachers participating in the College-Ready Writers Program, Leah was most able to articulate her teaching philosophy. In an interview in the spring of 2015 she explained,

I like to think of my career as before and after.  
 Before my master's program,  
 I taught English because I loved literature.  
 I was a content teacher.  
 Um, I wanted- my purpose was to... get my kids..  
 to have my kids fall in love with reading.. and writing.. literature.  
 But I knew going in, those first five years that something was missing,  
 I just didn't know what it was.  
 And then my after was...  
 I earned my master's in rhetoric and comp.  
 That was the missing link.  
 I realized I'm a writing teacher, composition teacher,  
 And so, for the last four years,  
 I've been developing my curriculum solely around writing.

She went on to clarify,

... To me, it makes sense, uh,  
 the kind of writing we want our students to learn  
 to be active members within their community.  
 I love literature.  
 I still read literature,  
 But I don't write literary analysis..  
 and I don't see its purpose for young people  
 if they're not going to English lit.  
 It's not practical.

Here, Leah clearly expresses an epistemology of literacy as adaptation, which prioritizes the pragmatic purposes of literacy. Even so, as someone who considered herself first a literature teacher and subsequently a writing teacher, by the end of the project Leah talked about looking forward to synthesizing these identities and bringing literature back in to function in conversation with the informational and argumentative reading and writing that had operated as

the major players in her classroom for her years at White Clover Valley High School. She explained,

Until you taught us fulcrum texts<sup>4</sup>, I kind of, like,  
threw the literature out the window,  
simply because it was too much for me at this time to try to navigate my  
way through this place.

INT - So, maybe that will come back around at some point?

Hopefully. Next year I'm definitely going to implement-  
I always implement something new.  
I'm going to add more literature,  
but I'm going to do it through the lens of rhetoric.

For Leah, like many of her colleagues, reading literature had always been accompanied by writing literary analysis. Leah recognized that she could put fiction and non-fiction texts in conversation with one another, but she also realized that doing so would be a challenging and time consuming project. As she gained confidence and prepared to move on to another school, Leah was able to reconsider that synthesis that she had previously avoided.

Reflecting on the overarching goals of her course, Leah explained,

I really want them to know that they're responsible  
for whatever it is that they decide to do.  
CAPstone could be like a metaphor, and, so  
when they take on a responsibility, whether it's a job,  
it's college, it's starting a family..  
that they're responsible for the steps.  
the steps they need to accomplish a task,  
whether it's a successful marriage,  
whether it's climbing up the corporate ladder,  
whether it's getting on the dean's list.  
And, so, in order to do that, they need to access sources,  
apply new knowledge, analyze situations,

---

<sup>4</sup> Leah is referencing a workshop provided through the CRWP on creating diverse text sets comprised of a variety of text types and purposes. The term "fulcrum text" refers to the most complex piece in a text set (which additional texts help to illuminate) and is a reference to Wessling, Lillage, and Van Kooten's (2011) *Supporting Students in a Time of Core Standards: English Language Arts, Grades 9-12*.

redefine strategies, all sorts of stuff.

For Leah, the English language arts course operated as a training ground for citizenship where students would practice skills (i.e., accessing sources, applying new knowledge, analyzing situations) that would allow them to become responsible, active participants in the diverse realms of their lives.

**Tyler.** *“I’m full of ideas. I mean, I wanted to be a writer...”*

Tyler and I shared a commute, but we never drove together, as he had to leave his house by 6AM to get to school in time for duty and to prepare for first hour, whereas I was only on campus one day a week, and I didn’t come in until second period. The drive from our hometown to White Clover Valley was a solid 90 minutes, and Tyler made this 3 hour round trip 5 days a week for the duration of the grant cycle. My Wednesdays always felt grueling after this drive: I was never up for much after getting home from school on those days; I could only imagine how exhausting this experience must have been for Tyler, a long, winding commute bookending a day spent teaching writing to the 120 or more juniors at White Clover Valley High.

Near the end of our time in White Clover Valley, Tyler told me a long, interesting story about his trajectory into becoming a high school English teacher. Originally a computer science major, Tyler realized several years into his undergraduate career that he felt unhappy and isolated. Tyler signed up for a creative writing course, and he was immediately hooked on creative writing, eventually graduating with a degree in English. Even after finishing his degree, however, Tyler still wasn’t thinking about teaching. He was working full time at a movie theater, and after about a year, he started to feel stressed that he wouldn’t find a way to make use of his degree. After some soul-searching and a realization that the one part of his job at the movie theater that he did like was helping the high school students with their homework, it dawned on

Tyler that he might enjoy teaching. After some research, Tyler found the nontraditional licensure program. He was in his second year of teaching – his first in White Clover Valley – when I met him.

When asked about how things had changed over the time that Tyler had been teaching – three years, at the point of our spring 2015 interview – Tyler highlighted the change from a focus on “minutia” to “big unit ideas.” Tyler connected the focus on “minutia” to two main practices: (1) working with the Arkansas frameworks and (2) his own reliance on textbooks. Reflecting on his transition to Common Core, he explained,

I was still in the Arkansas mindset, sort of, of just  
 little picking at things and not the big unit ideas  
 [...]  
 Teaching, like, a whole day on symbolism,  
 a whole day on foreshadowing..  
 [...]  
 And that was kind of atrocious  
 And also, just going through the textbook  
 [...]  
 Even here, that first year under Common Core,  
 I didn't exactly know what I was doing.  
 So, I was... just going through the textbook,  
 picking out things that I knew and liked and..  
 felt like the kids would enjoy..

When asked if he had inherited any curriculum when he came in, Tyler said, “Not at all.” Even with his AP students that first year, Tyler explained that he felt that there was “nothing cohesive at all between nine weeks.” Tyler’s sentiments about his first experiences with curriculum design illustrate his orientation towards coherence as a priority in planning for student learning.

Thankfully, some of Tyler’s sense of incoherence was ameliorated, he explained, by the launch institute hosted for participants in the summer of 2013 to kick off the CRWP. Designing his units around essential questions – a process he was introduced to in the launch institute –



helped him to give his class time more coherence and structure. Figure 6. provides a screenshot of part of one of the unit plans Tyler began to design that summer. For Tyler, as a novice teacher, one of the most valuable realms of growth in his own practice had been located in a reconceptualization of structure. While Tyler began teaching “picking out things [he] knew and liked and felt like the kids would enjoy,” he was experiencing a sense of transformation as he stepped away from the textbook and began to focus on long-term understanding over short-term activities. His striving towards coherence was a move shared by many of the teachers participating in the CRWP.

#### **ELEVENTH GRADE**

##### **First 9 weeks**

*Substantive Topic:*

*Enduring Understanding: A New World (why do we read and write)?*

*Essential Question(s):* How can language empower you? How can language manipulate you? How does literature reveal the values of a culture or time period? What enduring questions and conflicts did Americans grapple with hundreds of years ago that are still relevant today?

- **Fiction texts:** *The Crucible*
- **Non-fiction texts:** Student choice on early American/Native American texts, Anne Bradstreet poetry, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” Edwards, Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Declaration of Independence, Student choice on American Independence

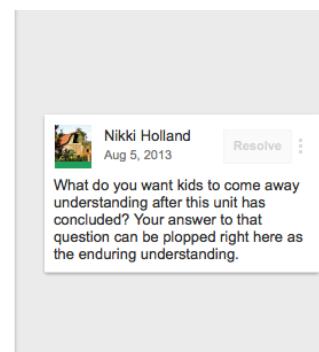


Figure 6: Screenshot - working with essential questions

In his teaching as well as his life outside of the classroom, Tyler was hunting for opportunities for enlightenment and transformation – a colleague and I joked once that Tyler frequently asked “existential” questions rather than “essential” questions. Tyler described his approach in this way –

But once I started thinking about these essential questions –  
 These big, unanswerable questions,  
 Like, this is what I do, when I’m at home,  
 I’m looking at YouTube videos, I’m reading articles about, and...  
 It’s just, that’s what gets me excited every day.  
 So, you know, I kind [of] want to turn that around on the students,  
 Build interest there.

Tyler's interest in engaging his students in thinking about philosophical questions and experiencing moments of transformation permeated the way he approached many aspects of his teaching. For example, in April of 2015, near the end of the grant, I asked Tyler to invite me in to observe a lesson he felt exemplified an ideal lesson in his room – argumentative or not – and the lesson that he chose for me to observe was one in which students read and analyzed “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Here's how he explained his choice:

You know, today... giving them Edgar Allen Poe is difficult...  
 I do it every year. I've always given them Poe, a Poe story,  
 Um, and they always start out hating it, but once we get to the end,  
 And start talking about and doing activities with it,  
 They're like, oh, this is actually pretty neat.  
 So, it's that process of getting them to enjoy Poe, really,  
 Behind this is what it's really about.

When asked what a successful product from this experience would look like, Tyler elaborated, “Um, I'm hoping they figure out that literature can be fun, of course, that, there's deeper meaning behind it. [...] You know? I'd love to get some of the kids hooked on reading.”

Reflecting on this unit specifically, Tyler commented that he hoped students would understand that “everyone has their own perception of what their reality is.” This, he explained, is “the kind of secret behind all of this... that they're seeing the way other people see the world.” Tyler went on to explain,

You know, we'll have arguments over, uh, well, discussions about..  
 you know, what is real?  
 How do you see one thing,  
 versus how does another person see that same thing,  
 you know, and realizing just how.. different we all are,  
 and just more accepting.  
 That's kind of the secret that's going on that they don't..  
 maybe realize is happening,  
 But I'll hint at it quite often.

Again, Tyler's purpose here is to engage students in transformation and revelation: to transform their impressions of a text and reveal aspects unexplored on first read; to transform the way students understand perspective and diversity; and to reveal this learning to students. When asked, overall, what he hoped students would come away from his course knowing and being able to do, Tyler replied,

Um, well, and I've seen great progress with these kids.  
 They started out rough.  
 Um, but they've come a long way.  
 Um, shaping out to be better.. better thinkers.. I think... is the best thing.  
 They really, when we started the year, they didn't seem like they'd ever...  
 Though about anything, almost...  
 You know, they were constantly just on their phones,  
 And taking everything at face value a lot of the times,  
 But they seem to now be more interested in learning,  
 More interested in thinking about bigger things than themselves...

INT - Yeah

I'm sensing that anyways.  
 But also, better readers, better writers, of course,  
 General English hopefuls, but then finding, also finding a few students that really do  
 have.. uh.. a career in... learning, you know, or even English.  
 You know, I've definitely found a few that I think have a career in English,  
 Have a career in education,  
 So, trying to help them more specifically, 'cause I know more about that.

As the passage above begins to indicate, in addition to being driven by his valuation of coherence and transformation, Tyler was also driven to create writing experiences that would make his students feel capable as writers and help specifically motivated and / or talented students to consider careers in English or education. For example, battling generally low student motivation (exacerbated by high-pressure testing that came in the form of 11<sup>th</sup> grade literacy exams, AP exams, and PARCC exams), Tyler decided not to assign any writing more than two pages long, justifying his position by describing students' attitudes towards testing and writing:

[...] it seems to just get in their head that it's just so important

And that writing is just this.. you know.. mountain that they have to climb...  
 And the essay's at the top...  
 Um, but I think with shorter writing, it's far less intimidating, um...  
 You know, a one page essay.. anyone can do that.

As for his own attitude, of PARCC, Tyler explained, "It terrified me... I mean, if I was in my class, I would have hated writing if we continued doing that. So, I want writing to be fun the rest of the year." And in many ways, Tyler's fear of testing made even more sense when examined next to his own unease with his identity as a writer. When I asked Tyler if he identified himself as a reader and a writer, he responded quickly in the affirmative to the idea of his being a reader, but he was less confident in identifying himself as writer. He observed,

So, I've always been a reader, um...  
 I've not always been a writer,  
 Which is kind of odd because I'm creative writing...  
 But I do write a lot of stories for myself, um..  
 I write short stories?  
 Uh, but that, I haven't written anything pretty much since I started teaching.  
 It's just all been about.. the kids..  
 I really want to go back to that..

He later elaborated, adding,

I'm full of ideas for writing.  
 I mean, I wanted to be a writer, [...]  
 Uh, but I didn't take criticism well..  
 so I don't know if I could make it as a writer.

Tyler describes his students' attitudes towards writing as feeling daunted, like writing is a "mountain that they have to climb," but, in many ways, Tyler shares their concerns. Reflecting on his teaching overall, Tyler was typically self-deprecating, making comments like "I know I'm a terrible teacher." However, Tyler also allowed, "I know I'm trying my best." And everyone who worked with Tyler knew that this was much closer to the truth.

**Nicole.** *“I think teachers in general have a grand plan, and it’s beautiful in their head, and it seems like it never works out that way, because of everything else that happens.”*

Nicole was one of the teachers participating in the CRWP who challenged me the most. With five years of experience by the spring of 2015 at the close of the grant cycle, Nicole was the senior member of the high school English department. She was shy but with a biting sense of humor – at times cynical, but also genuine and caring. Nicole came to White Clover Valley after two challenging years teaching – one abroad, and one in the southern part of our state. A single mom with a daughter in elementary school and family roots in the area, Nicole was relieved to finally have a classroom of her own, as her first two years had been spent co-teaching.

Thinking back to her first year in White Clover Valley, Nicole talked about how her mentor teacher prepared her for the classroom – “She made me cry. It was good for me.” When asked why she felt that experience was good for her, she said,

Because she taught me that I needed to be stricter,  
and I needed to get tougher skin,  
so that stuff wouldn’t bother me.  
When you have a public position,  
everybody’s gonna [sic] know who you are.  
They’re gonna [sic] know what you do.  
I don’t know. It’s a lot of pressure.

Throughout her interviews and written reflections, the pressure that Nicole was facing in her position came through in a multitude of ways. Not only did Nicole sometimes find the public nature of her position overwhelming, she found the myriad duties surrounding teaching burdensome as well. She explained,

I love teaching.  
I’ve... I went through like a brief period when I was little that I wanted to be a veterinarian or a chef or something,  
But my whole life I’ve wanted to be a teacher.  
I’m afraid that’s what my daughter’s gonna [sic] choose too.

INT - You're afraid?

I'm afraid.

[...]

I don't think teachers know what they're walking into whenever they go,  
[speaking in a high-pitched mocking tone] "I think I want to be a teacher and  
change the world."

Nicole had high expectations for her students and, most of all, for herself, but she constantly felt she fell short and struggled to manage all of the forces demanding her time, energy, and focus. For example, Nicole's sense of responsibility for her students' wellbeing, not just in her classroom but well beyond it, troubled her to the point of distraction and sleep loss. In a fascinating conversation about students in her class who were struggling, Nicole remarked,

I can be in the middle of teaching, and my brain turns into-  
I just turn it into a robot basically.  
And I'm teaching something, and I'm speaking, and going through the whole lesson?  
But, in the back of my head, all I can think about is this kid.  
And it's bothering me – this kid – this kid used to be..  
He was silent at the beginning of the year, and then all the sudden  
He started doing presentations and group work.  
He was producing stuff and being creative,  
And he was asking me stuff.  
And making As on everything.  
And I could see it. He's doing it.  
And now, he won't even look at me.  
He won't talk.  
He's taking zeros on everything.  
He wouldn't even write his name on his quiz the other day.

INT - Wow.

And, so, stuff like that, I think it...  
That's what I think about at home.  
I think about it...

INT - So you take time to go, and talk to the counselor...

Yeah, it worries me.  
What if that kid- you always hear these stories of...  
Home life or something that the kid does because nobody pays attention to them, so...

I always worry that I'm::: I don't know, I'm going to miss something, and I'll feel responsible that I didn't do anything.

That goes back to that... everything else that a teacher's supposed to do.

For anyone who has taught or who works with or knows teachers, this positioning is ubiquitous.

For teachers like Nicole, the idea that we would engage students in writing about say, whether or not we should have driverless cars, misses a big opportunity to communicate with students in more personal ways. This concern echoes throughout the participants in the CRWP.

All along, with Nicole, the most challenging aspect of doing the work of the CRWP was to find a place for it in her classroom that didn't feel to Nicole like it was displacing the novel studies in which she typically engaged students. Reflecting on the lesson, Nicole expressed a strong sense of dissatisfaction that the CRWP work had caused her to shuffle around her units, changing timing in a way that she felt compromised her novel studies and pushing out favorite activities like Socratic circles and creative projects. In response to my request to observe a lesson that exemplified how she imagined her classroom to function, Nicole chose to invite me in to see literature circles, during which her students talked with each other about themes present in the text they were reading, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Even though the essential questions around which she organized her book study seemed to have potential space for reading and writing informational and argumentative texts, Nicole – like many of her colleagues – felt daunted by the project of synthesis. Thankfully, Nicole and I spoke frequently and frankly about this topic, and in the spring of 2015, in her exit interview, she was very clear in the advice she offered to the CRWP, and her comments touch on several themes that emerge in teachers' experiences overall.

Nicole explained,

I think some teachers have a focus, or they love a piece of writing,  
And they have a certain way that they view that.  
Um, and they don't see that they could teach,  
That they could write an argument piece in the middle of a novel,

Um, or... you could do literary analysis of course, but...  
 Or, and narrative is pretty easy too.  
 Argument is the hardest.  
 I think it's hard for them to see what that would look like,  
 Or they:: are stuck in their ways,  
 And so I think if they were to see what it would look like,  
 And... see how it's possible.  
 And timing is so important.  
 It's very important.  
 A::nd, you always feel like you only have a certain amount of time,  
 And you have to get something done, and...  
 I mean, timing is important.  
 And, so, I think... and teachers have to... plan so much  
 That whenever they're looking at the huge scope of things,  
 They need to know how long it's going to take,  
 Where it's going to fit  
 How much of my time is it going to take up?

In Nicole's estimation, "argument is the hardest" to integrate with literature study. "Teachers," Nicole argues, need "to see what [teaching argument and literature together] would look like." When talking about her *To Kill a Mockingbird* unit, Nicole expressed, "I mean, thinking... from a literature perspective on argument – say I wanted to do an argument in this unit, whoa! That's hard." Of course, close on the heels of her recommendations was Nicole's own self-criticism. She mentioned that teachers also need to be willing to work with one another and confesses, "Sometimes I don't want to work with – or I just, I don't know?" When asked if her hesitation to work with others might be logistical in source (i.e., after school meetings conflicting with taking care of her daughter), she acquiesced, offering,

Well, you're a teacher.  
 I think teachers in general have a grand plan,  
 and it's beautiful in their head,  
 and it seems like it never works out that way  
 because of everything else that happens.  
 ...Teaching other types of writing, or inserting that into a literature unit,  
 it would have to be in the plan from the start,  
 and not look so scary.



In conversations with other site leaders working with College-Ready Writers Programs across the country, I heard of many other “Nicole’s” working hard to navigate the myriad pressures and responsibilities placed on teachers while also maintaining some control over what and how they taught.

**Jill.** *“I never want it to be braggadocious [...] but a lot of times I’ll say, hey, I wrote about something like that too.”*

“Good morning, please notice the bell ringer<sup>5</sup>. Thank you to those who already have.” There’s a polite energy in the room. It’s pouring out, and the kids have that stormy excitement that comes with bad weather. It’s a big class – desks are arranged in rows and paired up, two by two. Jill inherited this room from a veteran teacher whose legacy – a formidable library of fiction texts – lines the walls. Banners of yellow cardstock hang from the ceiling; students’ compositions, and glossy color snapshots of each student writer are clipped up for sharing and celebration. Today, students are engaging in a gallery walk, reading poems to collect ideas they’d like to write about in their own poems on resiliency. In a chic chevron dress and black strappy sandals, Ms. K, as the kids call her, makes her way around the room, her tall, athletic build flanked by a shifting group of students who ask her questions and offer to share their work.

On that morning, in the spring of 2015, I was observing a class that Jill had chosen for me to attend as an illustration of her teaching philosophy. At that point, Jill, unlike her colleagues, was finishing up her first year with the program, as she had only joined the CRWP the previous spring in preparation for her move from fifth to eighth grade. When it was confirmed that Jill would be taking a position at the middle school, the principals made it possible for Jill to begin

---

<sup>5</sup> “Bell ringer” refers to the 5-7 minute writing prompts teachers frequently use to begin a class period.

joining us for meetings. We all immediately loved her. Friendly and warm, Jill entered the team with the helpful perspective of a fifth grade teacher; we immediately began a several month long conversation about the social and academic transitions kids would be making as they came up to the middle school. These conversations were well received by the others, as vertical alignment had been a goal of the group from the start.

Early on, it became obvious that Jill had a lot of energy and potential, and in the spring of 2015, we invited her to participate in an argument focused summer institute with our local site. She accepted and participated wholeheartedly, driving the three hours every day to write, study, and plan with colleagues. In the fall of 2016, Jill joined our site as a teacher consultant and began working with the second cohort of teachers participating in the CRWP.

As an educator, Jill was singularly focused on her students; I was unsurprised when I heard of her long term plans to take a position as the school counselor when the position opened up. During the 2014-15 school year – her first year as an eighth grade teacher – the biggest unit was one on resiliency: “What has changed me, and what can I change?” When asked why she chose this essential question, Jill described her reasoning behind the unit:

what is change to me, and what can I change?  
 [...] I want them to realize that they have been shaped by the things that  
 have happened in their life,  
 but they also can be that element of change that's needed,  
 you know, for the rest of their life,  
 and I want them to take some responsibility for that.  
 [...] But, I really want them to..  
 really reflect on what has changed them,  
 and how they can, you know, be a changer.  
 [...] It's going to be powerful.. what some of them are going to say.

As will be examined in detail in the next chapter, many of the values comprising Jill's epistemology of literacy are expressed in this passage. Throughout the year, Jill was focused on creating opportunities to cultivate in students a sense of responsibility in order to grow students'

awareness of their own agency and power to choose how to respond to the situations in which they found themselves. Jill explained, “it’s kind of like, philosophical, or ideological or whatever, but I do hope they learn some of that.”

When asked about why she originally decided to move up from fifth grade to work with middle school students, Jill had several reasons, but she emphasized two: first, she had community at the middle school where her husband worked as a science teacher and her new principal had been a former colleague; and second, she wanted the opportunity to focus more specifically on literacy. When asked what it was about literacy that drew her to the subject, Jill observed,

I mean, I'm an avid reader,  
so I like creating that culture.  
I think I'm a better reading teacher than writing teacher  
um, because I do that more,  
and so, it's a constant, like, having to say,  
"Am I writing enough to keep up with my kids?"  
(Both laughing)  
Because some of them are better writers than I am. Much.  
I'm like, "My gosh, I'm so humbled right now."  
Um, but, I guess, that was it,  
just, like, the love of the written word. That was it.

She went on to explain, “ I loved getting to know my kids through that time, like, in their writing.” For Jill, teaching was about communicating with her students. She was drawn to literacy because “she loved getting to know [her] kids [...] in their writing.” When asked about reading, Jill explained,

Okay. Reader, definitely, like,  
I love.. to digest books and talk about books with my kids.  
And, I love it that they will try to get their friends to try to read books,

This response illustrates Jill’s value, not just of reading for reading’s sake, but reading to share and reading to communicate. Describing her big goals for students who graduate from her

course, Jill explained that she hoped to prepare students to “tackle any text, comprehend it, digest it, respond to it, and be able to write. [...] It’s just that constant input, output, input, output.” “It’s all about communication,” she said.

An essential component of the environment that Jill hoped to cultivate and practice in her classroom was humility. For example, Jill revealed with pleasure that some of her students were “better writers” than she was. When asked if she ever wrote with her students, Jill explained,

I do. I do sometimes.  
I never want it to be a braggadocious,  
"here's what Mrs. K can write; here's what you can write"  
especially for my lower kids,  
but a lot of... a lot of times I'll say, hey,  
I wrote about something like that too.

Jill worked hard to create that safe space where students could discover their own power and agency in order to read and to write and to participate in order to, as she explained it, “do something” with their literacy.

**Anne.** *“I label myself as an adventurer, trying to step out and try and try and try and try.”*

The sole participant outside of ELA, Anne was also the senior educator with 29 years of experience as White Clover Valley’s career orientation and family and consumer sciences teacher. Of all of the participants, Anne was the only one whose involvement was not mandatory. She participated in all of the full day PD sessions with enthusiasm and was willing to implement all suggested activities ranging from bell ringer activities to multi-week argumentative research projects.

Like Leah, Anne’s course design was driven by an overarching belief in the importance of providing students with skills that would transfer seamlessly into other areas of their lives. For

example, when asked about the goals of her career research project, Anne explained that she didn't find it important that students actually choose a career – she expected that their minds would change as they made their way through school. She did, however, hope that students would take certain skills away from the experience:

I said, but, I want you to know how to look up information.  
 I said, I want you to be able to find out information about an occupation,  
 about where that occupation-  
 where to go to school for that occupation,  
 where to.. um, find out information about that occupation,  
 about how much money they make, about, uh,  
 all the information you can about that occupation,  
 so you can make a good decision about that.

Similarly, when asked about what drew her to the subjects of family and consumer sciences and career orientation, Anne recounted,

I actually I knew I wanted to teach,  
 then it was called the home economics,  
 because of the real life applications,  
 and they told me that the job also had  
 the position of a career orientation teacher  
 at that time, and, and that appealed to me  
 because, um, because it was also real life.  
 [...]  
 And I felt that, um, it was- it was just the position for me.  
 Um, everything about family and consumer science, um,  
 career orientation, is so applicable.  
 It's so- It's, it's something that the students are going to really use.  
 That's- That's what appealed to me.  
 They were going to actually walk out of the classroom,  
 with something they were going to use.  
 It was something that was going to...  
 It was something that was gonna [sic] make an impression on their family,  
 their family right now, their family in the future..  
 and that meant something to me.

For Anne, literacy in family and consumer sciences and career orientation functioned as a method for helping students to improve their future social and economic lives.

Throughout her experience with the College-Ready Writers Program, Anne was always honest when she was struggling with something. As the only content area teacher, Anne sometimes had the sense that she was less prepared than the other teachers. Even so, she embraced her vulnerability and engaged her students in a writing intensive classroom. Describing herself as “very much... an infant” writer, Anne talked frequently about the CRWP’s impact on her confidence as a writer and teacher of writing:

This is something brand new for me, and, um,  
 It will be something that’s really, really good for my students.  
 And we were talking about – I feel like it’s real life.  
 Um... being able to:: teach them how to write,  
 I’ve never been able to work with them and- with any confidence,  
 like I have this year.  
 And, I’m still a struggling writer myself.  
 [...]  
 Bu::t, um, I feel like I have more confidence  
 because of the Writing Project,  
 to try things.  
 to at least try.  
 and, uh, get my students to try.

When asked whether she would identify herself as a reader and / or as a writer, Anne’s response captured her positionality as an educator:

... (52) More.. as.. a... an adventurer (laughs)  
Because.. I find myself trying to do more of both..  
 Because... in reading.. I- I feel challenged  
 Because I feel so lost when I hear about some neat titles  
 that many of the teachers are talking about,  
 Like, I haven’t read as extensively as they have.  
 And in writing, I’m trying to write more,  
 And, um, and once again, I feel challenged.  
 So, I, I find myself- I label myself as an adventurer,  
 Trying to step out and try and try and try and try

Reflecting on her experience with the CRWP, Anne explained,

I just start grinning.  
 I feel- I feel empowered.  
 I’m just so excited- I mean, I feel so accomplished.

My students were able to do it,  
 And I'm just so excited because,  
 I feel like... I led them through it...

Anne went on to reflect on a sentiment that we had shared with her from Penny Kittle's *Write Beside Them* in which Kittle writes, "I wasn't supposed to be a writer – just someone trying to write. [...] It was such a relief to know I didn't have to be good at it; just trying was enough" (Kittle, 2008, p.9). Anne explained how empowered she felt when she learned, "I didn't have to be perfect [...] I just have to write."

**Carol.** *"I think [journaling] got me through my hard times, you know. Because, if I didn't have the journal - it was like Ann Frank – [...] she says something like 'you're my best friend.' you know, to the diary [...]. That really struck a chord with me..."*

Carol, like many of her colleagues in White Clover Valley, did not enter the workforce as a teacher. In fact, Carol spent 20 years working with her husband as a farmer and was thrust back to college after her husband's sudden death. With two pre-school aged daughters, Carol returned to college, eventually completing her bachelor's degree in science, and joining the faculty in White Clover Valley in 1999. Carol moved around between 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade for several years until she found her niche with "the sweeties" in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

In the spring of 2015, when asked how she ended up teaching literacy, Carol recounted an interesting story about a series of formative experiences that happened to her during her own high school years. She explained that, though she'd always identified as a writer and reader, she was "burnt out on English" because of an English teacher she'd had in 11<sup>th</sup> grade who failed her due to the work she missed when her parents took her on a two-week vacation in the middle of the year. She explained,

He was very rigid.  
 He was not kind to anybody.  
 It was a very controlled environment.

She went on to point out, “He never had us write anything.” Reflecting on her experience with this teacher, Carol explained, “I thought, you know, if I would have to be that way in a classroom, there’s no way...”

In contrast, Carol offered her experience the previous year, explaining that her teacher invited students to do quick writes every day and “she actually read them and commented on them.” Carol remarked, “that is what is good about English.” When asked to clarify, Carol observed,

It's that you could express yourself on paper  
 and someone else can see that,  
 and you've communicated something to them,  
 you know, regardless of what that is.

Carol was quick to identify herself as both a reader and a writer but clarified, “I get into books to some extent, but not as much as I do the writing.” Carol described her own relationship to journaling,

I just love to sit down and dump my brains out.. stream of consciousness.  
 It might sound like garbage to some people.  
 I love the written expression.  
 I think a lot of that got me through my hard times, you know  
 because, if I didn't have the journal –  
 it was like Ann Frank –  
 [...] and she says something like 'you're my best friend.' you know, to the diary,  
 because she didn't have any friends.  
 That really struck a chord with me because I do that a lot, you know,  
 I put down my thoughts.  
 And maybe it goes back to 10th grade.  
 I still have that journal from 10th grade.

INT - You do?

Yes, isn't that freaky?  
 I was looking though my old stuff, and there it was.



I was like, really, I kept this.  
I've always loved to write.

Reflecting on this history as a writer, Carol explained,

I want my class to be kids expressing themselves.  
I want my class to be about kids into what they're doing  
and enjoying what they're doing.

More than any other “minutia” (she, like Tyler, used this word frequently) or projects that made their way into her classroom, Carol was most dedicated to literacy activities that would provide her students with an opportunity for personal expression. Of her experience trying to re-learn some of the specific elements of grammar in order to teach them when she first came into the field, she remembered wondering to herself, ‘Why do I not remember this?’ to which she responded,

Well, probably because it has very little to nothing to do  
(laughs) with any kind of self-expression.  
You know, seriously?  
(In another voice) “Do you know what a gerund is?”  
No, and I really don't care.” (Laughs)  
Even though I taught it like I cared.  
I did teach it like I cared, you know.  
[...]Well, I'm not going to get out there in front of the kids and say,  
"well, you know..."  
I'm all about doing what has to be done,  
and making sure the kids know what they need to know.

In this passage, Carol’s expectation of personal expressive writing as in conflict with “what has to be done” becomes clear: while these types of experiences may have been her priority, she struggled to maintain coherence when attempting to balance this value with all of the other mandates she encountered.

Carol’s history with personal expressive writing and her experience connecting with a teacher through this type of writing played a major role in the values she held as a literacy educator. As someone who dealt with tragedy and isolation through writing, Carol prioritized

cultivating space and time where her students could experience the same. For example, when asked to narrate a successful experience she'd had that year, Carol told a story about a girl who was barely passing coming up to her after class one day and handing her an "I Am" poem all about who she was. Carol explained that students had started the poems in class and that this student had brought hers home to finish. Of this experience she recounted,

and what it- what it expressed was  
 a person who had learned that writing was an outlet for... um...  
 for stress in life...  
 and for someone who feels like no one is listening.  
 Um... and for someone who feels like she doesn't fit in.  
 And... you know... the reason that's inspirational for me  
 because whenever I get sucked into the vein of  
 "We've got to get ready for this test. We've got to get ready for that test"  
 and then suddenly someone brings something like this to me  
 this is not the kind of writing that changes my life  
 and it's not the kind of writing that is going to change anyone else's life.  
 The kind of writing that that matters to people is the close and personal writing.  
 Um... and... while I do firmly believe that there's a place for all genres of writing  
 and they need to be taught... um...  
 the kids need an avenue of close and personal writing in the classroom  
 because they don't all take it home and write it on the weekend.

In many ways, Carol's words here describe a sentiment shared by many of the participants – "the kind of writing that matters to people is the close and personal writing." This tension between the argumentative writing focus of the CRWP and the high value placed on personal writing by many teachers is a critical theme to which I will return in Chapter Three.

Relatedly, many teachers had a sense that the focus on argumentative writing had pushed out the other reading and writing they valued. Many of the reflective vignettes received from participants in the winter of 2015-16 corroborated this point. Carol expressed this sentiment in her 2015 exit interview:

[...] we cannot and should not  
 focus our entire curriculum around... um...  
 a limited mode or modes of writing.

And... uh... you know  
 we shouldn't be focusing our understanding of students' progress on test scores.  
 Um... you know...  
 we focused really heavily this year on argumentative writing.  
 Um... I will not focus as heavily on it next year because  
 it is an important mode of writing.  
 I can teach seventh grade students to...  
 go through the steps and write an argumentative paper...  
 but their true deep understanding of... um...  
 of really in depth subjects that we talk about in class...  
 Um, I almost feel like it's unfair to ask them to form an opinion on those things  
 based on reading that they do in class...

Interestingly, not only does Carol's discourse reveal a strong pushback against argumentative writing, but it also begins to reveal one of the reasons – shared by several participants – that students' treatment of controversial topics is oversimplified. Carol goes on to elaborate, explaining,

Some of my lowest students...  
 this was interesting to me...  
 some of my lowest students  
 could follow formulaic writing for an argumentative paper very well.

INT - Mmmhmm

Uh... and if I'm using a rubric based on what needs to be there... it's there.  
 But... the disturbing thing is that...  
 what I don't see in those students' writing is the real...  
 understanding of the issue.

For Carol and many of the teachers who share her value of personal, expressive writing in the classroom, argumentative writing failed to fulfill their expectations of what students would reap from an English language arts classroom – namely aesthetic experiences reading literature and opportunities to express themselves through personal writing.

**Kim.** *“I think it's more the personal level for me than the... academic level. The academic's just bonus.”*

“Panthers, clap once. Panthers, clap twice. Panthers, clap three times.” It’s colorful in this room. Desks and tables are arranged in a big square, and the walls are lined with binders, stacks of textbooks, and tall black bookshelves filled with paperback fiction. There’s a “Dead Word Zone” on the back bulletin board decorated with gravestones and ghosts. Posters on the wall in English and Spanish provide quick definitions of literary analysis terminology: hyperbole, onomatopoeia, metaphor. A cute reading nook occupies one corner, the word “campfire” posted in black letters above a fire made of red, orange, and yellow bulletin board paper. There’s a room full of sixth graders, and the first question anyone asks is, “How come this is called a ‘discussion’ if it’s silent?” A review of the protocol for the silent Socratic / chalk talk protocol commences. It’s right after lunch, and kids move around the room in small packs, writing their thoughts on posters hanging around the room that engage them in thinking about how a plot reveals character traits.

Kim was a White Clover Valley native who had spent 11 years in the classroom as a substitute teacher while her own kids were little before she became certified, K-8 in all subject areas. Kim taught sixth grade science for three years before her first year with the CRWP, and the summer before the CRWP began, she participated in a Writing Project summer institute for rural teachers. When asked about her interest in attending the summer institute as a science teacher, Kim explained that she had been searching for a way to help her science students become more confident writers. At the end of the summer institute, she received a call from her principal asking her if she’d be interested in stepping into a newly opened literacy position, and Kim accepted right then.

One of the major goals Kim identified for her classroom was to create coherent units that would, she explained, “marry” the separate elements. When asked why this was important to her, she explained,

I think it would make more sense for the kids  
if everything were to flow together  
rather than teaching everything separately.

To illustrate her point, Kim described how she and the other 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher planned their

*A Wrinkle in Time* unit:

We try to:: pick out those topics that are related to our themes,  
And our books.  
Uh, like, with, um, *A Wrinkle in Time*, uh,  
we talked about the whole issue of, you know,  
are these people really free? Um,  
what kind of rights do they have, what do they not?  
and then tied that to US students,  
what are your rights?  
and then we collected our texts from there,  
based on their interests.

Similarly, Kim described how they used the units that were provided to teachers as part of a testing program the district had purchased. She explained that she used the provided unit as a guide and tailored it to her students’ needs:

We still use some of the information from the units,  
but once we actually got our hands on the units and saw,  
okay, this is what the units should look like,  
then we were able to kind [of] pick and choose what we wanted to do  
and make a unit that fit what was right for our kids  
as opposed to going, we don’t follow it by the letter.  
[...] It kind [of] gave us just a sense of direction on some things.

Throughout the two years I worked with Kim, we were engaged in a constant conversation about how to fuse the work of the CRWP with the work that Kim was doing in her classroom. We worked consistently to make sure that the argumentative writing components of

the year were well integrated into the novel studies, creative writing projects, and interdisciplinary projects in which students were engaged.

In addition to nurturing a sense of coherence, Kim was also diligent in creating an environment in which she would share writing experiences with her students. For example, in our spring 2015 exit interview, Kim talked about a narrative she was working on with her students and explained how she learned a lot more about what she needed to cover when she was working alongside her students. She remarked,

So, I started writing with them, and I told them,  
I noticed that the hardest thing is to come up with the hook –  
Where do I start this, a story that actually happened?

For Kim, this decision to write with her students was also about fairness. She explained,

It's just something that seems like common sense to me because,  
If they're struggling...  
Well, first of all, if I expect them to do something,  
I should be doing it too.  
That's just my opinion.  
Maybe when I struggled in school,  
maybe if someone had done it this way,  
I could have done better.

She went on to point out,

So, um, but I think it gives them more confidence  
When they see me doing it.  
And they see me – even if I crumple up the paper and throw it away,  
I think it makes them feel like – it's okay if I want to start over.

A crucial element present in Kim's writing with her student was that of humility and confidence. When Kim talked about writing arguments with students, she explained,

And then, you know,  
When we were doing our argument unit,  
We modeled essays for them,  
We wrote alongside them doing that.  
I don't know.  
I think it's come about pretty naturally,

But, it's been pretty hard for me.  
 I guess, I've never had any formal training in writing,  
 Or teaching writing.  
 So, I guess I've always felt li:ke, maybe,  
 What if my writing's not good enough.  
 Or ☺ what if I really mess it up,  
 And these kids really don't know what they're doing.  
 But, it's sixth grade level,  
 So surely I can write on the sixth grade level! (laughs)

Like many of her colleagues, Kim's experience writing arguments with her students is humbling and requires a great deal of confidence. Her worry – “What if my writing's not good enough?” – exists as an undercurrent in many teachers' discourse about their experiences teaching argumentative writing. However, for Kim, it became less of an issue as the program progressed, and she became more confident in her ability to guide her students through their thinking and writing. In fact, by the end of the project, Kim and her co-teacher had developed high expectations for themselves and for their students in terms of their writing. For Kim, the additional time spent on argumentation led to an expectation that students “would be able to write a good argument.” She explained, “I feel like we have invested so much time in the writing... I'm really hoping it stays with them.”

Even though Kim was successfully able to integrate a substantial amount of argumentative writing into her curriculum, and even though she felt that her students had been successful in their writing, she was still surprised that her students seemed to enjoy argumentative writing more than narrative writing. Her epistemology of literacy regarding argumentative writing was that argument was much harder than narrative for students to grasp. When asked about how she might approach the following year, Kim explained,

Um, I would like to start with narrative, and then go into argument  
 And spend two, maybe the first quarter focused on narrative  
 And then the middle two quarters of the year, focus on, um, argument  
 And do the bulk of the writing right there in the middle

And then work our way back around to narrative  
And then our informative will come in with our project next year, probably.

When asked what made her feel that trajectory was best, Kim reasoned,

Um, we, narrative is easier for students.  
So, it's- to me it feels like a better way to start the year  
Because they have so much that they have to really-  
They're grasping so much new stuff,  
Changing classes, and they're having to adjust to so much,  
That it felt like it was a lot to throw argument on them  
Right off the bat like we did this year.  
Which, they handled it well.  
They did a good job.  
But I think it would be a better way to ease into the year for them.

This positioning of narrative writing as easier for students was visible through the choices that Kim made in her classroom and the way she talked about her teaching and writing. For example, when Kim told me about reading a narrative she had written about her oldest daughter's car accident, she focused on the emotional impact her story had on her ("I started crying when I was reading it.") and talked about how her students responded ("I had one kid write, I can feel your pain"). When asked about her goals for the lesson Kim had invited me in to observe as an illustration of her teaching philosophy, Kim responded,

I think it's just important for the students to see how...  
a series of events can shape a person's character.

Reminiscent of other lessons observed as part of the same request to sit in on lessons that are illustrative of their teaching philosophy (i.e., Jill's on resiliency), Kim's choice of lesson provided insight into her prioritization of character education through teaching practices that would help students develop socially, emotionally, and ethically. And, like many of her colleagues, Kim's choice represents a deep concern with students' development not just academically but also (and sometimes more so) socially and emotionally. She explained,

I think, to me, it's mo:re, (sigh)-



It's not necessarily the academic part, for me, that would be the...  
 that's why I keep doing it. It's that.  
 You know, you see that kid who maybe doesn't have anything to eat at home,  
 But then I had an opportunity to give one of those students the chance to lead my  
 classwork with the Capstone group,  
 and he got to cook food and take it home.  
 You know, just being able to do:: those little things for kids  
 Who need something beyond the academic  
 I think, is just as important to me as the:: academics.  
 I think it's more the personal level for me than the.. academic level.  
 The academic's just bonus. (laughs)

In an interview on April 29, 2015, near the end of the project, Kim and I talked about  
 how the book she was reading reminded her of why she decided to return to the classroom year  
 after year:

Uh, reading the book that I'm reading now, *A Boy Called It*,  
 his only safe place was at school,  
 was to get away from home.  
 And his teacher hugged him,  
 and he said, I wish she would have never let go.  
 And, so,  
 just being here every day,  
 just trying to be the bright part of someone's day  
 because we don't know what they have to go home to  
 and try to make them be successful,  
 you know, giving them hope, and the tools to be successful  
 when they're grown, or even right now.

INT - That's a lot bigger than the Common Core Standards.

I usually don't keep that on the forefront of my...

INT - Really?

(Both laugh)

You may want to delete that.

### Chapter 3: Identity, Politics, and Pedagogical Implications

Teachers' pedagogical decisions are centrally influenced by their beliefs in their own instructional efficacy (Dierking & Fox, 2013; Bandura, 1993; Woolfolk and Hoy, 1990) and by their beliefs about how knowledge is constructed (Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009; Ratcliffe, 2004). In this chapter, I first consider teachers' identities, analyzing what their discursal construction of identity as readers, as writers, and as change agents might reveal about the influence of their self-efficacy beliefs on their resistance or appropriation of argumentative writing presented through the CRWP. In addition, I also look to articulate, analyze, and categorize participating teachers' epistemologies of literacy in order to understand how the constellation of beliefs they hold about literacy, about the purposes of teaching literacy in the classroom, ways of talking about literacy, and the approaches to assessment and teaching that tend to be associated with these beliefs both construct and are constructed by their responses to the professional development offered by the CRWP.

Because coding for all of the components of teachers' epistemologies of literacy as expressed in the data corpus would have been an unwieldy project, I chose to focus on two aspects of these epistemologies: teachers' identities as readers, writers, and literacy teachers; and teachers' understanding of literacy as a social good. For both, I also analyze what teachers' discourse reveals about feelings of self-efficacy relating to their identities and epistemologies of literacies.

In *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*, Saldana (2013) defines value as "the importance we attribute to oneself, another person, thing, or idea" and belief as part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, personal knowledge and experiences, and our "interpretive perceptions" of the social world (p. 111). Stern & Porr (2011) explain beliefs as "rules for

action” (qtd. in Saldana, p. 28). In the following section, I analyze two categories of values and beliefs comprising teachers’ epistemologies of literacy as expressed by at least two teachers in the exit interviews excerpted in the previous chapter: (1) teachers’ identities as readers, writers, and literacy teachers, and (2) teachers’ epistemologies of literacy as a social good. While there are obviously other epistemologies related to literacy that might have been held by teachers but not articulated, those articulated beliefs retain their importance, as they illuminate the ideologies undergirding participants’ decisions related to the professional development.

By the end of the CRWP in May of 2015, interviews, written artifacts, and field notes painted a clear picture of where teachers were located regarding the teaching of argumentative writing. Table 3 illustrates their positioning.

Pushing back against argumentative writing	Teaching solely non-fiction, source-based argument	Integrating literature & argumentative writing
Carol (7) Nicole (10) Tyler (11)	Anne (8) <i>non-ELA</i> Leah (12)	Kim (6) Jill (8)

Table 3: Teachers’ positions regarding argumentative writing at program’s end

Gee’s (2011) “building tools” for the analysis of discourse were implemented to examine chains of passages related to epistemologies of literacy touching on issues of identity and social goods. Gee writes, “... language-in-use is a tool, not just for saying and doing things, but also used alongside other non-verbal tools, to build things in the world. Whenever we speak or write, we always and simultaneously build one of seven things or seven areas of “reality” (2011, p. 94). Those seven areas include the following: significance, activities, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign systems and knowledge. Table 4 illustrates the two tasks and questions which are asked in reference to the data illustrating teachers’ expressed epistemologies.

Task	Tool
Identities	What identity or identities is the speaker trying to enact or get others to recognize? How does the speaker position others?
Politics	How are words and grammatical devices being used to build what counts as a social good and to distribute the good to or withhold it from listeners or others?

Table 4. Gee's building tools, identities and politics

For the purposes of this dissertation, I make use of the identities and politics tools, as teachers' articulated identities and conceptions of social goods provide insight into the forces driving their decisions as they navigated the professional development provided through the College-Ready Writers Program.

## Identity

**What identity or identities does the teachers' discourse enact or displace?** Gee's first identity question asks what identity or identities is the speaker trying to enact or get others to recognize. For participants in the CRWP, feelings of self-efficacy impacted their willingness to identity themselves as readers, writers, and / or agents of change. In the sections that follow, teachers' discourse is analyzed in order to identify correlations between teachers' identities, self-efficacy beliefs, and their experiences with the CRWP.

*Teacher as reader / writer.* In the exit interviews conducted in the spring of 2015, participants were asked if they considered themselves readers. What follows is an overview of their responses<sup>6</sup>:

Kim; Yes. (emphatic) Absolutely.

Carol; Both. I do both on my own frequently.

---

<sup>6</sup> I do not have a response from Nicole for this question, as a fire alarm went off during our interview, and I mistakenly skipped that question.

Jill; Okay. Reader, definitely

Anne; More..as.. a... an adventurer (laughs)

Tyler; Yes.

Leah; Yes. I am a reader, and I am a writer.

While it might have been more of a surprise for literacy teachers not to identify as readers, teachers' responses to my questions – “Do you think of yourself as a reader?” and “Do you think of yourself as a writer?” – shed light on one aspect of their epistemologies of literacy, namely that of their willingness to and level of comfort with identifying themselves as readers or as writers.

For example, following her affirmative response to the question posed – Do you consider yourself a reader? – Kim elaborated,

Yes.  
I like it all.  
I don't think I could have said that last year, because I usually,  
I like realistic fiction,  
But Ms. S[...], um..told me about the Michael Vey series.  
It's not my genre, but she was bragging on it so much,  
So I thought, uh, I'll try it.  
So I use that to try to get the kids to go outside of their comfort level  
And try genres that they didn't like,  
Or didn't think they liked.  
And I really enjoyed it.  
I read the whole series.

Kim represents herself here as a responsive reader open to trying new genres. She provides her own experience as a model for her students, encouraging them to “go outside their comfort level.” Recounting her thought process as “[...] ugh, I'll try it,” Kim presents herself as the reader and learner skeptical of something she didn't know; in doing so, she sets herself up to model the kind of growth in herself that she hopes for in her students. We can also recognize the value Kim places on enjoying oneself and reading for pleasure, as these activities are presented

as the pinnacle of Kim’s success narrative: she didn’t think she’d like the book she had been recommended, but she tried it and recounted, “. . . and I really enjoyed it.”

Like Kim, Jill was also quick to identify herself as a reader, calling herself an “avid reader” and explaining that one of her favorite parts of teaching was to “talk about books with [her] kids” and witness them “try[ing] to get their friends to try to read books.” For Jill, her identity as a reader was tied up in the value she placed on communication, a component of her epistemology of literacy that was easily visible in her classroom. Reading books was valuable to Jill at least in part because it leads to talk – namely, student to student and teacher to student. Jill explained, “I’m an avid reader, so I like creating that culture.” For Jill, and for many of her colleagues, one of the major goals of her course was to create a “culture” of reading that would stick with students long after the course.

Several teachers, when asked whether or not they identified themselves as readers and / or as writers, compared their identities as readers to their identities as writers, valuing one as worth more than the other. In other words, teachers’ identities as readers were frequently tied up with their identities as writers. Carol, for example, explained,

I really consider myself to be both,  
but more a writer than a reader.  
I mean, I get into books to some extent,  
but not as much as I do the writing.  
I just love to sit down and dump my brains out...

Carol went on in the interview to talk about her deep belief in “stream of consciousness” and journal writing as most powerful in its ability to usher people through difficult times in their lives. This personal epistemology of literacy as confessional and therapeutic was easy to spot in Carol’s treasured literacy practices such as regular journal writing and composition of personal essays.

For several teachers, when compared to their identities as readers, their identities as writers were presented as lesser. Jill, for example, using her hands to indicate proximity to her body, explained, “So, yeah, definitely, like, reader here (hands close to her chest); writer here (hands farther away).” Tyler, similarly, when asked if he considered himself a writer, responded, “Less so. Definitely a reader.” Like Tyler, Kim also presented a less confident picture of herself as a writer. While she readily identified herself as a reader (“absolutely”) her identification as a writer was more guarded. She explained, “I’m getting there... A year ago, I would have said no. Today, I say I’m getting there.”

Determining teachers’ willingness to identify themselves as writers is important for several reasons. First, teachers who identify as writers are more likely to understand the writing process, to “know[...] it in the bones” (Smith, 1996) and work their students through the process. Writing teachers who identify as writers also perceive themselves as more effective, and teachers who experience higher levels of self-efficacy are more confident: research consistently shows higher results from professional development targeting teachers’ content knowledge (Desimone et al., 2002). When teachers can exercise their craft with confidence, they experience what Davis and Wilson (2000) describe as “personal empowerment,” the perception that they can “cope with events, situations, and/or people they confront” (p. 349). In addition, as Bandura (1993) argued, higher self-efficacy leads to higher levels of commitment, increased ability to deal with stressors, increased motivation, and a stronger sense of agency, all of which carry large implications for teachers’ praxis. As would be the case for most teachers who perceive themselves as working beyond the realm of their own expertise, when teachers are expected to teach writing but don’t identify as writers, they are less effective.

Among CRWP participating teachers, Leah was the only teacher who confidently

identified herself as equally reader and writer. She answered, “Yes. I am a reader, and I am a writer. I consider myself both.” Her short sentences, parallel structure with subjects and predicates for both clauses, as well as her iterative follow up sentence clarify her positioning.

Also unlike her peers, Leah was the only teacher who made mention of academic writing when she talked about her identity as a writer. Leah explained, “[...] I found academic writing, and I love that.” For all of the other teachers (with the exception of Anne), identity as a writer was mentioned specifically in connection with personal writing: Kim described herself as writing “personal narratives” alongside her students; Jill explained, “I love the concept of journaling;” and Tyler talked at some length about his own interest in personal writing and short stories. Aside from Leah and Anne, participating teachers’ conceptions of writing in the classroom were dominated by personal and creative writing and, as such, echoed the expressivist stance and related prioritization of personal writing for the purpose of self-expression.

In “Cultural autobiographics,” Ratcliffe (2004) quotes Greenblatt and Gunn’s *Redrawing the Boundaries*, in which they criticize personal writing arguing that “[a]utobiographical writing demeans our profession [...] we often look like a crowd of amateur therapists delivering dime store psychology to adolescents” (p. 209). On a similar note, Roskelly and Ronald (1998) point out that, undoubtedly, there are “teachers who have misused personal writing in the composition classroom and who have done a disservice to students by not considering rhetorical contexts or teaching academic discourse. Teachers who encourage only personal story and individual reaction imply that individual vision is unmediated by social and cultural contexts” (1998, p. 37). In many ways, the College-Ready Writers Program advances this perspective and implicit stance against personal writing. Expressivist-oriented teachers may prioritize the emotive, romantic aspect of writing, but assuming that the job of the school is to prepare students for the critical



reading and writing they will encounter as they move to post-secondary education and post-secondary careers that follow, one could ask how expressivist-oriented teaching helps students with the more critical tasks that they will be expected to master. Even so, the failure to validate or make space for teachers' epistemologies of literacy as aesthetic and expressive resulted in a chasm too wide for many to cross. Roskelly and Ronald (1998), Ratcliffe (2004), and others offer ways to reconcile these competing interests and impulses, ideas which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Anne was the only teacher in the group who resisted labeling herself as either a reader or as a writer. Anne, notably, was also the only content area teacher outside of English language arts in the group. Explaining her response, in which she decided to label herself, instead, an “adventurer,” Anne talked about a general sense of not being as well read as the other teachers— “[...] I feel so lost when I hear about some neat titles that many of the teachers are talking about, like, I haven't read as extensively as they have;”—and not having as much experience with writing. Even so, as the veteran teacher in the group with a strong sense of her own mission as a teacher, not having as much experience as a reader or writer did not prohibit Anne from feeling that she could successfully teach argumentative writing in her family and consumer sciences and career orientation classes.

For those teachers for whom argumentative writing became an integrated component of classroom culture, identities as readers and writers were mixed. Kim and Jill both represented themselves as more confident in their identities as readers than in their identities as writers. For both, lack of “expert” status in writing was cited as a primary reason for hesitating to identify themselves as writers. Kim and Jill read more than they wrote, and in some ways, this set them up to feel more able as readers than as writers. Anne and Leah, on the other hand, chose to

identify themselves differently, with Leah identifying herself equally as reader and writer and Anne opting out of the bifurcated categories altogether. Whether it was her personality, her status as a veteran teacher, her positioning as an outsider (where it was more acceptable to be a developing reader and writer), or something else altogether, Anne's easy occupation of novice status may have been a component of her assimilation of argumentative writing practices throughout the entire course of the grant cycle.

Teachers' articulated identities as readers and writers were intertwined with their beliefs about the connection between investment and performance, both of which emerged as strong themes within the picture of their epistemologies of literacy. In expectancy-value theory, motivation is governed by the expectation that behavior will produce certain outcomes (Bandura, 1993, p. 128). Each of the seven teachers profiled expressed this belief that they should be better at something because they had spent more time doing it or that they hoped their students to be better at something because they had spent more time doing it. Kim, for example, put it this way:

Before this year,  
I probably would have considered myself more of a writer than a reader,  
but this year it's kind of balancing out.  
maybe because I've read more now.  
I've been able to read more books this year,  
And I've crossed genres.

For Kim, reading more and reading more widely translated into a stronger identity as a reader. Similarly, though she was hesitant to refer to herself as a writer – “I'm getting there” – Kim indicated that writing more had helped her to see herself more as a writer. When asked if she wrote for her graduate school courses, Kim responded, “Well, that. But I've spent more time writing with my students this year than I have in the past.” Thus, while she essentially dismisses the suggestion that graduate school invited her to write more, she offered the fact that she had spent more time that year writing with her students. Again, “more time writing,” for Kim,

translated directly into an evolving identity of herself as writer.

Tyler, like Kim, made a connection between the amount of time spent engaged in reading and his identity as a reader. When asked if he considered himself to be a writer, Tyler explained:

Less so.  
Definitely a reader.  
I read every day.  
Quite a bit, actually.

The reasoning Tyler presented here links his identity as a reader to the fact that he reads “quite a bit” “every day.” Similarly, Tyler felt less confident identifying himself as a writer because, he explained, “I haven’t written anything pretty much since I started teaching.”

Jill made the same connections between investment and performance. When Jill identified herself as more of a reader than a writer, she explained,

So, yeah, definitely, like, reader here, writer here.  
Because, like, I love, like, the concept of journaling,  
but the time to journal is so difficult.  
I wrote a lot more before I had kids. A lot more.

Like Kim and Tyler, Jill’s explanation for why she identified more strongly as reader than writer was based on the fact she spent more time on one than the other. Jill made the same connection between investment and teaching, explaining, “I think I’m a better reading teacher than writing teacher, um, because I do that more...”

For some teachers, this belief in the connection between time investment and performance also translated to their students. For example, Kim mentioned that her students “enjoyed the argument writing more than the narrative writing this year,” and explained that this fact “really surprised” her. When asked to guess why students would feel that way, Kim offered the following explanation:

I don’t know if it’s because... we had a topic? that they were interested..  
in writing about, arguing for...?

Um, we were able to spend a lot more time with the argument this year.

For Kim, the fact that students had spent more time on writing meant that her expectations for them were higher. She explained,

[...] I feel like we have invested so much time in the writing that I want them to be able to, um, do things like cite their sources when they're writing, and carry those things over to seventh grade, so..

She went on to add, "But I think.. I hope that they would be able to write a good argument." Kim's shift from "think" to "hope" is telling in the way that it indicates her reluctance to commit to an expectation that students' argumentative writing had improved. For Kim, this was likely an effort to deflect attention and responsibility from herself. She also may have been thinking about the fact that she recognized the Writing Project staff would be reading her students' work and didn't want to offer a higher judgment than we might.

However, it is also important to note that, as Bandura (1993) argued, the motivating potential of expected outcomes can also be impacted by feelings of self-efficacy. Thus, in Tyler's case, one might argue that his low sense of efficacy as a writer lessened his motivation. When it came to his expectations regarding students, Tyler's actions may have been more governed by his beliefs about what he can (or cannot) do than by his expectation that behavior will produce a specific outcome.

Across the board, teachers participating in our local site's CRWP expressed a belief that larger time investments would lead to higher performance for themselves as readers and writers. In other words, the more time that teachers themselves spent reading and / or writing, the more likely they were to enact and embrace identities as readers and writers. When it came to time investment and students' identities as readers and writers, teachers were more split. While teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy expressed beliefs that additional class time

spent on reading and writing would translate to improved student performance, teachers like Tyler and Nicole with lower feelings of instructional efficacy did not specifically link increased time to increased performance. Considering the well-known correlation between increased time spent on reading and writing in class and increased performance (Applebee and Langer, 2011), teachers' ability to identify as readers and writers has direct implications on pedagogical decisions: when teachers self identify as readers and writers, they are more likely to spend time in class engaged in this type of academic activity (Bandura, 1993), time that consistently results in higher levels of literacy achievement for students.

*Teacher as change agent.* Teachers' willingness to identify themselves as change agents with the capacity to impact student writing and students' lives provided another important piece of cultural context influencing the creation of epistemologies of literacy. And, again, teachers' sense of self-efficacy played a central role in whether or not they saw themselves as change agents: teachers with high levels of self-efficacy were impacted by belief that effort would lead to change, while teachers plagued by doubt tended to have little hope that even persistent effort could produce change.

I was surprised in my interview with Nicole to hear her talk about her experience as a beginning teacher. Describing her first year in White Clover Valley, she explained,

I had to have a mentor that year,  
 Because I hadn't had my own classroom yet.  
She was my mentor.  
 She made me cry.  
 It was good for me.  
 She made me cry.  
 It was good for me.

INT - Why do you say it was good for you?

Because she taught me that I needed to be stricter,  
 And I needed to get tougher skin,

So that stuff wouldn't bother me.

Nicole's representation of herself as a teacher in this vignette is as ineffective. She recounts being told that she "needed to be stricter." Thus, implicitly, she wasn't strict enough. Nicole often described herself as a "sarcastic" teacher, and this sarcasm, placed into relief with her sense that she needed to "get tougher skin" to protect herself from becoming overwhelmed by her students' struggles made sense. In what she described as a "very public position," Nicole felt compelled to distance herself from her students "so that stuff wouldn't bother [her]." Sarcasm and distance as coping mechanisms became part of Nicole's course and reflected the idea that Donehower addresses in *Rural Literacies* when she explains how the "close-knit, personal nature of small rural communities results in school and community operating as a single integrated social structure" (p. 71). For Nicole, this "close-knit, personal nature" of her small rural community impacted the way she approached her relationships with students and, relatedly, decisions about what and how she taught. Her discourse also repeatedly reveals her anxiety and sense of worry that she cannot effectively manage the threats she perceives. She dwells on her coping deficiencies, and in doing so, impairs her level of empowerment. Explaining why she thinks new teachers don't understand what they're getting themselves into, Nicole points out,

[...] it's nothing like what I learned in college.  
 The day to day, like, disruptions, or  
 standing out in the hallway,  
 or here's your extra duties – here's what you're also responsible for...  
 also you're going to have administration calling all over because you're not doing  
 something right,  
 or you're not contacting parents, or... a million other things  
 that you have to do.  
 And you have a public image.  
 So, if I go [...] get my groceries, here in small town [White Clover Valley],  
 everyone knows who I am.

Nicole's discourse in this passage illustrates Bandura's (1993) argument that "It requires

a strong sense of efficacy to remain task oriented in the face of pressing situational demands and failures that have social repercussions.” When Nicole worries about going to the store and “everyone know[ing] who [she is],” she reinforces Donehower’s point about the role of the close-knit community and Bandura’s argument pointing out the role of social factors even outside of the school in impacting teachers’ decisions in the classroom.

Tyler approached his course from a similar positionality as Nicole, though for Tyler, feelings of low self-efficacy were articulated more specifically through his self-identification as a failed writer. Tyler explained that he had hoped to pursue a career as a professional writer but learned through writing workshops and personal experiences outside of the classroom that he was unable to accept criticism:

I thought writing was gonna [sic] be it for me.  
 Uh, but I didn’t take criticism well..  
 So, I would spend hours and hours on something,  
 And then have, you know, students, other students and teachers...  
 Criticizing it

INT - Mmmhmmm

And reflecting on it.  
 And, oh man, that was kind of terrible.

Tyler went on to explain, “[...] if it’s a story I worked on for hours and gave to someone to read and then they said.. ‘You know.. I didn’t understand your main character at all.’ I would get hurt.” Tyler’s identity as a failed writer was an integral part of his epistemology of literacy, as low self-efficacy prohibits Tyler from identifying as a writer or as a change agent. Because Tyler sees himself as a failed writer, he experiences low levels of personal empowerment. For teachers who fail to see themselves as effective, even within one specific domain, the repercussions reverberate and impact their pedagogical decisions.

Kim’s discourse, unlike Tyler’s and Nicole’s, pointed towards a different stance

regarding her sense of self-efficacy. When asked about how she prepared students for standardized testing, Kim offered a story about when she and her co-teacher disagreed about the answer to a multiple choice question. She recounted how the two discussed their reasoning with the class:

We don't always agree,  
 And sometimes I don't always agree with-  
 There was one particular one yesterday,  
 And I went to Ms. S.  
 I didn't have the answer key.  
 We were disagreeing.  
 I was right on part A. She was right on part B.  
 I didn't, you know, agree with their answer.  
 After looking at it closer, I see where they got the answer.  
 But I went back today, talked to the students about it,  
 And we discussed some of the wording, um..

In this story, Kim shows herself answering a test question incorrectly, but she doesn't present it as a failure. Rather, she presents it casually as part of the process of test preparation.

Kim also demonstrated her willingness to position herself as a learner and co-writer in the way that she approached a narrative assignment in which she engaged students earlier in the spring of 2015. First, Kim decided to write the assignment alongside her students in order to use her own process to inform her teaching decisions. She explained,

So, I started writing with them, and I told them,  
 I noticed that the hardest thing is to come up with the hook –  
 Where do I start this, a story that actually happened?  
 What does the reader actually need to know?

As a teacher and writer, Kim presented herself as developing rather than as the only expert. Her belief that her own process of reasoning could serve as a model for students impacted her teaching in the way that she chose to articulate her process so that students could have an example line of reasoning from which to work.

Kim explained that, throughout the process, she invited students to read and comment on



her work and to offer suggestions for her improvement and cited a comment that one student made who wrote, “I can feel your pain.” Kim decided to write about an emotional topic – when her daughter was in a car accident – and she talked about reading the draft to students – “I started crying when I was reading it.” When asked why she decided to write with her students, Kim explained,

Well, first of all, if I expect them to do something,  
I should be doing it too.  
That’s just my opinion.  
Maybe when I struggled in school,  
maybe if someone had done it this way,  
I could have done better.

For Kim, the decision to write with her students, about a topic close to her heart, implies a higher level of self-efficacy and willingness to identify as a writer. In fact, in the interview, Kim was the only one who offered to share a piece of her own writing with me. As we talked about her narrative, Kim said, “Actually, I’m gonna [sic] grab it real quick.” She was eager to share her writing with me, which was unusual, as even though I tried to position myself as equal, many teachers still saw me as someone from the university who was there to judge their teaching. Considering this climate, it was remarkable that Kim chose to share her writing with me, and the act of having done so alone indicated a confidence in her identity as a writer and change agent that all of her colleagues did not share.

Anne, again, as the disciplinary “outsider” and veteran teacher of the group, occupied an interesting positionality in terms of her sense of self-efficacy. Ultimately, she was the most comfortable with her status as a growing reader, novice writer, and teacher of writing – a positionality that allowed Anne to write alongside her students without the same sense of needing to be an expert. Because she perceived herself as an effective teacher, Anne didn’t feel as threatened as some teachers with lower levels of perceived self-efficacy. Positioned as a

content area teacher outside of English language arts, Anne was able to retain her feelings of being an expert in her discipline. Because non-fiction source based arguments dealing with contemporary social issues aligned more easily with Anne's content, she was able to take up the new work without compromising her own content. For example, thinking back on her first experience teaching writing with the CRWP, Anne reflected,

This is something brand new for me, and, um,  
It will be something that's really, really good for my students.  
And we were talking about – I feel like it's real life.  
Um... being able to:: teach them how to write,  
I've never been able to work with them and- with any confidence,  
Like I have this year.  
And, I'm still a struggling writer myself.

INT - Sure.

I'm very much a..an infant.

(Both laugh)

But, um, I feel like I have more confidence because of the Writing Project,  
To try things.

Anne embraced her position as a novice and, as mentioned previously, named herself an “adventurer” because of her willingness to step out of her comfort zone and “try and try and try and try.” For Anne, the awareness she gained that she “didn't have to be perfect” helped her to position herself as a novice in a way that did not make her feel incapable. In fact, she recognized that in articulating her learning and writing processes to her students, she was actually doing more for their development as writers than if she had tried to position herself as an expert, a position that would have been much less comfortable for her besides.

Teachers' perceptions of their own self-efficacy not only revealed underlying values and beliefs central to their epistemologies of literacy; they also played a major role in shaping teachers' decisions regarding whether or not they were willing and / or able to take up

argumentative writing through the CRWP. Teachers' perceptions of efficacy varied greatly, depending in part on with what they perceived themselves engaged. For participants, efficacy and agency were closely linked – teachers who placed themselves as agents in their professional discourse were more likely to have stronger feelings of self-efficacy – and stronger feelings of self-efficacy translated into an increased willingness to grapple with the argumentative writing tasks presented by the CRWP.

For the duration of the grant, the two teachers who consistently dealt with low feelings of self-efficacy were Nicole and Tyler. In her exit interview, Nicole explained,

After three years, I felt like something had to change.  
 The first year was hard, of course.  
 My second year was.. good. I felt like, ok,  
 I've got an idea of what I should be doing and this is good and, yay.  
 That was good.  
 My third year, I was thinking, oh my gosh –  
 Is this really what I should be doing?  
 So then, yeah, last year was really hard,  
 And I thought... I shouldn't be doing this...  
 This year's been, meh...

In this passage, Nicole expresses doubt about her choice to pursue a career as a teacher asking, “Is this really what I should be doing?” While she is willing to dismiss the feelings of inadequacy she experienced during her first year of teaching as typical, she expresses more concern about how difficult her experience was as a third and then fourth year teacher. For Nicole, a fourth year labeled “meh,” is offered as an improvement to her third year, when she felt she “shouldn't be doing this.”

Near the end of his own interview, Tyler asked, “Well, do you feel like I've... progressed... over these two years? Cuz I feel like I've gotten worse.” Before that he cracked, “I know I'm a terrible teacher.” For Nicole, teaching argumentative writing, particularly within a literature unit “look[ed] so scary.” For Tyler, preparing students for testing was “terrifying.”

Tyler explained, “I thought [the students] were gonna [sic] do horrible, and then Mr. L is gonna [sic] be yelling at me.” For both Nicole and Tyler and teachers like them with low beliefs in their capabilities, many aspects of the teaching environment – from testing to teaching literature and argument in the same unit – are viewed as fraught with danger. These teachers tend to, as Bandura (1993) also observed, “magnify the severity of possible threats and worry about things that rarely happen” (p. 132). Because of this, these teachers experience higher levels of anxiety, which ultimately impairs their functioning and impacts their pedagogical decision making in myriad ways from setting lower goals to spending less class time devoted to academic content.

On the other side of the spectrum, Kim, Jill, and Leah all identified themselves as effective teachers, either outright or by placing themselves as actors in their success narratives. Of the seven teachers profiled, Leah was again the only one to specifically articulate her belief in her own efficacy:

To be honest, I think my craft is pretty strong,  
 It’s just..um.. the structure..  
 I’m really good at building structure,  
 I’m really good at that.  
 With UBD and now fulcrum texts,  
 I feel as if I’m equipped to teach effectively,  
 And now it’s just content,  
 Finding the right stuff.

While Leah begins with hedging language, introducing her point with “to be honest” and modifying her characterization of her craft as “pretty strong” rather than strong. However, she quickly moves into more confident language, using the intensifier “really” to describe her perceived strength at “building structure.” The parallel structure and repetition also communicate a sense of confidence that Leah has in her work. Unlike many of her colleagues, Leah is able to name precisely what she sees as her strength: “building structure.”

In this passage and through the many conversations we had over the years about the

importance of structure, Leah's sense of her own effectiveness as a result of clear goals and teaching structures that would support those goals was evident. For example, Leah became the go-to teacher in the department for colleagues who wanted to learn more about using learning protocols (i.e., affinity mapping, chalk talks, jigsaw). Leah also developed a reputation in the department for being an expert in *Understanding by Design*, a method of backwards planning which she practiced both in her own lesson planning and also taught her students to use.

For Leah, several factors impacted her ability and willingness to work the CRWP material into her classroom. First, with a master's degree in rhetoric and composition and a curriculum already focused on non-fiction, the jump from what she had been doing to what she was asked to do through the CRWP was not a huge one. Second, Leah's high sense of self-efficacy led her to interpret the CRWP not as a threat but as a challenge that would ultimately enrich her teaching. Leah's understanding of her craft as being to "build[...] structure" also helped her to find a place for argumentative writing - particularly in the form of the mini-units provided by the National Writing Project - in her classroom. Because Leah interpreted her job as being to build the structure, with content being a second tier concern, she was more comfortable bringing in a mini-unit engaging students in thinking about, for example, physician-assisted suicide / death with dignity partly because she wasn't also trying to pair it with a book study and partly because she was able to see the structures at work under the content. Leah demonstrated this understanding throughout the course of her participation in the CRWP by continuing to use mini-units as models in her classroom, changing out the text sets to fit her needs. Teachers like Leah with high levels of self-efficacy are well equipped to interpret professional development as enriching rather than threatening. In this specific case, Leah also benefitted from the CRWP's being within her *zone of proximal development*. Unlike her literature-focused colleagues, Leah's

experience of writing and teaching source-based argumentation was more of a step than a leap. Her confidence in her own identity as a change agent only made this process easier.

In an effort to help expose underlying identities and epistemologies, each teacher was asked during the exit interviews to tell a story about a success they had experienced that year. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy consistently identified themselves as the agents of change, while teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy tended to use a more detached discourse. For example, when asked if she had noticed any changes in the field during her time as a teacher, Kim – who viewed herself as effective – gave examples were of changes *she* made. She explained,

Yes.  
 Um, the first year that I was here?, um,  
 I just followed other teachers closely because,  
 Well, I'm new and starting in the middle of the year,  
 And it was a lot of worksheets,  
 And you sit quietly,  
 And it's not that way any more.  
 It's- students are constantly doing now.  
 It's very different from when I started four years ago.

INT - Why did that happen?

I think a big part of it was me.  
 I remembered that I didn't want to sit still when I was in school.  
 I mean, my college classes were online,  
 So I didn't really have a choice there,  
 But I just didn't like the kids sitting there,  
 Looking bored all the time.  
 So I would, start new things,  
 "Here's a little game we could play to get going."  
 And then just slowly over time,  
 It's gone to the students are constantly doing.

In this passage, Kim located herself as the change agent – “[...] a big part of it was me.” Because Kim didn't want to sit still when she was in school, she didn't want her literacy students to sit still all day in school; thus, she made changes to get students moving. Kim explained, “So I

would, start new things,” a statement that illustrates her perception of controllability. Kim clearly positions herself as the reason that students are now “constantly doing.” Because Kim perceived herself as effective, she enacted the expectancy-value theory that behavior would produce certain outcomes (Bandura, 1993, p. 128).

Jill frequently positioned herself as the agent of change in the same way. Recounting a story about a student who began the year as a struggling writer but ended with a more positive attitude, Jill explained,

He was trying to work on something, and he was in tears.  
 He was like 'I can't do this.'  
 He was tryin' [sic] to take this huge story,  
 this huge plot line that would have taken a novel to explain,  
 and put it in a short story.  
 And I said 'let's just focus on one interaction between these two characters-  
 how did he look, what did he say.'  
 You know, what was happening, what was going on around them,  
 and I just kind of took down some notes as he was talking,  
 cuz [sic] it was all there in his head.  
 And I took down some notes and said okay what can you do with this.

Jill clearly positions herself as the reason that this student experiences success in the situation. In the interaction, she recounts telling the student to focus on one specific aspect of the story in order to harness his ideas. Jill's discourse about her success story also reveals a high level of respect for the student's capacity as a learner. She explains, "... it was all there in his head." In her success story, Jill guides the student to overcome his frustration and sense of being overwhelmed by the prospect of capturing his ideas in writing.

Jill went on to provide several other milestones in this student's development, and ended her story with her observation of the student's attitude towards a final writing assessment that was administered as a part of the College-Ready Writers Program grant: "I can promise you his writing wasn't perfect, but he busted his butt." This statement illustrates an important component

of Jill's epistemology of literacy, which was the cultivation of diligence or perseverance.

Through her narrative, Jill positions herself as an actor impacting this student's development, helping him to cultivate an industriousness central to her understanding of what she hoped to cultivate through the practice of literacy in her classroom.

In their interviews, neither Carol, Nicole, nor Tyler cited examples of themselves acting in a way that led to student change. For example, when asked to talk about a success she had experienced that year, Carol offered the following story:

And one girl in particular  
that I've watched the entire year...  
she came in at barely a 6th grade reading level.  
Um... and... she has... just... you know...  
with every assignment that I've given her  
she's just struggled her way through it.  
[...]  
When we did the research for the inventions book...  
[...]  
and she just was struggling with it...  
she finished that assignment...  
and she's finished every assignment like that...  
really struggled with it... made herself think on it.  
In addition to that... she has... um...read on her own all year.  
She's chosen to read some higher level books on her own  
Sixth grade level and higher.  
And... um... her writing has also really become much more detailed.  
Her vocabulary has gone up.  
But she... she has raised her reading level from 6th grade...  
the last test that she took was 11.7... 11th grade... 7th month.

For her success story, Carol talks about a student who came in at a low reading level and left at a higher reading level, as determined by a reading test used by the district. However, Carol doesn't position herself as a change agent here. In this story, the student struggles through the work; she reads on her own and chooses to read higher-level books "on her own." Rather than describing any specific methods or strategies she applies to aid in this student's success, Carol chooses a passive construction to convey the student's improvements – "her writing *has become*



much more detailed” and “her vocabulary *has gone up*” – constructions that conveys a sense of the student’s improvement as autonomous rather than as impacted specifically by Carol’s teaching.

When asked for a success story, Nicole had trouble coming up with an example. Eventually she explained, “All I can think of right now is what we’re immediately doing” and provided two examples. First, she offered, “A kid who’s been, I mean, not talking at all, all the sudden is doing something.” Notably, Nicole does not position herself as an actor in the sentence at all. Whether or not she had any effect on whether or not this student had changed is unclear. The student’s alleged transformation is also vague, another marker of a lower level of confidence in instructional capability (Dierking & Fox, 2013, p.136). Nicole’s second example was of a student who had become out of reach. She explained,

He was silent at the beginning of the year, and then all the sudden  
 He started doing presentations and group work.  
 He was producing stuff and being creative,  
 And he was asking me stuff.  
 And making As on everything.  
 And I could see it. He’s doing it.  
 And now, he won’t even look at me.  
 He won’t talk.  
 He’s taking zeros on everything.  
 He wouldn’t even write his name on his quiz the other day.

Again, Nicole excludes herself from this “success” narrative (though she offered it as an example of a student success story, it turns mid-way into something else); it seems clear that Nicole did not see herself as the reason that this student “started doing presentations and group work,” a positionality that set her apart from her colleagues who were more likely to position themselves as agents of change. In her story, Nicole doesn’t position herself as being the cause of the student’s change. Rather, this student begins working “all the sudden.” Again, Nicole’s positioning of herself as insignificant in her change narratives both reveals and constructs her

epistemology of literacy. For Nicole and teachers like her who struggle to see themselves as effective, receptiveness to professional development, perceived as one more threat to their efficacy and empowerment, is lower.

Tyler, on the other hand, did offer a success story, but he also minimized his role in the outcome. In his story, Tyler described a class that hadn't been going well, and how he sat down one day in the spring without a lesson plan and invited students to talk about the class and make some plans for improving the climate. Here's how he described the situation:

I was like, okay, tomorrow, I'm just gonna [sic] come in.  
 We're going to sit down..no lesson plan.. it's just, you know..  
 'What's going on?  
 This class isn't going well.  
 I know it. You know it.  
 Let's talk about it.'  
 Um, and that helped a ton.  
 They've gotten better with working with each other,  
 Communicating with each other.

In this passage, Tyler articulates a component of his epistemology of literacy that values communication as a way to solve conflict. Unlike Jill or Kim in the examples presented above, Tyler does not position himself in the subject position; there is no "I" doing the action. Likewise, in the story he offered in response to the question about a memorable moment from the year, Tyler recounted a story about a student who had not been participating who turned in a high quality assignment:

For example, yesterday, one of these trouble students from seventh period..  
 Uh, refuses to do the homework, refuses to read, in an AP classroom,  
 I mean, this is the problem I was dealing with.  
 He was doing that for months,  
 And then, he was late on an assignment,  
 And I just reminded him,  
 I said, you know, we had an assignment due yesterday,  
 You haven't turned it in yet.  
 And he was like, "Okay, I'm gonna [sic] do that, I promise."  
 "Good. Thank you."

And he came in yesterday with the assignment.  
 And I was expecting, you know, it was supposed to be a close read of some poetry..  
 I was expecting maybe he'd circled and underlined some stuff,  
 You know, obviously just blowing it off.  
 He did authentically close read some poetry..  
 And did a good job at it too.

Notably, Tyler himself only appears in the narrative to remind the student that the assignment was due. Tyler's low expectations are also clear here, as he explains "I was expecting maybe he'd circled and underlined some stuff, you know, obviously just blowing it off." In this case, the student's behavior may have changed, but Tyler doesn't present himself as having played a meaningful part in impacting the student's behavior. Ultimately, Tyler's discourse of detachment is illustrative of his low sense of self-efficacy and the reality that this low self-efficacy produced in his classroom: low levels of student engagement, high levels of frustration, and no notable improvement in student writing. Nearing the end of one abruptly abbreviated writing unit, one of Tyler's students pronounced, "You're setting us up for failure." Another, under his breath, remarked, "This one time, a teacher made me write an essay all in one day. It made me hate myself" (Observation notes, 2.25.15). As Bandura (1993) argued, "Those beset by self-doubts construct classroom environments that are likely to undermine students' sense of efficacy and cognitive development" (p. 104). Tyler's inability to identify as a writer or as a change agent, both of which were constructed by and constructed low feelings of self-efficacy, resulted in major challenges in his ability to implement the work demanded by the CRWP.

For several teachers, self-efficacy beliefs related to perceived controllability were more visible in their discourse surrounding their responsibilities to students beyond the realm of academics. At the end of her interview, Kim, for example, recounted the story of the book she was reading, *The Boy Called It*:

His only safe place was at school,

Was to get away from home.  
 And his teacher hugged him,  
 And he said, I wish she would have never let go.  
 And, so,  
 Just being here every day,  
 Just trying to be the bright part of someone's day  
 Because we don't know what they have to go home to

One major component of Kim's epistemology of literacy was that her purpose as a teacher was "to be the bright part of someone's day." The implications of this perspective on practice are widespread and impact both the way that Kim constructed her literacy classroom and what she invited the students to read and write. When asked to share a favorite moment from the year, the kind of moment that made her want to stay in the profession, Kim admitted,

I think, to me, it's mo:re, (sigh)-  
 It's not necessarily the academic part, for me, that would be the...  
 That's why I keep doing it. It's that.  
 [...]  
 You know, just being able to do:: those little things for kids  
 Who need something beyond the academic  
 I think, is just as important to me as the:: academics.  
 I think it's more the personal level for me than the..academic level.  
 The academic's just bonus. (laughs)

For Kim, as the passage indicates, the academic component of teaching was of secondary importance only after the basic needs of the child were met. And, even though much of this may have been out of her control, Kim felt like she was effective in helping her students. For her, "trying" to have a positive impact on someone's day and "do[ing] those little things for kids who need something beyond the academic" equaled success. Kim's high level of self-efficacy resulted in a capacity to identify herself as a change agent.

Unlike Kim, Nicole tended to view herself as unable to effectively meet the needs of students who were grappling with issues beyond the academic. She explained,

I can be in the middle of teaching, and my brain turns into-  
 I just turn it into a robot basically.

And I'm teaching something, and I'm speaking,  
and going through the whole lesson?  
but, in the back of my head, all I can think about is this kid.

When asked if she found herself regularly talking to the counselor about her students,  
Nicole responded,

Yeah, it worries me.  
What if that kid- you always hear these stories of...  
home life or something that the kid does because nobody pays attention to them,  
so...I always worry that I'm::: I don't know, I'm going to miss something,  
and I'll feel responsible that I didn't do anything.  
That goes back to that... everything else that a teacher's supposed to do.

Nicole presented herself here as posed to “miss something.” She “worries” and “feel[s] responsible,” but in this particular interview, she doesn't cite any actions she had made to respond to the situation. When asked if she went to the counselor on behalf of students, Nicole responded in the affirmative, but she did not offer this action as an example of helping her students. For teachers like Nicole with low levels of self-efficacy, the challenge of addressing students' out-of-school needs becomes another distressing threat. Again, whether related to students' academic or social well being, teachers' feelings of self-efficacy occupied a significant portion of their epistemologies of literacy and were widely influential in the decisions that teachers made regarding how they approached the teaching of literacy.

Some of the teachers' beliefs regarding self-efficacy clustered around their talk about aspiring to “make a difference” in the lives of their students. Kim, for example, told a story about a student who was sometimes “rude and snappy,” who had trouble getting along with some of the other students and teachers. Kim explained, “I have continued to try to inspire her. I went out of my way.” She went on to explain her reasoning,

I've just kind [of] taken a heart to her.  
You know, sometimes you just see students,  
And you want to make a difference.

For this student, Kim cites major growth as a reader, linking the student's growth to her own influence: Kim made sure the student got her first choice of what book to read; she cited advocating for the student with other teachers; she overlooked minor infractions regarding classroom protocols in order to maintain high levels of trust. In this story, Kim positioned herself as the actor who was able to make a difference for her students, and this positioning indicates a high sense of self-efficacy.

Similarly, when Anne talked about "making a difference" for students, she presented herself as effectively doing so. For Anne, the goal of her courses was to prepare students for their lives outside of the classroom. She described her trajectory into the classroom in this way -

I did- I wanted to make a difference in children's lives,  
 A sincere difference.  
 I wanted them to walk.. out of the classroom,  
 feeling good about themselves,  
 feeling like they could accomplish things in their lives.  
 And I didn't? want to be looking through the rose colored glasses or anything like that,  
 Um, but I wanted..just.. a sincere, real life experience in the classroom  
 that "you can do your best, no matter what it is,  
 in any kind of job...  
 [...]  
 and I just wanted to be able to get that across to my students,  
 and make that difference.  
 I wanted them to feel good about themselves,  
 and somewhere along the line, teachers made me feel good about myself,  
 and I just wanted to give that back, somehow, through whatever I teach...  
 I, I felt like I could do that.

Anne's sense that she "felt like [she] could do that," that, like Kim and Leah, she felt like she was capable of impacting students lives, was apparent. Anne's use of repetition and her use of the intensifier "sincere" communicate a sense of confidence. At the end of the passage, Anne expresses that she "...wanted to give that back" and "felt like [she] could do that." Like Kim and Leah, Anne's belief that her behavior will result in change is clear here.

For teachers with lower self-efficacy, that sense of agency was missing. When Nicole remarked that she felt that the previous year had been “meh,” I asked her what had been uncomfortable or hard for her. After listing several issues centered around responsibilities outside of the strictly academic, Nicole concluded, “I don’t think teachers know what they’re walking into whenever they go, (high pitched, mocking voice) ‘I think I want to be a teacher and change the world.’” Nicole’s disappointment and disillusionment were unmistakable and also instrumental in the construction of her identity as a literacy teacher and her inability to enact an identity as a change agent. Unlike Anne’s statement of her goal and perceived ability to fulfill that goal, Nicole’s presentation of the “change the world” goal as naïve, as expressed through her change in tone, illustrated deep feelings of ineffectiveness. For teachers who don’t position themselves as change agents and / or who are grappling with their own feelings of low self-efficacy, integration of the complex literacy tasks involved in source-based argumentative writing into existing literature units ranged from inefficacious to nonexistent.

#### **How does teachers’ discourse construct and reveal their positioning of students?**

Gee’s second question related to identity asks how the speaker [teacher] positions others. Teachers’ attitudes towards student efficacy as readers, writers, and thinkers occupied critical space in their epistemologies of literacy. Specifically, teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy pass this sense of efficacy on to their students and generally tend to perceive students as less capable and to blame students for their failures (Dierking and Fox, 2013, p. 131; Bandura, 1993). Teachers’ views of students impacted whether or not they were willing to attempt to engage students in high-level reading and writing activities associated with the professional development through the CRWP. More generally, teachers’ perspectives about students’ abilities as readers and writers revealed another important component of their epistemologies of literacy. The way

that teachers talked about students' literacy practices and abilities both constructed and revealed two different responses to the professional development. While Carol, Nicole, and Tyler questioned their students' capacity for certain thinking, reading, and writing, Kim, Jill, Anne, and Leah's discourse concerning student capacity indicated higher levels of expectations for students.

*Students as highly capable.* Unlike Tyler, Nicole, and Carol; Kim, Jill, Anne, and Leah tended to speak of their students as more capable. For example, when asked about the reasoning behind a lesson I observed, Kim explained her goals:

That students would learn where to look on websites,  
So that they could know if the website is credible or not.  
And we did that because we always tell them,  
'You need to find a credible website.'  
But we've never actually shown them,  
Where do you need to look to find if it's credible or not?

In this passage, Kim took responsibility for students' inexperience related to ranking credibility, explaining that "we always tell them, [...] but we've never actually shown them." She doesn't blame the lack of knowledge on the students, opting instead to attribute the missing information to assigning rather than teaching a concept. Later in the interview, when explaining how she planned to adjust units the following year, Kim said this of the students:

Because they have so much that they have to really-  
They're grasping so much new stuff,  
changing classes, and they're having to adjust to so much,  
that it felt like it was a lot to throw argument on them  
right off the bat like we did this year.  
Which, they handled it well.  
They did a good job.

Acknowledging the challenges students faced as they engaged in learning argumentation, Kim, like Jill, Anne, and Leah, still positions the students as highly capable. While she felt that she needed to adjust the way she began the year – that she had jumped too quickly into argument



writing – she granted that students “handled it well” and “did a good job.” Typical of teachers with a high sense of instructional efficacy (Bandura, 1993), Kim’s discourse revealed her belief in the capacity of students to do the work she asked of them.

Anne, like Kim tended to acknowledge the challenging nature of the material and activities while also conceding that students had been successful in navigating the changing terrain. For example, when talking about a new personal finance class she was teaching, Anne acknowledged the difficulty of the material, while also praising students for handling the work. She explained,

We’re covering some tough subjects,  
like credit cards and banking and, um, you know,  
some tough information.  
[...]  
The kids are really learning.  
I had one say this morning, “I’ve learned so much.”  
So, once I.. – I do step back and think about it,  
I think they are learning quite a bit.

While the work might have been challenging, Anne positions her students as capable learners.

Like Anne and Kim, Jill, gave several examples of her students overcoming challenges. In one instance, she mentioned that students were nervous about the slam poems that they would be performing for the seniors, and she offered, “It’s going to be powerful what some of them are going to say.” Similarly, Leah tended to talk about her students as proficient. For example, when talking about writing workshops, Leah explained,

And, so, when we’re doing writing, it’s a lot-  
If you were to come into my classroom,  
It looks like... a lot of nothing happening.  
But I trust my students that.. they are responsible..  
to.. determine the steps they need to complete a task.

In this passage, Leah described her students as “responsible” and indicated that she “trust[ed]” her students to “determine” for themselves “the steps they need[ed] to complete a

task.” Thus, the onus of decision-making was given to students, and Leah expected students to be successful.

And, while playful in tone, Kim, Jill, Anne, and Leah all commented specifically on their concern that students might out-perform them as writers. For example, Jill quipped,

Am I writing enough to keep up with my kids?  
 (Both laughing)  
 Because some of them are better writers than I am. Much.  
 I’m like, “My gosh, I’m so humbled right now.”  
 Similarly, Kim, in describing her evolving identity as a writer confessed,  
 I guess, I’ve never had any formal training in writing,  
 or teaching writing.  
 So, I guess I’ve always felt like, maybe,  
 what if my writing’s not good enough,  
 or what if I really mess it up,  
 and these kids really don’t know what they’re doing?  
 But, it’s sixth grade level,  
 so surely I can write on the sixth grade level! (laughs)

In these passages, Jill and Kim acknowledge the challenges they face as writers and teachers of writing, but they do so in a way that makes it clear that, even so, they still believe in their own capacity to provide students the support they need to develop as writers.

*Students as less capable.* Nicole, on the other hand, while talking about the literature circle activity that I had observed her teach, remarked, “I’ll say I have noticed that.. the::, the commitment or the love of reading has gone down.. since I’ve been here.” Tyler, similarly, explained a decision made regarding shortening the length of writing assignments, pinned the decision on low student capacity for reading and writing. He rationalized,

Um, especially the beginning of the year, uh,  
 When I started to find out that they were not readers at all,  
 Their reading skills were pretty low, um, so I changed up some of my stories  
 that I would’ve done with my students last year..  
 I gave them, um, much shorter, I actually made a rule at the beginning of the year  
 that nothing would be over five pages.

Tyler’s low sense of instructional efficacy leads him to give up quickly on the students,

lowering his expectations for their work. In his exit interview, Tyler went on to explain,

They really, when we started the year, they didn't seem like they'd ever...  
 Though about anything, almost...  
 You know, they were constantly just on their phones,  
 And taking everything at face value a lot of the times,

For Tyler, the onus for sub-par work was placed on the students. Though he tempers the statement by adding “almost,” Tyler’s condemnation of students as not seeming that they had every “thought about anything” conveys a belief that students came to the course with a deficit and negatively impacts his willingness and ability to engage his students in the work of the CRWP.

Carol also worried about student capacity to do the thinking, reading, and writing connected to argumentative writing. At the end of her interview, when asked if there was anything I hadn’t asked about that she wanted to add, Carol explained her positioning regarding student efficacy in argumentative writing in some detail. A seventh grade teacher, Carol was concerned that her students were not “mature” enough or “developmentally able” to make many of the moves demanded of them through the process of argumentative writing. She explained,

I can teach seventh grade students to...  
 Go through the steps and write an argumentative paper...  
 But their true deep understanding of... um...  
 Of really in depth subjects that we talk about in class...  
 Um... I almost feel like it's unfair to ask them to form an opinion on those things  
 Based on the reading they do in class.

Carol went on to explain that she was primarily concerned that argumentative writing would compel students to oversimplify issues. She clarified,

They have a surface understanding...  
 And what I don't want them to do is make... form... to make rash opinions  
 And think that they understand it  
 And then just not really come back to that later.

Carol also felt that “until [students] are developmentally ready... they don't really see

bias. They don't really see many sides of the story [...] and they're not necessarily ready to inspect [what other people say] very closely."

Carol's concerns were different from Tyler's and Nicole's in that they were specifically based on students' skills in argumentation. While Tyler and Nicole were more concerned with students' general motivation and reading ability, Carol doubted students' ability to grapple with controversial issues fairly. And while some of Carol's concern centered on the student, she also cited concerns about the way that the CRWP presented argumentative writing through activities such as the pre-created mini-units, a concern that will be addressed specifically in chapter four.

### **Literacy as a Social Good**

**What perspective on literacy as a social good does teachers' discourse reveal?** As Gee (2014) explains, when using language, one thing that we build is what counts as a social good and how those social goods should be distributed. In order to articulate how teachers understand literacy as a social good, I use Scribner's (1984) three metaphors for literacy as a heuristic, as they help to distinguish between the epistemologies of literacy held by teachers in this study. Using the metaphors for literacy as adaptation, literacy as power, and literacy as a state of grace, I analyze teachers' discourse in order to better understand what, for them, counts a social good when it comes to literacy and what implications these epistemologies of literacy have on teachers' pedagogical decisions.

In her 1984 article, "Literacy in three metaphors," Scribner explains that each "has differing implications for educational policies and goals." Briefly, she outlines literacy as adaptation as a belief in the pragmatic, functional value of literacy. She writes, "Today, functional literacy is conceived broadly as the level of proficiency necessary for effective performance in a range of settings and customary activities" (p.9). What differentiates literacy as

power from literacy as adaptation is the focus on the impact of literacy on group or community advancement. Under the literacy as power metaphor, the relationship between social change and literacy education is central. Literacy as a state of grace, on the other hand, pivots on “the tendency in many societies to endow the literate person with special virtues” (p. 13). Unlike literacy as adaptation or literacy as power, the literacy as a state of grace metaphor transcends the political and economic, concentrating instead on the intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual growth made available through writing. Understanding the metaphor underlying teachers’ epistemologies of literacy helps to identify where the professional development offered through the CRWP was able to fit within teachers’ understanding of the purposes of literacy and where the chasms between teachers’ epistemologies and the enacted PD program were wide.

***Social good – literacy as adaptation.*** For some teachers, what counts as a social good is literacy as adaptation, literacy as a pragmatic skill set that would enable students to function effectively in their daily lives. In this study, Leah, senior English teacher, and Anne, career orientation and family and consumer sciences teacher, operated from epistemologies of literacy that were constructed by and constructed literacy as adaptation.

When Leah talked about her background – a dual master’s degree in literature and rhetoric and composition – she explained,

I love literature.  
 I still read literature,  
 But I don’t write literary analysis,  
 and I don’t see its purpose for young people if they’re not going to English lit.  
 It’s not practical.

For Leah, practicality played a large role in her decisions regarding what and how to teach. In this comment, Leah questions the value of literary analysis, as that activity doesn’t construct a social good or fit within the adaptation metaphor. Later in her interview, Leah remarked, “self

directed learning opens doors for authentic and meaningful acquiring of knowledge and skills.” Her focus on “knowledge and skills” places her in alignment with literacy as adaptation as a social good. Describing the goals of her course, Leah’s belief in the importance of adaptation was articulated even more directly:

I really want them to know that they’re responsible  
for whatever it is that they decide to do.  
Capstone could be like a metaphor, and, so  
when they take on a responsibility, whether it’s a job,  
it’s college, it’s starting a family  
that they’re responsible for the steps.  
the steps they need to accomplish a task,  
whether it’s a successful marriage,  
whether it’s climbing up the corporate ladder,  
whether it’s getting on the dean’s list.  
And, so, in order to do that, they need to access sources,  
apply new knowledge, analyze situations,  
redefine strategies, all sorts of stuff.  
And, so that’s just like one thing of what I want them to do.

The examples Leah provides here illustrate her belief that literacy is a social good that should be distributed to students so that they might use their skills in practical ways to function in the diverse arenas of their lives. Specifically, Leah’s use of parallel structures to present the post-secondary options that students might pursue emphasizes her belief in teaching literacy for the purpose of preparing students to use their literacy skills in a wide variety of environments and for evolving purposes.

At least in part because her epistemology of literacy was constructed within the metaphor of literacy as adaptation, Leah’s acquisition of the skills, texts, and goals offered by the CRWP was fairly seamless. In alignment with the New Literacy Studies’ understanding of literacy as social practice – a theoretical perspective held by the CRWP leadership team as well<sup>7</sup> – Leah

---

<sup>7</sup> For example, on the CRWP website, the following rationale is offered for engaging students and teachers in routine and long-term writing in argument: “Students in the College-Ready Writers Program,

understood herself as being involved in teaching literacy skills rather than content.

Anne positioned herself very similarly to Leah, explaining, “I actually I knew I wanted to teach, then it was called the home economics, because of the real life applications.” She explained that part of the draw to teach for her had been the idea that “it was something that was gonna [sic] make an impression on their family, their family right now, their family in the future, and that meant something to me.” She went on to explain that she had always wanted to “make a difference in a child’s life” and clarified,

And I wanted to make sure that what I taught  
Was, was applicable. It was something-  
We sit in classrooms and- and we ask “Why am I being taught this?”  
And, I wanted to make sure that the content that I taught..  
Was something that they could understand right away that,  
(CH = student) “Oh, I’m going to use that!”

For Anne, the goal of her classroom was to provide students with skills that they could carry along with them and use in different aspects of their lives. This passage illustrates her prioritization of fulfilling students’ need to understand the purpose for their learning, a need that Anne repeatedly expressed in terms of her own learning as well.

In addition, when Anne explained that the goal of her occupations research project, she pointed out that her hope wasn’t for students to actually choose an occupation and stick with it. Rather, she explained,

[...] I’ve always told them,  
You know, you’re going to change your mind over and over and over again,  
Before you get out of high school,  
Because your interests are going to change between now and then.  
I said, but, I want you to know how to look up information.  
I said, I want you to be able to find out information about an occupation,  
about where that occupation-  
where to go to school for that occupation,  
where to.. um, find out information about that occupation,

---

ideally, are able to recognize a public conversation, read and understand the various positions taken in that conversation, and enter into it themselves.”

about how much money they make, about, uh,  
all the information you can about that occupation,  
so you can make a good decision about that.

For Anne, the goal of literacy acquisition in her course was to pave the way for students to “find out information” and use that information to “make...good decision[s].” Literacy was practical and adaptable and would help students to be successful. Like Leah, Anne was also clear that she hoped the skills would translate to other areas of students’ lives. She explained,

Um, but I wanted.. just.. a sincere, real life experience in the classroom  
That “you can do your best, no matter what it is,  
In any kind of job... it doesn’t have to be that, that college,  
You know, It doesn’t have to be that physician, you know,  
It can be that construction.  
It can be that farming job.  
It can be.. whatever kind of job you want it to be.

For Anne and Leah, in many ways representative of disciplinary outsiders, the driving metaphor of literacy placed them in the position of providing students with experiences that would help them to function in the various aspects of their lives beyond the classroom walls. Leah and Anne were both also exempt from testing, a fact that may have helped to shield them from what Roskelly and Ronald (1998) refer to as the “cult of efficiency,” that driving sense of a need to “get through” a certain critical mass of content to prepare students for standardized testing. In addition, both Leah’s and Anne’s content already engaged students in making decisions about current issues, in reading nonfiction sources, and in writing for purposes beyond personal expression and literary analysis. Thus, for these teachers, whose epistemologies of literacy were formed with understanding of literacy as adaptation, the CRWP’s focus on writing arguments from non-fiction sources did not disrupt their metaphors on which their epistemologies were based.



*Social good - literacy as power.* Literacy as power as a driving metaphor and social good was uncommon. In fact, only one teacher articulated this belief – Leah. Leah referred to herself as a social justice teacher; her guiding metaphor for literacy was not only that literacy should provide students with the social good of adaptation, but students’ literacy acquisition should also positively impact the lives of others as well. Leah explained, “To me, it makes sense, uh, the kind of writing we want our students to learn to be active members within their community.” She went on to define the scope of her multi-week senior capstone project, arguing “problem solving should be a habit that empowers them to solve not only their own problems, but the challenges of their schools, communities, and maybe even the world.” The guiding purpose of the project, Leah explained, was to help students see that “they possess the ability to change lives through the power of their voice.” When asked why she felt it was important to keep the project running at the school, even once she moved on, she elucidated,

Because it gives them- it gives them student agency.  
 It gives them a voice.  
 It allows for them.. If they choose to do it..  
 Allows for them to utilize the skills that they have learned  
 Throughout their educational career, into this one project,  
 A project that they care about  
 And that they want to succeed in.  
 It gives them that platform, that space, that place  
 To practice  
 And to master these skills,  
 And feel like they’re contributing something to society.

For Leah, both within the capstone project and beyond it, the focus was outward. Students were to learn skills that would give them “agency” and would help them “contribute something to society.” Through her capstone project, Leah invited students to spend an entire quarter studying and contributing to a solution to a local social issue that mattered to them. In this environment, Leah expected her students to develop literacies not only in order to improve

their own lives, but also to improve their communities and the lives of others. The way that Leah talked about literacy, the decisions she made about what texts to read, what to write, and how to assess reading and writing, all comprised her epistemology of literacy as power.

***Social good - literacy as a state of grace.*** For teachers operating from the belief that literacy could “endow the literate person with special virtues” (Scribner, 1984), the social good in play was that of literacy for personal development and enjoyment. For the majority of teachers participating in this project – all but one of whom were teaching English language arts – the understanding of literacy’s social purpose as self-enhancement was evident.

For the teachers whose epistemologies valued literacy as a state of grace, the enjoyment of literature was of utmost import. Teachers who held these beliefs understood reading for reading’s sake, adopting what Louise Rosenblatt characterized as an “aesthetic stance” (Rosenblatt, 2005, p. 11).

For example, when Tyler explained his intentions for engaging students in reading Edgar Allen Poe, he reasoned “...they always start out hating it, but once we get to the end [...] they’re like, oh, this is actually pretty neat.” “So, it’s that process of getting them to enjoy Poe, really, behind this is what it’s really about,” he reasoned. Carol expressed a similar sentiment, explaining that frequently students read books aloud together just for the “enjoyment” of doing so. In responding to a question about what students read and write in her class, Carol explained,

You know, but past what I'm required to do,  
the enjoyment of it really what... is, um,  
maybe sometimes overlooked in a classroom /  
which is why I like to teach that.

Carol’s perception of student enjoyment as “sometimes overlooked in a classroom” also influences her decisions, as she sees herself as carrying more responsibility for providing students with enjoyable experiences (which she perceives as happening in her classroom

primarily through reading aloud together and writing for personal expression).

Paying more attention to the sensuous, emotive, affective elements of the text, teachers operating from a primarily aesthetic stance were likely to make decisions about what and how students would read based on the level of enjoyment they perceived students experiencing. Considering these teachers' general sense that students would enjoy personal and creative reading and writing more than argumentative writing, combined with their prioritization of aesthetic experiences, teachers' resistance to engage in argumentative writing and nonfiction reading with their students is explicable.

One of the greatest differences between teachers who understood literacy as a state of grace and teachers who understood literacy as adaptation or as power was their understanding of the relationship between romanticism and rhetoric. For example, both Jill – a romantically-oriented teacher and Leah – a rhetorically-oriented teacher, taught units dealing with change. Jill's essential questions for the unit were "What has changed me, and what can I change?" The essential question for Leah's unit was "How can I change lives through the power of my voice?" The major difference between these units was in inward versus outward orientation. While Leah's unit was designed to engage students in contributing their voices to local social justice issues (demonstrative of her epistemology of literacy as power), Jill's unit was designed to engage students in personal reflection, a move characteristic of the epistemology of literacy as a state of grace. Describing her unit, Jill explained,

I want them to realize that they have been shaped by the things that have happened in their life,  
but they also can be that element of change that's needed,  
you know, for the rest of their life,  
and I want them to take some responsibility for that.

She went on to clarify,

So, I don't know, the big concept is trying to make them realize that they can change, regardless of what has happened to them, what situation they've been in. They can be that- They can make a change and they can make a difference.

Jill's unit engages students in self-study, with the hope of helping students to understand that they can "make a difference" in their own lives, "regardless of what has happened to them."

Like Jill, Kim also talked about her hope that her students would "see how a series of events can shape a person's character." Kim also talked about the impact of testing on students' emotional health, positioning herself in opposition to literacy practices that made "students feel bad about themselves." She explained,

Students feel bad about themselves every time they take a TLI.  
They read this insanely long passage,  
That is not interesting to them.  
It has nothing to do with anything an 11 or 12 year old would ever be interested in,

The social good she presents here is that of literacy as a state of grace, literacy as a means to maintaining emotional health. The test is provided as a counterexample to what she hopes for her classroom.

Carol was also the most vocal of the teachers regarding her sense that the English language arts classroom should create a space for connecting with students through personal writing, and she felt that argumentative writing did not provide the same opportunity to connect with students. For example, when recounting her success story, Carol talked about receiving a confessional poem from a student who had taken an assignment that the class had begun together home with her to complete. Carol described the interaction in this way –

Um... and she brought a paper to me that she'd written on her own...  
And... um... it was a poem all about how... um... she- about who she was.  
We'd written an "I am " poem in class  
and had taken that and written her own "I Am" poem  
and what it- what it expressed was

a person who had learned that writing was an outlet for... um...  
 for stress in life... and for someone who feels like no one is listening.  
 Um... and for someone who feels like she doesn't fit it.  
 And... you know... the reason that's inspirational for me  
 because whenever I get sucked into the vein of  
 "We've got to get ready for this test. We've got to get ready for that test"  
 and then suddenly someone brings something like this to me  
 this is not the kind of writing that changes my life  
 and it's not the kind of writing that is going to change anyone else's life.  
 The kind of writing that that matters to people is the close and personal writing.  
 Um... and... while I do firmly believe that there's a place for all genres of writing  
 and they need to be taught... um...  
 the kids need an avenue of close and personal writing in the classroom  
 because they don't all take it home and write it on the weekend.

I chose to include this excerpt again because it represents a widespread belief articulated by all participants, save Anne and Leah, that “the writing that matters to people is the close and personal writing.” For teachers whose epistemologies of literacy were shaped by their metaphor of literacy as a state of grace, the divide between reading fictional texts together for aesthetic purposes or writing for personal expression and reading informational and argumentative texts to prepare for argumentative writing was difficult to navigate and exposed an important space of disconnect between the CRWP and the (primarily) literature teachers that the project served. As Carol explained,

I really do have a passion for the reading and writing,  
 But really I have a passion for working with the kids.

The prioritization of the personal over the academic was typical for Carol, Kim, Jill, and teachers like them operating within the epistemology of literacy as a state of grace. Relatedly, teachers' theoretical assumptions were, as others (Dierking & Fox, 2013; Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009; Ratcliffe, 2004) have argued, a driving force impacting pedagogical choices. As such, the disconnect between these teachers' understanding of literature and creative writing as personal and argumentative writing as purely academic became a major component contributing

to their decisions regarding whether to accommodate or sideline the source-based argumentative writing targeted by the CRWP.

### **Pedagogical Implications for Argumentative Writing**

Integral to this study and existing at the intersection between teachers' identities and perspectives on literacy as a social good were the beliefs that teachers held about their own capacity for teaching argumentative writing and students' capacity for employing the literacy skills necessary for argumentative writing. Argumentative writing was consistently named as most challenging for students to learn, and this component of teachers' epistemologies of literacy, paired with teachers' perceptions of student abilities, was one of the strongest indicators of whether or not teachers integrated the argumentative writing of the CRWP into their classrooms in meaningful ways.

When explaining her plans for the following year, after the CRWP ended, Kim presented this idea:

Um, I would like to start with narrative, and then go into argument and spend two, maybe the first quarter focused on narrative and then the middle two quarters of the year, focus on, um, argument and do the bulk of the writing right there in the middle and then work our way back around to narrative

In other words, Kim's plan was to begin with narrative, spend half of the year focused on argument, and then loop back around to end the year with narrative writing. Though dismissed in theory (Connors, 1981), the modes of discourse still shape the way many English teachers approach teaching writing (Roskelly and Ronald, 1998, p. 103). Kim's impulse to move from the personal to the public and back to the personal captures this understanding and was characteristic of the ELA teachers' approach to writing in White Clover Valley schools. When asked what made her feel that trajectory was right, Kim offered this reasoning -

Um, we, narrative is easier for students.  
 So, it's- to me it feels like a better way to start the year  
 because they have so much that they have to really-  
 they're grasping so much new stuff,  
 changing classes, and they're having to adjust to so much,  
 that it felt like it was a lot to throw argument on them  
 right off the bat like we did this year.  
 Which, they handled it well.  
 They did a good job.  
 But I think it would be a better way to ease into the year for them.

For Kim, beginning and ending with narrative writing would “ease” students into the year more easily than argument writing, as narrative writing was “easier for students.” Thus, at least one reason for placing narrative writing at the beginning and end of the year was that it was easier for students and thus functioned more appropriately as transitional.

The idea that students would identify more easily as writers of narrative over writers of argument was shared by many teachers. When describing his students’ struggle to write argumentative essays, Tyler related,

It seems to just get in their head that it's just so important  
 And that writing is just this..you know.. mountain that they have to climb...  
 And the essay's at the top...

And, in some ways, Tyler shared this perspective with his students. For example, when asked if he planned to engage students in any longer term argumentative writing before the end of the year, Tyler responded,

This year, no.  
 We're just ending with some creative writing, just writing for fun,  
 just to remind them that writing is not this big beast,  
 cuz [sic] I think PARCC really terrified them..  
 It terrified me.  
 Um, those writing prompts were tough  
 The TLI prompts were tough  
 Um, and I would, I mean, if I was in my class, I would have hated writing  
 if we continued doing that.  
 So, I want writing to be fun the rest of the year.

Tyler's response illustrated his epistemology of literacy regarding argumentative writing as not only more difficult for students but also less enjoyable. Tyler also equated argumentative writing to writing for tests in this passage in the way that he used examples of tests (PARCC and TLI) to respond to the question about plans for argumentative writing for the rest of the year.

As discussed, teachers who understood literacy as a state of grace also held the belief that students would be less effective in making personal connections through argumentative writing. Considering that most teachers explicitly expressed values in creating opportunities for students to express themselves on a personal level through their writing, teachers' perception that argument provided fewer opportunities for students to express their identities in their writing played a major role in some teachers' disinterest in argumentative writing. Jill, for example, commented that what she loved about the personal writing she did with students through bell ringers was, "[...] getting to know my kids through that time, like, in their writing." All of the teachers, save Anne and Leah, shared this view of the purpose of writing as being primarily a means to connect personally with students.

Several teachers also articulated their belief that argumentative writing was the most challenging to integrate into pre-existing, literature-centered units and their concern that students would struggle to move between argumentative writing and writing about literature. At the end of her exit interview, when asked if there was anything that I hadn't asked, Nicole asked about the purpose of the interviews. When I explained to her that I was using the interviews to help our writing project site understand how to better navigate professional development, Nicole offered this perspective:

I think some teachers have a focus, or they love a piece of writing,  
and they have a certain way that they view that.  
Um, and they don't see that they could teach,  
that they could write an argument piece in the middle of a novel,



um, or... you could do literary analysis of course, but...  
or, and narrative is pretty easy too.  
Argument is the hardest.

For Nicole, literary analysis was a given: she explains that she could “of course” work with literary analysis. She positions narrative as “pretty easy too.” The underlying assumptions in this passage are that (1) narrative writing is easier for students than argumentative writing and (2) literature study should be the focus of the course, and if argumentative writing were to have a home in the classroom, it would belong embedded within the study of literature. The assumptions were shared by many teachers and played a central role in shaping teachers’ pedagogical decisions when it came to implementing the source-based argumentative writing of the CRWP.

In speaking about their praxis, teachers’ discourse uncovered beliefs regarding what counts as a social good when it comes to instruction in literacy. In other words, teachers construct classroom cultures dependent, in large part, on their beliefs regarding the purpose of literacy acquisition. For teachers whose epistemologies of literacy were built on the metaphors of literacy as adaptation or literacy as power, the CRWP was an easier fit, as work with nonfiction sources in argumentative writing met many of the articulated goals of these teachers. The challenge came for teachers working with epistemologies of literacy informed and shaped by their beliefs in literacy as a state of grace. For teachers working within this understanding of literacy, the nonfiction source-based argumentative writing promoted by the CRWP was a difficult fit.

For teachers operating from an understanding of literacy as a state of grace or self-enhancement, literacy learning is equated with the humanistic project of facilitating students’ self-discovery rather than the social project of engaging in public discourse. In many ways, this

bifurcation of purposes echoes historical understandings of romantic and rhetorical purposes as oppositional. As Roskelly and Ronald write in *Reason to Believe* (1998), “The stereotypical primary tenet of romanticism – the search for and glorification of self – seems profoundly antirhetorical, or at least a-rhetorical, just as the purview of rhetoric – persuasion of another person or group toward a desired end – seems antiromantic” (p.31). Similarly, the focus of the CRWP – writing arguments from nonfiction sources – was rhetorical, while the focus of teachers operating with an understanding of literacy as a state of grace – reading literature and writing literary analysis and creative pieces (i.e., personal narratives and poetry) – was more easily identifiable as romantic. By maintaining this distinction between purposes through moves such as limiting the topics of writing to nonfiction rather than literature, those of us at the helms of the CRWP missed an opportunity to bridge one of the most substantial gaps between where teachers were in their teaching and where the National Writing Project, through the College-Ready Writers Program, hoped that they might be.

## **Conclusions**

Several critical, interrelated issues bubble to the surface in these passages: teachers come to the classroom with a wide range of understandings regarding their own identities as readers, writers and educators and with a wide range of epistemologies of literacy, particularly in regards to their perspectives on literacy as a social good. Teachers who perceive themselves as effective writers and who view their environments as controllable tend to view their students as more capable, and in the case of our local site’s College-Ready Writers Program, were more willing to take up the challenge of the work. Teachers operating from an epistemology of literacy as a state of grace had a more difficult time integrating non-fiction, source-based argumentative writing into their literature- and creative-writing-based classrooms, as the tasks appeared oppositional to

one another, and teachers lacked models for what this integration would look like.

In Chapter Five, I consider the national and local results of the College-Ready Writers Program and offer a series of adjustments that might have been made to our local CRWP, with implications for the design of professional learning both within and beyond the National Writing Project. Before that, however, Chapter Four offers a thick description of one participant's struggle to navigate the uncharted terrain between the primarily rhetorical stance of the CRWP and the primarily romantic stance held by English language arts teachers more oriented toward the personal than the public.

#### Chapter 4: Carol, a Telling Case

This chapter offers a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of Carol's second year (2014-15) participating in the CRWP and her reflections six months after the program ended. While recognizing that Carol represents only one perspective, it is a perspective that prompts the question that generated susurrus talk each time local site leaders and teacher consultants from all of the CRWP sites worked together at national meetings: Are local Writing Project sites offering "place-sensitive" (Gallagher & Woodworth, 2013) learning opportunities that meet the needs of disciplinary teachers, in this case, English language arts teachers?

While the study could have presented a telling case based on any of the participating teachers, this dissertation presents a case where transformation wasn't, as this perspective is underrepresented in the literature. In their 2014 article, "High school English Language Arts teachers' argumentative epistemologies for teaching writing," Newell, VanDerHeide, and Wynhoff Olsen offer the idea of "argumentative epistemologies" as a way to help understand how teachers approach the teaching of argumentation. This construct creates a foundation for an important conversation linking the idea of epistemology to practice. However, what remains unexplored in this piece is the experience of teachers who may not have firmly articulated epistemologies concerning argumentation. While Newell, VanDerHeide and Wynhoff Olsen (2014) explore the idea of "argumentative epistemologies" as it applies to teachers "with local reputations of excellence as writing teachers" (p. 100), this study applies the broader concept of "epistemology of literacy" to consider how teachers with different epistemologies of literacy approach the teaching of argumentative writing.

This study also adds a perspective to the research base of the National Writing Project, as it gives voice to teachers participating in inservice, a voice that is absent from the recent

literature. While studies are regularly published exploring the experiences of teachers who have opted in to NWP programming through summer institutes, the experience of teachers in the NWP's school-based inservice programs is much less frequently targeted.

Though also exploring the experiences of teachers who have opted in to a NWP summer institute, Anne Whitney's (2006) dissertation examining teacher transformation through the NWP devotes a few pages to considering what happens in special cases "when transformation wasn't" (pp. 266-272). This study is, in part, a further exploration of Whitney's question. Considering that the National Writing Project teacher consultants and professional development providers more generally often find themselves working with teachers who may struggle to implement writing instruction into their classrooms for a multitude of reasons, articulating and understanding those reasons becomes an important step towards creating opportunities for all participants to experience the transformations for which the National Writing Project is well known. As an English language arts teacher with an epistemology of literacy as a state of grace, Carol's experience was typical of an ELA teacher struggling to integrate the work of the CRWP into her classroom and, as such, provides a window into adjustments that may be made to create space for teachers who struggle through their experience with the NWP.

Data in this description were collected from several sources including weekly lesson plans submitted by Carol; field notes from our weekly meetings; Carol's exit interview on April 21, 2015; and her reflective vignette, submitted via email on January 6, 2016.

Though Carol and I did not always see eye to eye, we had an honest and trusting relationship. In the summer of 2014, Carol accompanied our site leadership team to the CRWP Summer Partnership Meeting. As the only participating teacher on our site's team, Carol was exposed to the plan for the second year of programming before the rest of the teachers. While

attending the meeting, Carol worked to create a mini-unit that would integrate fiction and argument, a project she took upon herself. I include her full plan in Appendix C. The fact that Carol agreed to attend the summer meeting and then took up this project of her own volition indicates a lot about her openness to working with the CRWP as she entered her second year of participation.

The title of Carol's mini-unit for her seventh grade students – “Adding the Argumentative Strand to Existing Plans” – illustrates a fundamental characteristic of Carol's relationship with argumentative writing through the CRWP. When she began the project, Carol and her partner teacher had been working together for most of a decade. They liked the units they taught, and their approach to the CRWP was to fit it in where they could within units that already existed. Carol's mini-unit integrating argumentative writing into a literature study unit on “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” serves as an example of the kind of work we saw on our site when teachers began working to integrate argumentative writing into pre-existing units.

The text set for Carol's unit is diverse, including Rudyard Kipling's short story, “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi,” and four nonfiction sources (3 videos, 1 article) about the mongoose. The writing that takes place over the course of the six days ranges from informal writing sprints to a formal, five paragraph argumentative essay. However, the sequence of activities is problematic for several reasons.

First, students are asked to mine the videos and articles, all of which are informational sources, for evidence. This is problematic for one main reason: Because students, at that point, don't know what question they would be asked, they don't have any way to evaluate what would work as evidence. Thus, reading a source and collecting evidence isn't possible until students have a clear sense of the controversy.

In addition, in the first several days of the unit, Carol engages students in It Says / I Say, a learning protocol she learned through the CRWP as a tool to help students explore differences between the perspective(s) represented by a source and their own perspective. Carol uses it throughout the mini-unit as a way for students to organize information. So, for example, the template “At first I thought X, but now I understand X” would be used in argument to represent a changing claim. In Carol’s unit, however, students were prompted to fill in the blanks with information: what did they think about the mongoose, and then what did they learn that challenged those first thoughts? Rather than functioning as a structure for organizing a student’s thinking about a controversy, the It Says / I Say protocol is used here to organize information, an activity that fails to prepare students to think about the argumentative writing to come.

On day three, the purpose of the activities switches completely, and students are asked to delve into literary analysis, working to notice aspects of craft including sensory details; figurative language; vivid verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; and effective dialogue. This shift is problematic as it means that students begin with informative writing, move to literary analysis, and end with argumentative writing, all within the span of five days. Seventh grade students would surely struggle with the scope and pace of this work.

On the fourth day of the project, students learn the writing prompt: Do you think a mongoose would make a good pet? They are asked to use information from the text set to support their positions. There are several problems with this activity. First, the question isn’t genuinely arguable – all of the provided sources point to the same answer. Carol herself explained that she enjoyed this activity because of the way that she was able to disrupt students’ thinking about the mongoose – they all came in thinking that the mongoose was dangerous but left understanding that mongooses were actually fairly docile. In order for a topic to truly be

arguable, there have to be multiple perspectives available: I tend to explain this fact to high school students in this way – “child abuse” doesn’t work as a topic for an argumentative paper because no one is going to argue “for” child abuse. Punishment for individuals convicted of child abuse or the best way to educate children to recognize and report child abuse are topics that would work better.

Comparing lesson plans from the fall of 2014, when Carol first taught this unit, to the fall of 2015, the first semester following the end of the CRWP, I was not terribly surprised to see that Carol had returned to teaching the Rikki Tikki Tavi unit the way she had before the CRWP. A five paragraph theme (the structure that Carol provided to students for their writing) on the topic of whether or not a mongoose would make a good pet likely did little to engage students in anything central to their study of the literature, which would likely have been Carol’s goal.

Sadly, a giant missed opportunity is also present in this lesson plan on day three when Carol asks students to respond to this question as their exit ticket: Why is this story still being read and enjoyed more than 100 years after it was written? Rather than asking students a trivial question about pet ownership that did not enrich their reading of the literature, Carol might have used Rikki Tikki Tavi to explore a more essential question about canonical literature and what students should read in school. Considering that Carol started her year making the case for reading, this unit could have been constructed as a coherent and powerful exploration in alignment with her epistemology of literacy. In her exit interview, Carol explained, “One of the things that we do beyond the enjoyment is to try to teach them the necessity of [reading]... and to make them aware of what level they are reading at and where they need to go...” Rather than merely being positioned to “Add[...] the Argumentative Strand to Existing Plans,” Carol needed



a professional learning opportunity that would have engaged her in designing a unit reflective of her epistemological orientation.

### **Examining a Unit Plan: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**

Carol's unit plan for *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* further makes the case for a more responsive and discipline-specific focus in professional development in literacy. Table 5 offers a comparison of one of Carol's favorite units, a novel study of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* that she had been teaching for several years, implemented during and after the CRWP.

This unit plan provides a rich example of how teachers like Carol who worked to integrate the argumentative strand into pre-existing units accomplished the task. Sadly, the comparison also reveals that, at least within this unit, the focus on argumentative writing didn't stick after the CRWP ended. The left column includes Carol's unit plan from the fall of 2014, during her second year with the CRWP, while the right column is Carol's unit plan from the fall of 2015, after the CRWP ended. All argumentative elements within the units are highlighted in grey: a quick glance over the plans reveals limited argumentative components in 2014 and the absence of argumentative components in 2015.

Novel study: <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>	
Essential questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has language changed over time?</li> <li>• How can a person's language affect success?</li> <li>• What are the origins of language?</li> <li>• How does language evolve?</li> <li>• What does slang, abbreviation, and dialect have to do with success?</li> <li>• What elements of language should be mastered for upward mobility?</li> <li>• How can a dictionary be used to increase mastery of language?</li> </ul>	
Year 2	Year 3

<p><b>Day 1</b>  → Bell ringer: Look at progress report: Do you have any zeroes so far? If so, why? Are you satisfied with your grade? Do you think your parents will be satisfied? How important is for you to succeed academically this year?  → Main activity: reader's theater with <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i></p> <p><b>Day 2</b>  → Bell ringer: Look at Helpless Kids article results. On which part did you do well? Which parts needed more understanding or detail? Work with your group to figure out what you might have added or answered differently.  → Main activities: (1) Library lesson – research / AR reading<sup>8</sup>; (2) reader's theater with <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i></p> <p><b>Day 3</b>  → Bell ringer: Read “Birches.” Summarize the poem verbally within your group. Be prepared to state your summary to the class.  → Main activities: (1) spelling and vocabulary practice test; (2) reader's theater with <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i></p> <p><b>Day 4</b>  → Bell ringer: Study the image of a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. What claim might you make based on the details in this picture? What evidence do you have to support this claim? (Discussion)  → Main activity: Watch <i>The Adventures</i></p>	<p><b>Day 1</b>  → Bell ringer: Read story with no punctuation. Discuss difficulty of understanding. Pass back stories and compare punctuation in both stories. Reflect on comments and set goal for next paper. Discuss whole class.  → Main activities: (1) AR book test; (2) vocabulary; (3) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 2</b>  → Bell ringer: Brainstorm a short list of great adventures that you have had. Circle one that you think would be easy to tell a story about.  → Main activities: Using the bell ringer, tell impromptu stories to a partner in sections as directed by teacher: setting, character, plot; Discussion: value / craft of storytelling – What was easy? Difficult? What is the benefit of writing rather than telling verbally? Vice versa? (2) reader's theater with <i>Tom Sawyer</i></p> <p><b>Day 3</b>  → Bell ringer: Consider Jim's dialect on p. 14 and the dialect of the speaker in “Fishin’.” What does dialect tell about a person? Can or should people change the way they talk? What is the difference between dialect and dialogue?  → Main activities: (1) Read and discuss 22 Maps That Show How Americans Speak English Totally Differently From Each Other;” (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 4</b>  → Bell ringer: Analyze Mark Twain quotation, “Where prejudice exists, it always discolors our thoughts.” What does</p>
--	--

<sup>8</sup> The Accelerated Reader (AR) program is a computerized program that tests reading comprehension. Students select books on their reading level, read independently, and take an independent comprehension test on the computer. Each book is worth a certain number of points based on its length and reading level.

of *Tom Sawyer* film

→ Exit ticket: Make claim of value on your own about music, television, clothing, etc. and provide evidence.

### Day 5

→ Bell ringer: Begin a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the Tom Sawyer movie and book.

→ Main activities: (1) Finish movie; (2) Finish Venn diagram; (3) Take spelling and vocabulary test

→ Exit ticket: Make a claim of value about the movie vs. the book. Provide evidence to support your claim.

### Day 6

→ Bell ringer: N/A

→ Main activity: (1) Finish movie and Venn diagram; (2) AR testing

### Day 7

→ Bell ringer: Analyze image of teacher in one-room schoolhouse. What claim might you make based on the details in this picture? What evidence do you have to support this claim? (Notecard, discussion)

→ Main activity: (1) mini lesson: structure, sentence frames, and rubric for argument writing; (2) choose one topic from list provided and write an argument.

### Day 8

→ Bell ringer: Read argument paper so far and check for clarity of pronouns

→ Main activity: (1) Argument – checklist, peer conference, teacher conference, and polish; (2) AR reading

### Day 9

→ Bell ringer: Make a list of all the things you can think of that an author like Mark Twain might do to make an adventure story engaging to read. How would a present day setting affect the events that

Twain think? What do you think? Support. (Use sentence frames.)

→ Main activities: (1) Read and respond to Aunty Cord text; (2) reader's theater

### Day 5

→ Bell ringer: Analyze Mark Twain quote

→ Main activities: (1) Study spelling and vocabulary words; (2) reader's theater

### Day 6

→ Bell ringer: Spelling / vocabulary retest

→ Main activities: (1) Library lesson; (2) reader's theater

### Day 7

→ Bell ringer: Brainstorm a short list of great adventures that you have had. Circle one that you think would be easy to tell a story about.

→ Main activities: (1) Read and respond to Aunty Cord reading; (2) reader's theater

### Day 8

→ Bell ringer: Read Frederick Douglass biography. Sticky notes: 2 important points; 2 questions or connections

→ (1) Contrast Douglass' writing with that of Aunty Cord in "A True Story." Why do you think there is such a difference? How can a person's language affect his / her success? (2) reader's theater

### Day 9

→ Bell ringer: J "character" finish

→ Main activities: (1) Review misspellings, vocabulary, spelling rules; (2) reader's theater

### Day 10

→ Bell ringer: spelling / vocabulary retest

→ (1) Library – free flow and reading; (2) reader's theater

### Day 11

→ Bell ringer: J "Connection 2"

<p>take place in the story of Tom Sawyer? How would the event of Tom and Becky's fight be different if told from Becky's point of view? (Discussion)</p> <p>→ Main activity: Write an adventure story or rewrite an event from Tom Sawyer from another point of view</p>	<p>→ Main activities: Frederick Douglass annotation; (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 12</b></p> <p>→ Bell ringer: "22 Maps that Show How Americans Speak English Totally Differently from Each Other"</p> <p>→ Main activities: (1) Read and respond to "The Dictionary Has a Way with Unique American Words"; (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 13</b></p> <p>→ Bell ringer: Contrast Douglass' writing with that of Aunt Cord in "A True Story." Why do you think there is such a difference? How can a person's language affect his / her success?</p> <p>→ Main activities: (1) spelling test; reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 14</b></p> <p>→ Bell ringer: Choose a character from <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> and discuss everything you know about that character.</p> <p>→ Main activities: (1) Make Facebook entry for character; (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 15</b></p> <p>→ Bell ringer: spelling list</p> <p>→ Main activities: (1) Library lesson / AR testing; (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 16</b></p> <p>→ Bell ringer: Read "Birches"</p> <p>→ Main activities: (1) Read and annotate poem; (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 17</b></p> <p>→ Read exemplary student response to "Connection 2"</p> <p>→ Main activities: (1) Literary analysis of "Birches;" (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 18</b></p> <p>→ Bell ringer: Personal web – teacher example</p>
--	---

	<p>→ Main activities: (1) students' personal web; (2) spelling test; (3) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 19</b>  → Bell ringer: Complete literary analysis of "Birches"  → Main activities: (1) McDougal's cave virtual tour; (2) Reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 20</b>  → Bell ringer: spelling list  → Main activities: (1) library free flow; AR reading; (2) reader's theater</p> <p><b>Day 21</b>  → Bell ringer: Tom Sawyer opinion response; Tom Sawyer AR testing  → Main activities: Watch 1973 musical version of <i>TS</i></p> <p><b>Day 22</b>  → Bell ringer: N/A  → Main activities: (1) Watch movie; (2) make contrast notes; (3) Socratic circle analysis of characters and events in book vs. movie; essential questions</p>
--	--

Table 5: *Tom Sawyer* unit plans, 2014 v. 2015

The main argumentative writing towards which these few days build is an argumentative essay, the topic of which students choose on day seven and complete on day eight. Topics in the list of possibilities ranged from banning books to spanking in school to comparing books versus movies.

The unit illustrates a clear effort to include information from professional development sessions into the unit. Earlier in the month that this unit was taught in 2014, the CRWP brought in a teacher consultant who taught a demonstration lesson to 12<sup>th</sup> graders on the topic of making claims of value. There is a clear echo of this work on Day Four, when students are asked to make a claim of value about "music, television, clothing, etc." and then again on Day Five when they

are asked to make a claim of value about “the movie versus the book.” However, as the unit plan illustrates and as evidenced by the student writing, the integration of the claim of value work is minimally effective for several reasons. Students don’t have the foundation, at this point, to understand how a claim of value might differ from a claim of fact or claim of policy. They also don’t receive any direct instruction on the topic, and are left to figure out the concept on their own. They don’t have much time to work on making these claims: the activities are listed as exit tickets, which, like bell ringers, typically take no more than five minutes and are not the focus of instruction. Finally, the claims of value don’t lead to anything larger. Students choose different topics for their final pieces; thus, few opportunities exist to check for understanding.

Day Eight also provides a clear illustration of the way that Carol approaches the work. Though students have had little time to write thus far, the second day begins with students checking “for clarity of pronouns.” Thus, the focus is on editing rather than idea generating. Further, the list under “main activity” begins with “checklist.” One can assume from this information that students were provided a list of components to include. Carol herself explained that the students were instructed to compose five paragraph essays with an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs explaining their reasons, and a concluding paragraph. Once again, Day Eight also illustrates the brief amount of time students were given to compose their pieces. Though the second day of writing, the main activities listed for the day include, beyond the checklist, peer conferencing, teaching conferencing, and “polish,” which can be taken to mean editing. Though the seventh grade operated on a block schedule (meaning that students essentially spent two periods in literacy), this still results in very little writing time.

One of the most noticeable differences between the two unit plans is their length: while the 2014 unit lasts only 9 days, the 2015 unit takes 22 days. Throughout their exit interviews,

teachers – especially those who struggled with the argumentative focus of the CRWP – talked a lot about how the work of the CRWP took the place of what they might have typically done with a unit. Carol’s expanded unit plan for her 2015 *Tom Sawyer* study indicates the types of activities and content that teachers felt were squeezed out by the CRWP: vocabulary and spelling practice, readers’ theater, literary analysis, poetry.

Also interesting in the extended days of Carol’s 2015 unit is the content focus on dialect. Looking back at the essential questions, Carol’s unit delves into the connections between language and “success” in the following inquiries:

- How can a person’s language affect success?
- What does slang, abbreviation, and dialect have to do with success?
- What elements of language should be mastered for upward mobility?

From these essential questions, one can draw the conclusion that students are expected to come to the understanding that standard academic English should be the goal. As a rural community, the stance taken here towards dialect is clear and is illustrated in the bell ringer that asks students to compare the language used by Frederick Douglass versus Aunt Cord in “A True Story.” This example of equating local dialect with “failure” and academic English with “success” makes a strong case for engaging teachers in reading about and engaging in work in rural literacies and for modeling, through professional development, a place-sensitive approach to literacy instruction.

### **Concerns about Argumentative Writing**

As reflected in the excerpts from her exit interview presented in Chapter Three, Carol struggled with argumentative writing because it didn’t fit her epistemology of literacy as expressive, confessional – an “outlet” (Carol, interview, 2015). For Carol, “The kind of writing

that matters to people is the close and personal writing” and kids need “an avenue of close and personal writing in the classroom” (Carol, interview, 2015). Carol was not the only teacher in the cohort who held these beliefs. However, even beyond this fundamental concern, Carol was also dissatisfied with her students’ composition of arguments. She was compliant and engaged students in the work to the best of her ability, but Carol had deep concerns about the students’ writing, which she expressed both in her interview (as excerpted in Chapter Three) and in her reflective vignette (Table 7).

Before considering Carol’s concerns, I look first to the student writing samples collected from Carol’s *Tom Sawyer* unit. Table 6 illustrates the claim written by students for each of the eight collected essays.

Essay 1	“In the argument I have to side with not banning books because I would like to pick out my own choice in books so I don’t have to go pick out a series that I like only for it to be banned to where I can’t read it.”
Essay 2	No claim (Topic: comparing book and movie versions)
Essay 3	“In my opinion, banning books is bad. You may think that banning books is good. By the end of this story, I hope to change your opinion.”
Essay 4	“I believe that spanking in school is terrible.”
Essay 5	“I agree with Adam Holmes a lot of books made into movies are horrible (Tom Sawyer), (Diary of a Wimpy Kid).”
Essay 6	No claim (Topic: comparing book and movie versions)
Essay 7	“I think banning books is a terrible idea.”
Essay 8	“I believe that parents should not be allowed to ban books from schools.”

Table 6: Students’ claims

These essays offer a fascinating window into the way that students responded to the argumentative writing tasks offered by Carol. Several important themes emerge. First, students who chose to write in response to the topic asking them to think about movie versions of books



were unable to construct claims. These students had access to one article, “10 Great Books that Made Utterly Terrible Movies,” and wrote in response to the writer’s opinions about the book to movie adaptations, using their own opinions as evidence. This setup kept students from being able to construct arguments, as they didn’t have access to sources that they could use as evidence. In addition, the question itself asks students to write an opinion piece, not an argument. This was a mistake that rippled throughout classrooms as some teachers struggled to differentiate between opinion writing and argumentative writing.

Another trend in the student writing was the way that students approached the topics as pro / con or either / or scenarios. No writers in this sample were able to construct nuanced claims (which would include some acknowledgement of opposing viewpoints) and only one made an effort to include a counterclaim. In Carol’s case, she had decided early on that students weren’t ready yet to compose counterclaims, a decision that we discussed throughout the second year of the project. However, Carol remained convinced that students were not developmentally ready to work with this concept. Even so, it may have been this very omission that led, at least in part, to the oversimplified writing that Carol dismisses in her exit interview and her vignette. Because students were not asked to respond to opposing views, their essays tended to come across as dogmatic and lacking “real thought,” as Carol puts it in her vignette. Thus, the Toulmin approach to argumentation, which was promoted by the CRWP in the early days of the grant, but slowly abandoned over the course of the three years, didn’t appear to meet the needs of teachers like Carol who struggled to engage students in writing that didn’t appear “formulaic” (Carol, reflective vignette, 2016). In the final chapter, I discuss the Rogerian approach to argumentation as an alternative to Toulmin that may help to address some of the concerns expressed and

discomfort experienced by teachers who struggled to implement the Toulmin Model in their classrooms.

### Carol's Reflections

Table 7 provides the full text of Carol's reflective vignette, written six months following her completion of the CRWP. This vignette is central to this project because in it she expresses several themes that emerge across participants' experiences and discourse regarding the College-Ready Writers Program.

1	I really wish this question had been “What elements of Writing Project benefitted
2	you most as a professional?” or “What did you learn from Writing Project that benefitted
3	your students most?” My answer would have been something like this: Collaboration
4	among teachers of various grade levels and departments was an invaluable way to solve
5	problems, generate new ideas, notice patterns, and develop continuity between
6	curriculums, not to mention a pleasurable way to build a closely-knit team that encouraged
7	one another and worked well together. Focused writing activities provided by the project
8	leader breathed new life into old strategies, introduced brand new strategies, and provided
9	enlightening research and supplemental materials that helped busy teachers keep the focus
10	in the classroom strong and fast-paced. Overall, Writing Project taught me a great deal
11	about how to be a better teacher.
12	Since the question really addressed only the argument portion, which consumed most
13	of the second year, my answer is quite different. Looking back over the teaching of
14	argument through Writing Project, there is one great success and one great failure of which
15	to speak.
16	The great success was really a series of small successes along the way: The grasp of
17	the inner workings of an argument such as claim, evidence, credibility, counter-argument,
18	source citation, etc. These lessons were taught and practiced many times throughout the
19	year at various levels of depth and difficulty. The end result was that most students grasped
20	the process and were able to write an argument following the format taught in class.
21	Classroom assignments showed definite growth in both high and low-achieving students in
22	their ability to write arguments as they had been taught. PARCC results also indicated
23	achievement, with only 14% of our 7 <sup>th</sup> graders performing Below Expectations in the
24	Reading Information category, compared to 36% statewide and 32% nationwide, and 11%
25	of our 7 <sup>th</sup> graders performing Below Expectations in Writing Expression, compared to 35%
	statewide and 30% nationwide. Since the PARCC format was similar to the format used in
	class to teach argument writing, it is easy to connect success in one area to success in the

26	other. Because of this evidence, I feel that I successfully trained students to follow a
27	process to write a decently formatted argument paper.
28	Having said all of this, I hesitate to tout the above paragraph as evidence of a great
29	success at all. While it may make the number crunchers happy (and give me a certain
30	degree of satisfaction), the failure I have to discuss is intertwined with the success
31	mentioned. As stated, students across the board, from low and high, were able to follow the
32	process taught in class to form an argument. Low-achieving students in particular seemed
33	to latch on to this process and use it with zeal. On the surface, this appears to be a
34	satisfying outcome. However, as I looked at the quality of student papers, I found
35	something vital missing: real thought. While the process was being followed, authentic
36	investigation and true mastery of logical and reasoned thought processes was absent.
37	Instead, students became masters at hurriedly reading a limited number of given resources
38	on a complex topic, quickly forming an opinion based on those few resources, and then
39	stating a claim with evidence that was usually only partially understood. This seems like
40	the antithesis of what I truly want to achieve as an educator. Consequently, I believe my
41	greatest failure was focusing heavily on a process sought after by the powers that be rather
42	than leading students into authentic research and real thinking of their own.
43	The most important thing about this experience for me was the realization that
44	students who are developing from concrete to abstract thinkers need a great deal of small,
45	subtle scaffolding in order to develop the skills necessary to become independent thinkers.
46	Skipping those many steps of small understandings between simply reading information
47	and actually forming and conveying logical, informed opinions and arguments about that
48	information results in formulaic writing with little to no original thought or learning on the
49	part of the student. In short, students become trained, not educated.
50	As a teacher, I have learned that, before forming thought-based arguments, students
51	must be able to read difficult nonfiction, question meanings and biases in texts, find and
52	evaluate opposing viewpoints, discuss materials with others, and change viewpoints as
53	convincing evidence is discovered. All of this must take place in small steps and be
54	embedded in authentic activities over an extended period, giving students the time needed
55	to digest information, form preliminary opinions, investigate further, and evolve their
56	thinking. Giving cookie cutter writing tasks is only effective in teaching the process, not
57	the thinking.
58	
59	<b>I would definitely recommend year one of Writing Project to other teachers. I would be</b>
60	<b>much more hesitant to do so for year two in consideration of the argument portion.</b>
61	

Table 7. Carol's Reflective Vignette, January 2016

In lines 1-11, Carol's discourse reveals several components that comprise her epistemology of literacy. She expresses the desire to have been asked a different question, which she explains would have allowed her to express what she did value about her experience with the CRWP: "collaboration;" "solv[ing] problems, generat[ing] new ideas, notic[ing] patterns, and develop[ing] continuity;" and "build[ing] a close-knit team that encouraged one another and worked well together." For Carol, learning was discursive, collaborative and embedded in context. In line 12, Carol's use of the verb "consume" to describe the argumentative focus of the second year illustrates her disempowerment in the face of the CRWP.

Carol's description of her success with the CRWP also articulates her epistemology of literacy and illustrates how she felt about the CRWP. Carol uses a passive construction to describe her engagement with argumentative writing - "These lessons were taught..." (line 18) - a construction that conveys a sense of disempowerment through its failure to place Carol in the subject position. Carol also names components of Toulmin's model for argumentation, citing her teaching of "claim, evidence, [...], and counter-argument" (lines 17-18) and illustrating her approach to teaching argumentation. Carol goes on to explain, "Classroom assignments showed definite growth in both high and low-achieving students in their ability to write arguments as they had been taught" (line 22). The qualifier here, "as they had been taught," foreshadows her criticism in that it positions students as merely following a formula. Carol confirms this sentiment in the final sentence in her vignette of success when she writes, "...I feel that I successfully trained students to follow a process to write a decently formatted argument paper" (lines 28-30). The chasm between teaching students to write a "decently formatted" argument and a "thoughtful, nuanced, fair" argument is wide. Thus, what Carol positions as a success is ultimately re-evaluated as a failure in her concluding paragraph.

Carol is critical of students' ability to construct nuanced arguments. She explains, "Low-achieving students in particular seemed to latch on to this process and use it with zeal" (lines 34-35). Her choice to use the word "zeal" here connotes zealot, and readers come away with the sense that Carol is presenting the way that students followed the process as fanatical or uncompromising. She goes on to criticize the student writing as lacking "real thought" (line 37). Her main concern was that students were exposed to a limited number of articles and that they "quickly form[ed] an opinion based on those few resources" (line 40), which led them to construct arguments that students themselves only "partially understood" (line 41). The student writing samples Carol collected over the course of the project confirmed her worries, as much of the writing from her classroom was stilted, lacked voice, and lacked evidence of students' genuine understanding of the issues at hand. Interestingly, however, this was not the case for all students in the study: even sixth grade students showed that they were able to construct nuanced arguments and understand and compose counter-claims and rebuttals, a fact to which I will return in the final chapter.

One of the harshest criticisms in Carol's vignette comes through the discourse surrounding what she frames as her own greatest failure. Carol writes, "I believe my greatest failure was focusing heavily on a process sought after by the powers that be..." (lines 42-44). Thinking back to the literature outlining the legacy of the National Writing Project, it might come as a shock to some who have been involved in the Writing Project to have the NWP equated with "the powers that be." Carol's interpretation of the CRWP is similar to her positioning in regard to the myriad influences that impose on her goals for her classroom, as another external mandate with which to comply.

In Carol's case, several circumstances combined that led to her sense of dissatisfaction with argumentative writing. First, as a mandated participant, Carol felt disempowered, that the "powers that be" were determining the content, process, and resources in a way that felt imposing and that Carol saw as conflicting with the activities and content that aligned more easily with her epistemology of literacy. In addition, her *Rikki Tikki Tavi* mini-unit plan and her *Tom Sawyer* unit plan also illustrate a limited understanding of argumentative writing. While the mini-unit fails to differentiate between informative and argumentative writing, the *Tom Sawyer* unit provides very little support to students as they wrote their arguments, arguments that did nothing to deepen the study of the literature. Argumentative writing may have been assigned, but the teaching was minimal, and time devoted to the process was insufficient.

Unlike participants in some of the other CRWP sites that were talked about in national meetings who simply refused to do the work, participating teachers in the first cohort in our local site were all kind and compliant. They participated to the best of their abilities, but many did so the same way that they tolerated and accommodated other classroom distractions – the announcements may play for too long, but if you turn down the volume and get back to what you were doing as soon as they're over, they're minimally disruptive. For the CRWP to truly align with the legacy of the NWP and meet teachers where they are, adjustments can be made that will help teachers like Carol – who are ubiquitous in the communities served by the CRWP – to experience the transformative aspects of the National Writing Project professional development that have been cited enthusiastically by participants over the decades.

## **Chapter 5: Results and Implications**

The critical ethnographic discourse analysis of teachers participating in the College-Ready Writers Program, a two-year long professional development program created by the National Writing Project and funded by a federal Investing in Innovation (i3) grant, presented in this dissertation reveals the complexity of implementing a professional development initiative intended to improve the teaching of writing. This dissertation grew out of an experience working to implement a professional development program and the challenge encountered by our local Writing Project site as we attempted to balance the targeted goals of the College-Ready Writers Program with the identities and epistemologies of teachers working in the rural districts served by the grant. From a theoretical assumption that literacy is a social practice embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles (Heath & Street, 2008), the analysis reveals the role of teachers' epistemologies of literacy and the way these epistemologies impacted the way that teachers interacted with the professional development programming offered by our local site of the National Writing Project.

### **Promising Results – National & Local Level**

In November of 2015, SRI International, the nonprofit, independent research center working in partnership with the National Writing Project on the evaluation of the College-Ready Writers Program, released the following statement regarding the results:

SRI's 2-year random assignment evaluation found consistent program implementation and positive impacts of the National Writing Project's College-Ready Writers Program (CRWP). Despite the challenge of implementing a program in 22 districts across 10 states delivered by 12 Writing Project sites, CRWP was implemented with a high degree of fidelity to key program components. Teachers in CRWP districts took up the materials and approaches presented by the program, and as a result the writing instruction that students experienced in treatment districts was significantly different from that in control districts. Ultimately, CRWP had a positive, statistically significant effect on the four attributes of student argument writing—content, structure, stance, and conventions—

measured by the National Writing Project's Analytic Writing Continuum for Source-Based Argument. In particular, CRWP students demonstrated greater proficiency in the quality of reasoning and use of evidence in their writing. (Gallagher, Woodworth, & Anshan, 2015)

In this section I discuss the national results in more detail and compare our local site's experience to the information presented by SRI. This information is important because it provides a clear picture of both the successes and challenges of implementing the CRWP at the local site level and creates a space for both the celebration and replication of successful strategies and the rethinking and re-envisioning of components of the program that created friction between the NWP's legacy and the College-Ready Writers Program, as implemented and experienced by our local site.

**Finding 1: CRWP was implemented largely as intended.** SRI posted these results regarding the national program:

Across the CRWP districts, 76% of English language arts teachers participated in at least 45 hours of professional development each year. Moreover, 89% of treatment teachers reported that planning with the Writing Project and/or colleagues supported their use of CRWP resources, while 73% reported observing Writing Project staff model the use of text-based argument tasks and/or benefiting from coaching or co-teaching support from the Writing Project as they implemented CRWP text-based argument tasks. (Gallagher et al., 2015)

In White Clover Valley, 100% of participating teachers participated in a minimum of 45 hours of professional development per year. In our site, participants had access to professional development in the form of all-group workshops that took place over the summer and one day each month as well as collaborative planning meetings that happened each week. In addition, I was regularly present in classrooms co-teaching, observing, conferencing with students, and taking part in the general life of the classroom. Through the all-group meetings and weekly



planning meetings alone, participants had access to over 80 hours of professional development each year. Thus, our local site's participation levels were higher even than the national levels.

In addition, treatment teachers commonly reported benefiting from colleagues and site leaders, both in reference to the CRWP text-based argument tasks and beyond. In reference to argumentative writing specifically, Kim, for example, reflected,

I received numerous nuggets of gold from participating in The National Writing Project. These nuggets have generated growth and caused my sixth grade students and me to spiral upward in our argumentative writing. Personally, I have learned how to guide my students from the beginning steps of argumentative writing to the final step (Kim, reflective vignette, January, 2015).

Notably, it was somewhat easier to find examples from the reflective vignettes of teachers reporting “benefiting from colleagues and site leaders” without the qualification “as they worked to implement the CRWP text-based argument tasks.” Though the prompt for the vignettes did not specifically ask teachers to express benefits of the program - teachers were asked to recount a success story and a challenge experienced through CRWP - many teachers expressed gratitude for components of the project outside of the scope of argumentative writing. For example, reflecting on her successful experience, Nicole wrote, “The time allotted for collaborating with colleagues would be my top successful experience with NWP” (Nicole, reflective vignette, 2015). Tyler, similarly, reflected on support outside of the scope of argument, writing about learning how to plan using *Understanding by Design*. He explained,

[...] overall, the unit felt like a great success, something that never would have happened without the College-Ready Writers Program to help peel my eyes back a little and to support me all the way through it. Collaboration with colleagues and getting time to study the protocols and strategies chosen by CRWP completely changed the way I thought about teaching. I owe my love of teaching almost entirely to what blossomed that fateful summer day at [the retreat]. (Tyler, reflective vignette, 2015).

Through the reflective vignettes and informal conversations held with participants over the years, it was evident that teachers felt the benefits of working collaboratively and coaching in the form of individual mentoring and co-teaching.

**Finding 2: CRWP teachers' instruction focused more on the key components of argument writing than did the instruction of the control teachers.** SRI reported these results regarding the national program:

Teachers in CRWP districts took up the materials and approaches from the program. For example, 93% of treatment teachers reported teaching at least one CRWP mini-unit or text-based argument task. Because teachers used the ideas and materials presented in the program, the writing instruction that students experienced in treatment districts was significantly different from that in control districts. Teachers reported spending about the same amount of time on writing instruction in treatment and control districts, but treatment teachers had students work on argument writing on 41% of instructional days compared with 13% of days for control teachers. Treatment teachers were also significantly more likely to report placing a significant or heavy emphasis on key skills for source-based argument writing. (Gallagher et al., 2015)

Among the participants in our local CRWP, 100% taught a minimum of three text-based argument tasks (also called mini-units) over the course of the 2014-15 school year. By the second year of the CRWP (2014-15), the focus of the work had shifted more specifically to argumentative writing, and the year was approached in that way. All teachers began the year by teaching a unit on informal argumentation during the first month of school. This was a 5-day unit created by the CRWP to be taught as a series of bell-ringer activities over the course of the week. All teachers also collaborated in a lesson study to engage students in a mini-unit in January of 2015. This unit—on redesigning high schools for career success—was designed as a two-day on-demand task, but our site decided to extend the on-demand task into a mini-unit, giving students 5 to 7 class days to complete the work. By the spring of 2015, participants had the option to choose between several argumentative writing tasks ranging from 5 day mini-units to 5 or more weeks working with extended argument. Thus, in the second year alone, teachers spent a

significant amount of time working with argumentative writing, even in comparison to the first year of the CRWP.

**Finding 3: CRWP students demonstrated greater proficiency with argument writing than non-CRWP students.** SRI reported the following results for the national program:

The CRWP had a positive, statistically significant impact on the four attributes of student writing—content, structure, stance, and conventions—measured by the Analytic Writing Continuum for Source-Based Argument Writing [see Appendix D for the Analytic Writing Continuum for Source-Based Argument Scoring Attributes]. On a scale of 1–6, adjusting for baseline, students in CRWP districts outscored students in control districts, with average scores of 3.04 compared with 2.82 on content and 2.96 compared with 2.74 on structure ( $p < .01$ ) Differences in scores on stance and conventions followed the same trend (and were significant at  $p < .05$ ). (Gallagher et al., 2015)

Local student writing samples also illustrated teachers’ consistent teaching of the argumentative writing terminology offered by the NWP focused on Harris’ illustrating, authorizing, extending, and countering. For example, the samples collected from teachers to inform the 2013 Mid-Year Partnership Meeting differed greatly from those collected for the following year’s meeting. The majority of papers comprising the first set - containing 10 samples from each teacher, representing a range of student writing achievement - were not argumentative writing. The following year, in 2014, not only were all student writing samples indeed argumentative in nature, they also regularly contained claims, evidence, and reasoning, and students - even in the lower grades - were attempting more complex moves such as extending<sup>9</sup> and countering<sup>10</sup>. Appendix E provides two example student papers - one middle school and one high school - for each of the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Partnership meetings of the CRWP.

---

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Harris, in *Rewriting: How to do things with texts*, explains “extending” as “when you put your own spin on the terms or concepts that you take from other texts” (p.39).

<sup>10</sup> Harris explains that to “counter” is “not to nullify but to suggest a different way of thinking” (p.56).

Local results from the CRWP's formative assessment, the Using Sources Tool, also indicated improvements in students' source-based argumentative writing. For example, from November 2014 to January 2015 alone, teachers' ranking of students' referencing an expert to support their claim (Harris' "authorizing" move) rose nearly 26% from 42.9% to 68.5%. During the same time frame, teachers ranking of students' commentary on source material as "competently" rose over 20% from 14.3% to 34.8%. Appendix F provides the full results from the Using Sources Tool as collected during all group meetings in November of 2014 and January of 2015.

**Reflecting on Results.** In many ways, at both the national and the local level, the CRWP was a success: the program was implemented with high fidelity across the country; participating teachers spent more time engaging students in argumentative writing; and students demonstrated greater proficiency with content, structure, stance, and conventions in argumentative writing than their peers in control districts. However, it is also critical to take a step back and consider what additional questions might be asked: Namely, how can the competing goals of implementation "with high fidelity" and implementation of "place-sensitive" professional learning be met? And, how will teachers' devotion of time to argumentation and students' improved achievement in argumentative writing be sustained?

### **Proposed Adjustments**

In this section, I propose a series of potential adjustments that could be made to the College-Ready Writers Program, as implemented by our local site, in order to create a more harmonious path forward for professional development that works to advance the legacy of the National Writing Project. If the NWP's approach is, as many have argued (Dierking & Fox,

2013; Blau, 1999; Strong, 1988), as much about teacher empowerment as it is about the teaching and learning of writing, then reframing the CRWP at the local level within a pedagogy of sustainability in order to re-empower those teachers who may have felt disempowered has great potential to more closely align professional development with the values of the NWP, even within the constraints of purpose- and outcome-driven federal funding.

**Adjustment 1: Teachers will be positioned as writers.** Research in teachers' self-efficacy beliefs by scholars such as Bandura (1993) has indicated that high levels of self-efficacy lead teachers to set higher goals for themselves, to be more committed to those goals, to see their environments as more controllable, and to be more motivated as a result. Unfortunately, many teachers in the CRWP experienced low levels of self-efficacy as writers and as teacher, both outside of and as a result of the professional development. Analysis of participating teachers' discourse revealed that teachers who identified as writers and believed in their own instructional efficacy were more likely to successfully integrate argumentative writing into their curricula than teachers who did not identify readily as writers or had a generally low sense of instructional efficacy.

Positioning teachers as writers is central to the National Writing Project. As the NWP has argued over the history of the organization, the best teachers of writing are writers. As Smith (1996) wrote, "to engage in the discipline makes the difference between seeing it from the outside and knowing it in the bones." Participants like Tyler who struggled to see themselves as writers and like Carol and Nicole who were daunted by the prospect of argumentative writing because they didn't feel they had proper training would benefit immensely from writing practice, practice that would both sharpen their skills as writers and build a higher sense of self-efficacy. Many teachers' epistemologies of literacy included the belief that more time spent doing

something led to higher performance in that area. Thus, by providing time and space for teachers to develop their own skills as writers, professional development can lead to higher performance by teachers and, ultimately, their students. Participants in the CRWP who had higher feelings of self-efficacy and who were more comfortable identifying themselves as writers were also more likely to model the writing process for students, a practice with great potential to improve student writing and students' attitudes about writing.

**Adjustment 2: Teachers will opt in to professional learning communities.** Teachers whose discourse revealed instances of self-identification as agents of change articulated and enacted beliefs in the expectancy-value theory, resulting in higher goals and higher expectations for students' writing. Teachers who did not identify as agents of change were less likely to perceive their environments as controllable. For teachers who felt mandated to participate in the program, perceptions of controllability as expressed through the discourse were low.

The directive at the national level of the CRWP was that at least 80 percent of English language arts teachers participate in the professional development series. However, at our local site, we learned that many teachers were not asked by local administrators whether or not they would be interested in participating. As O'Shaughnessy, director of the Acadiana Writing Project wrote in her (2000) piece, "Do Workshops Work?," "No workshop will be transformative for a teacher who isn't looking for a new and better way." For many participants, the CRWP was interpreted as yet another example of what Dellinger (1988) explained as "the loss of ownership, autonomy, trust, and confidence under the onslaught of the state-mandated reform movements that are sweeping the country" (p. 3). As Mary Calliarai explained, "Teachers who welcomed the [inquiry] groups shared beliefs and benefited. Teachers who felt coerced, or who lacked commitment and shared philosophy, simply put in their time and did not change" (Weaver et al.,

2005, p. 14). We saw this in participants like Carol and Nicole, whose discourse illustrated feelings of frustration and disempowerment and impacted their willingness and ability to engage students in the work of the project. In order to keep from overwhelming teachers with too many initiatives and not enough time, professional development experiences must be chosen by teachers rather than for them. As Donehower argues in *Rural Literacies*, sponsors' literacy practices are more likely to be adopted when perceived as options from which to choose rather than as mandates (p. 72).

By working only with teachers who have chosen to participate in the project, a major shift occurs in power dynamics. Rather than teachers feeling colonized by an outside "expert," who knows better than they do, teachers join a collaborative team working towards common goals. If teachers are positioned as "trainable enactors of others' ideas" (Whitney, 2008), it's unlikely that they will see themselves as empowered professionals. If teachers don't share a vision, the motto of "teachers teaching teachers" becomes impossible to enact: how can teachers decide how to get somewhere if they don't share a common understanding of where they're going?

**Adjustment 3: Resources and experiences offered through professional development must be tailored and adjusted to accommodate for teaching contexts and for diverse disciplinary literacies.** For English language arts teachers working from epistemologies of literacy shaped by the understanding of literacy as a state of grace, the argumentative writing focus of the CRWP was outside of their disciplinary content area, a positioning that made integration challenging. In order to respond to this challenge, professional development must begin by engaging teachers in examining and reflecting on their epistemologies of literacy as a preliminary step in the professional learning process. Effective PD has been found to engage

teachers in first examining and reflecting on their own theoretical orientations, values, and beliefs (Heller, Daehler, Wong, Shinohara, & Miratrix, 2012; Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009; Spillane, 2002). And while our local site did recognize the importance of this step when we began the CRWP with our second cohort of participants, we did not engage the teachers who participated in the CRWP within the scope of this study in this type of reflection.

The process of engaging teachers in identifying and articulating their own epistemologies could garner many results. First, in some cases, providing opportunities for teachers to explore their epistemologies of literacy could disrupt the “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1977) in which teachers teach in the way they have been taught for no reason other than that it is what they know. For some teachers, teaching literature or engaging students in personal, expressive writing may merely be what they have seen done, what they think they should be doing, or what the school culture promotes. For others, however, those practices may have deep roots in their epistemologies. In all cases, this process of inquiry and exploration serves as a type of needs assessment through which providers of professional development could learn more about participating teachers’ interests, strengths, hesitations, and resulting praxis.

Research in teacher change shows that content knowledge plays a large role in the success of PD, and professional development with a content focus more commonly results in teacher knowledge and teacher change (Desimone, 2009; Putman, Smith, & Cassady 2009; Desimone et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001). For the majority of the teachers participating in the project, who saw their content area as literature, the CRWP did not meet this need.

Overall, teachers expressed higher levels of satisfaction with the first year of professional development offered by the CRWP than with the second. Their stated reasons were related to the wider focus in the first year as opposed to the second year’s concentration on argumentative



writing at the expense of other purposes and modes. In addition to the problematic circumstance of some teachers being forced to participate regardless of their interest in pursuing professional development in argumentative writing, teachers also grappled with how to make connections between their literature-based units and the non-fiction units created and disseminated by the CRWP. Mini-units with texts sets related to issues such as school start time, reality TV, school nutrition, and driverless cars were generally well-constructed and well-received by students but problematic for some teachers for several reasons.

First, these nonfiction topics were difficult for teachers to connect to their literature units. Not one mini-unit provided an illustration for how to pair non-fiction, source-based argumentative writing with literature study, which is what nearly all teachers were tasked with doing. In addition, teachers and site leaders were also initially discouraged from making changes to text sets, the argument being that text sets had already been “curated” and had already been tested by teachers around the country. This stance sounded alarmingly similar to the stance against which publications spanning the first several decades of the Writing Project’s existence warned. How would it be possible to begin with teachers’ interests (Faulkner, 2008; Whipp, 1979) if teachers were mandated participants who were discouraged from making decisions, even at the level of text selection? To bring back the safe inquiry space that Dellinger (1988) and Kittle (2004) fretted about losing and to provide teachers with the opportunity to “find one’s own way” (O’Shaughnessy, 2000), programs of professional development need to co-create resources with teachers. When models are provided, those models need to be adjustable so that teachers can learn how they work and then adjust them to fit their own epistemologies, identities, and classroom contexts. Practitioner-oriented publications such as Thomas Newkirk’s *Minds made for stories: How we really read and write informational and persuasive texts*, John O’Connor’s

*This time it's personal: Teaching academic writing through creative nonfiction*, and Schilb and Clifford's guide and reader, *Arguing about literature* also provide understandable theory and examples of writing assignments, unit plans, and texts that integrate romantic and rhetorical elements in ways that are both accessible and appealing to English language arts teachers who identify primarily as literature and creative writing teachers.

In the specific case of providing professional development to English language arts teachers in order to improve the teaching of nonfiction source-based argumentative writing, not only do teachers need examples of units that integrate argumentative writing and literature but they also may benefit from approaching argument from a different framework. Rather than working with the Toulmin model of argumentation, for example, as the CRWP did, professional development in argumentative writing for English teachers, especially those for whom epistemologies are informed by literacy as a state of grace, Rogerian argumentation may be a better fit.

In "Rogerian rhetoric: Ethical growth through alternative forms of argumentation," Doug Brent (1996) makes the case that Rogerian argument can offer an alternative to the "argument as war" metaphor that commonly plays out in classrooms. The roots of Rogerian rhetoric come from Carl Rogers' approach to therapy and, specifically from a technique called "restatement," through which a therapist continually repeats back their understanding of their clients' words until the client is satisfied with the restatement (Brent, 1996 p.299). Applied to a rhetorical situation, this technique involves writers first in restating the ideas of a speaker or source before moving on to his or her own point of view.

Interestingly, one of the resources provided by the CRWP leadership team during the second year was from Casey Olsen, a classroom teacher in Montana who created an extended

researched argument assignment for his students based on a Rogerian style of argumentation.

The following passage is taken from Olsen's assignment description:

For this portion of the paper, you will be asked to take part in a Rogerian argument of sorts (named after Carl Rogers, a prominent psychologist). Persons engaged in a Rogerian argument "are asked to address those with whom they are in conflict in a manner that assures them that the speaker fully understands and empathizes with their viewpoINT - in other words, one person must present the other's position in a way that the latter accepts as accurate. The speaker next acknowledges points on the other side that he or she finds valid..." (Lazere 130). Later you will be asked to explain ways that your viewpoints differ from the opposing viewpoint, but for now you will focus on how the opposition sees the issue. Now where can you find accurate expressions of this viewpoint? Spend some time searching for multiple examples of the opposing viewpoint and then synthesize them into your own words, and explain how the opposing viewpoint has reached their conclusion. When you are finished with this portion of the paper, someone who disagrees with your views should be able to read this portion and say, "Yes, you accurately portrayed my viewpoint." (Olsen, 2015)

For the two participating teachers – Leah and Kim – who chose to engage their students in this extended researched argumentative writing, results were promising. While Kim's sixth graders engaged in writing about school policy issues, Leah's seniors tackled the issue of death with dignity or physician-assisted suicide. Both teachers were pleased with student work and planned to engage in similar units the following year, and student writing from the unit was, overall, nuanced and complex. Appendix G provides one sample of an average sixth grade composition and one sample of an average senior composition. The student writing collected from these extended researched argumentative writing units illustrated how imagining and reading with empathy allowed students to construct more nuanced claims and evidence sets. In addition, it helped to move students away from the dyadic arguments that the Toulmin model tended to create.

In future iterations of the CRWP and in future instances of professional development targeting argumentative writing and English language arts teachers, Rogerian argumentation could provide a smoother transition between teachers' epistemologies of literacy and

argumentative writing, particularly for those teachers for whom argumentation does not necessarily figure into their epistemologies in any central way. Rogerian argumentation asks students to read and imagine with empathy and to explore opposing points of view in some complexity, in order to return to form their own positions reflectively.

Considering many participating teachers' epistemologies of literacy as a state of grace, argumentation that engages students in a process that also develops character might be more appealing. In addition, by inviting students to imbue arguments with more of their personal background and understandings, teachers might find an opportunity to get to know their students better in their writing, a goal mentioned by Jill and several other participating teachers. As Brent explains, Rogerian discourse is "a technique that helps students learn to connect with other points of view, explore them fully, and place them in a dialectical relationship with their own as part of a process of mutual discovery" (p. 311). While not suggesting that Rogerian rhetoric be presented as the only way to write arguments, I am suggesting that introducing Rogerian rhetoric as an alternative to more widely practiced models such as Toulmin's may provide teachers who have expressed an interest in professional learning opportunities targeting argumentation with another "option from which to choose," as Donehower encourages those working in literacies in rural communities to do (p. 72). And regardless, teachers should be the ones to make the choice.

Although argumentative writing makes up 30 percent of the genres of writing mentioned in the Common Core State Standards, the teaching of literature remains ubiquitous: teachers in the English Language Arts classroom frequently feel underprepared and unenthusiastic about the teaching of argumentative writing. The focus of many classrooms remains on reading, and the writing that is done, as Applebee and Langer (2013) pointed out, remains primarily personal and creative (e.g., fiction and poetry) in nature. To be respectful of teachers' autonomy and of the

specific contexts in which teachers and students are working and writing, professional development in writing must be presented as a situated social practice, flexible and responsive to the communities in which the opportunities for professional learning are offered.

As a literacy sponsor working in rural communities, the CRWP is well positioned to model and promote a pedagogy of sustainability, involving teachers in the creation of place-sensitive, respectful, and empowering professional learning opportunities that build on teachers' interests and strengths and, in doing so, provide a safe space for inquiry and praxis.

## **Conclusion**

As a theoretical framework, New Literacy Studies provides a critical perspective on the work of designing professional development to improve the teaching of writing, reframing literacy as a social practice embedded in cultural context. Understanding literacy as a social practice rooted in culture reinforces the significance of the College-Ready Writers' Program's stated goal of offering rural teachers "learning opportunities that are distinctly place-sensitive" (Gallagher & Woodworth, 2013, p. 2). If literacy is "always rooted in ideologies representing specific world views" (Gee, 2015, p. 65) and "always embedded in socially constructed epistemological practices" (Street, 2005, p. 418), then professional development that aims to "improve middle and high school teachers' practice in the teaching of academic writing" (p. 4) must first discern those ideologies and practices and subsequently co-design programming in response. This, indeed, has been the project of this dissertation—to identify the ideologies foundational to the National Writing Project and promoted through research on teacher change; to identify the ideologies of CRWP participating teachers; and then to consider both how successful the CRWP is at bridging these ideologies and what opportunities exist to reconcile identified rifts between stated goals and practice.

Teachers in the high-need, rural areas targeted by the CRWP stand to benefit immensely from professional development that connects them to the rich resources available through the National Writing Project. Through the College-Ready Writers Program, the National Writing Project has created a potent illustration that a large-scale, national initiative can, in fact, offer high-quality learning opportunities to teachers. With adjustments, the CRWP can build on the NWP's legacy as a democratic, empowering, and even transformative organization to provide the support that teachers need as they work hard to engage their students in literacy as a social practice, embedded as it is in the landscapes of home.

## References

- Allen, L. (2004). From votes to dialogues: Clarifying the role of teachers' voices in school renewal. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(4), 318.
- Applebee, A., & Langer, J. (2013). *Writing instruction that works: Proven methods for middle and high school classrooms*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Applebee, A. N., & Langer, J. A. (2011). A snapshot of writing instruction in middle schools and high schools. *English Journal*, 100(6), 14-27.
- Arkansas Department of Education. (2015). School report cards. Retrieved from <https://adesrc.arkansas.gov/>
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117.
- Banilower, E. R., Heck, D. J., & Weiss, I. R. (2007). Can professional development make the vision of the standards a reality? the impact of the national science foundation's local systemic change through teacher enhancement initiative. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 44(3), 375-395.
- Bartholomae, D., & Petrosky, T. (1986). *Facts, artifacts, and counterfactuals: Theory and method for a reading and writing course*. Upper Montclair, N.J.: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Beck, S. W. (2006). Subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the teaching and learning of writing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 40(4), 413-460.
- Behizadeh, N., & Engelhard, G. (2011). Historical view of the influences of measurement and writing theories on the practice of writing assessment in the United States. *Assessing Writing*, 16(3), 189-211.
- Blau, S. (1999). The only new thing under the sun: 25 years of the national writing project. *The Quarterly*, 21(3)
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University. (1998). *Reinventing undergraduate education: A blueprint for America's research universities*. Princeton, NJ: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Boykin, Z., Scrivner, J., & Robbins, S. (2005). In Alberts J., & Howard L. (Eds.), *The professional leadership development project*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Bratcher, S., & Stroble, E. J. (1994). *Determining the progression from comfort to confidence: A longitudinal evaluation of a national writing project site based on multiple data sources*

- Brent, D. (1996). Rogerian Rhetoric: Ethical Growth through Alternative Forms of Argumentation. In B. i. Emmel, P. i. Resch, D. i. Tenney (Eds.), *Argument Revisited; Argument Redefined: Negotiating Meaning in the Composition Classroom* (pp. 73-96). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Briggs, C. (1986). *Learning how to ask: A sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of the interview in social science research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cambourne, B. (1995). Toward an educationally relevant theory of literacy learning: Twenty years of inquiry. *Reading Teacher*, 49(3), 182.
- City-data.com. (2016).
- Coker, D. L., & Lewis, W. (2012). Beyond *Writing next*: A discussion of writing research and instructional uncertainty. In Ippolito, J., Steele, J.L., & Samson, J.F. (Ed.), *Adolescent literacy* (pp. 231). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Review.
- Coladarci, T. (2007). Improving the yield of rural education research: An editor's swan song. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 22(3), 1-9.
- Collet, V. S. (2012). The gradual increase of responsibility model: Coaching for teacher change. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 51(1), 27-47. doi:10.1080/19388071.2010.549548
- Collet, V. S. (2015). Transforming instruction: How collaborative professional development changed the teaching of argumentative writing. *English Leadership Quarterly*, 38(2), 2-5.
- Connors, R. J. (1981). The rise and fall of the modes of discourse. *College Composition And Communication*, 32(4), 444-455.
- Couillard, R. G. (1981). A look at how one program improves composition skills of students, teachers. *NASSP Bulletin*, 65(447), 90-95.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). Assessing aesthetic education: Measuring the ability to "ward off chaos". *Arts Education Policy Review*, 99(1), 33.
- Davis, J., & Wilson, S. M. (2000). Principals' Efforts to Empower Teachers: Effects on Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction and Stress. *Clearing House*, 73(6), 349.
- Davis, L. (1986). Remarks for a workshop. *The Quarterly*, 8(2)
- Dellinger, D. (1988). Where does the NWP end and the real world begin? *The Quarterly*, 10(8)
- Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181-199.



- Desimone, L., Porter, A., Garet, M., Yoon, K., & Birman, B. (2002). Effects of Professional Development on Teachers' Instruction: Results from a Three-Year Longitudinal Study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 81-112.
- Dierking, R. C., & Fox, R. F. (2013). "Changing the way I teach": Building teacher knowledge, confidence, and autonomy. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(2), 129-144.
- Donehower, K., Hogg, C., & Schell, E. E. (2007). *Rural literacies* Southern Illinois University Press.
- Emig, J. (1971). *The composing processes of twelfth graders* The National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL
- Faulkner, G. (2008). New York City writing project helps teen immigrants succeed in Bronx high school. *NWP.org*.
- Ferretti, R. P., & Lewis, W. E. (2013). Best practices in teaching argumentative writing. In S. Graham, C. A. MacArthur & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Best practices in writing instruction* (2nd ed., pp. 113). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Galen, H. (2005). Restoring teacher empowerment: A possible antidote for current educational challenges. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 71(3), 31-36.
- Gallagher, H. A., & Woodworth, K. (2013). *NWP College-ready Writers Program: Teacher professional development in writing and critical analysis to improve academic student writing in middle and high school*. U.S. Department of Education.
- Gallagher, H. A., Woodworth, K., & Anshan, N. L. (2015). *Impact of the national writing project's college-ready writers program on teachers and students*. (). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
- Garet, M. S., Porter, A. C., Desimone, L., Birman, B. F., & Yoon, K. S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 915-945.
- Gee, J. P. (2010). A Situated-Sociocultural Approach to Literacy and Technology. In E. A. Baker (Ed.), *The New Literacies: Multiple perspectives on research and practice* [The New Literacies: Multiple Perspectives on Research and Practice] () Guilford Publications.
- Gee, J. P. (2011). *How to do discourse analysis: A toolkit* (2e ed.) Routledge.
- Gee, J. (2015). *Social linguistics and literacies*. Florence, GB: Routledge.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures; selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.

- Gerard, L. F., Varma, K., Corliss, S. B., & Linn, M. C. (2011). Professional development for technology-enhanced inquiry science. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(3), 408.
- Gillespie, T. (1991). Joining the debate: "Shouldn't" writing teachers write? *Quarterly of the National Writing Project and the Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy, 13*(3), 3-6.
- Goldblatt, E. (2007). *Because we live here: Sponsoring literacy beyond the college curriculum*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.
- Gomez, M. L. (1990). The national writing project: Staff development in the teaching of composition. In G. E. Hawisher, & A. O. Soter (Eds.), *On literacy and its teaching: Issues in english education* (pp. p. 68). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Gray, J. (2000). *Teachers at the center: A memoir of the early years of the national writing project*. Berkeley, Calif.: National Writing Project.
- Hairston, M. (1982). The winds of change: Thomas kuhn and the revolution in the teaching of writing. *College Composition and Communication, 33*(1), 76-88.
- Harris, J. (2006). *Rewriting: How to do things with texts*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Healy, M. (1995). Beating the writing systems on our own ground. *The Quarterly, 17*(1), 20.
- Heath, S. B., & Street, B. (2008). *On ethnography: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Heller, J. I., Daehler, K. R., Wong, N., Shinohara, M., & Miratrix, L. W. (2012). Differential effects of three professional development models on teacher knowledge and student achievement in elementary science. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 49*(3), 333-362.
- Herring-Harris, L., & Hansbrough, C. (2002). In Alberts J., & Howard L.(Eds.), *Story of SCORE: The MS writing/thinking institute takes on a statewide reading initiative*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Hillocks, G., Jr. (1986). *Research on written composition*. Urbana, IL: National Conference on Research in English.
- Hillocks, G., Jr. (1999). *Ways of thinking, ways of teaching*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Howley, C. B., Howley, A., & Yahn, J. (2014). Motives for dissertation research at the intersection between rural education and curriculum and instruction. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 29*(5)

- Investing in innovation fund (i3). (2016). Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>
- Jean-Marie, G., & Moore, G. W. (2004). The highly qualified teacher: Implications and recommendations for rural school districts. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 17(2), 146-161.
- Kinnucan-Welsch, K., Rosemary, C. A., & Grogan, P. R. (2006). Accountability by design in literacy professional development. *Reading Teacher*, 59(5), 426-435.
- Kittle, P. (2008). *Write beside them*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kittle, P. (2004). Walking in our students' shoes: Reading teachers and the writing project model. *The Quarterly*, 26(1)
- Knowles, N. (2013a). MI Red Cedar WP provides inservices focused on writing argument at high-needs school. Retrieved from <http://voicebox.nwp.org/modelatwork/discussion/mi-red-cedar-wp-provides-inservices-focused-writing-argument-high-needs-school>
- Knowles, N. (2013b). MT Yellowstone WP unpacks the common core. Retrieved from <http://voicebox.nwp.org/modelatwork/discussion/mt-yellowstone-wp-unpacks-common-core>
- Koch, R., Roop, L., & Setter, G. (2006). In Alberts J., & Howard L. (Eds.), *Statewide and district professional development in standards: Addressing teacher equity*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Langer, J., & Applebee, A. (2007). *How writing shapes thinking: A study of teaching and learning*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Lanza, K. (2009). NWP at Rutgers: What we've learned about school partnerships. *NWP.org*.
- Lieberman, A., & Friedrich, L. (2007). Teachers, writers, leaders. *Educational Leadership*, 65(1), 42.
- Lieberman, A., & Grolnick, M. (1996). Networks and reform in american education. *Teachers College Record*, 98(1), 7-45.
- Linebarger, S. (2010). Creating a culture of inquiry through use of model lessons. *NWP.org*,
- Lortie, D. (1977). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lunsford, K. J. (2002). Contextualizing toulmin's model in the writing classroom: A case study. *Written Communication*, 19(1), 109-174.

- McCarthy, S., & Mkhize, D. (2013). Teachers' orientations towards writing. *Journal of Writing Research, 5*(1), 1.
- McCarthy, S. J. (2008). The impact of no child left behind on teachers' writing instruction. *Written Communication, 25*(4), 462.
- McGonegal, P. M., & Watson, A. (2002). In Alberts J., & Howard L. (Eds.), *The fledgling years: Lessons from the first four years of the NWP in Vermont*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Mintz, N.; Stein, A. & Wolfe, M. (2002). On-site consulting: New York City Writing Project. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*(2), 96-107.
- Morgan, W., & Beaumont, G. (2003). A dialogic approach to argumentation: Using a chat room to develop early adolescent student's argumentative writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 47*(2), 146-157.
- Morrison, C. M. (2013). Slipping through the cracks: One early career teacher's experiences of rural teaching and the subsequent impact on her personal and professional identities. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(6)
- National Writing Project. (2015). National writing project awarded U.S. department of education grant. Retrieved from <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/4439>
- National Writing Project. (2016). College-ready writers program overview. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/1516nwpcrwp/what-is-the-college-ready-writers-program>
- Newell, G. E., VanDerHeide, J., & Olsen, A. W. (2014). High school english language arts teachers' argumentative epistemologies for teaching writing. *Research in the Teaching of English, 49*(2), 95-119.
- Newkirk, T. (2014). *Minds made for stories: How we really read and write informational and persuasive texts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Nussbaum, E. M., & Schraw, G. (2007). Promoting argument-counterargument integration in students' writing. *Journal of Experimental Education, 76*(1), 59-92.
- Olsen, C. (2015). *The senior year position paper*. Unpublished manuscript.
- O'Shaughnessy, K. (2000). Do workshops work? *The Quarterly, 22*(1)

- Patmon, D. (2012). RI: Rethinking a site's core values and summer institute practices. Retrieved from <http://voicebox.nwp.org/modelatwork/discussion/ri-rethinking-sites-core-values-and-summer-institute-practices>
- Perry, T. (2014). LA northwestern state university WP creates a four-day literature and writing summer institute Retrieved from <http://voicebox.nwp.org/modelatwork/discussion/la-northwestern-state-university-wp-creates-four-day-literature-and-writing-summer-instit>
- Pritchard, R. J., & Marshall, J. C. (1994). *Evaluation of a tiered model for staff development in writing*.
- Putman, S. M., Smith, L. L., & Cassady, J. C. (2009). Promoting Change through Professional Development: The Place of Teacher Intentionality in Reading Instruction. *Literacy Research And Instruction*, 48(3), 207-220.
- Ratcliffe, K. (2004). Cultural autobiographics: Complicating the "personal turns" in rhetoric and composition studies. In B. Couture, & T. Kent (Eds.), *The private, the public, and the published: Reconciling private lives and public rhetoric* (pp. 198). Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Remington, N., & McGinty, R. (2005). In Alberts J., & Howard L.(Eds.), *Southside elementary writing focus: Site-based leadership reforms the writing curriculum*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Rosenblatt, L. (2005). The transactional theory of reading and writing. *Making meaning with texts* (pp. 1). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Roskelly, H., & Ronald, K. (1998). *Reason to believe: Romanticism, pragmatism, and the teaching of writing*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Rural site networks: Request for proposals. (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/lpt/projects/100>
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2 ed.) Sage Publications.
- Scherff, L., & Piazza, C. (2005). The more things change, the more they stay the same: A survey of high school students' writing experiences. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 39(3), 271.
- Schilb, J., & Clifford, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Arguing about literature: A guide and reader*. Boston, MA: Bedford / St. Martin's.
- Scribner, S. (1984). Literacy in Three Metaphors. *American Journal of Education*, 93(1), 6-21.
- Singer, N., & Scollay, D. (2006). *Increasing student achievement in writing though teacher inquiry: An evaluation of professional development impact*. National Writing Project.

- Slattery, P. J. (1991). The argumentative, multiple-source paper: College students reading, thinking and writing about divergent points of view. *Journal of Teaching Writing*, 10(2), 181-199.
- Smith, M. A. (1996). The national writing project after 22 years. *Phi Delta Kappan*.
- Smith, M. A. (2003). Learning about ourselves from looking at others. *The Quarterly*, 25(1), 19.
- Spillane, J. P. (2002). Local theories of teacher change: The pedagogy of district policies and programs. *Teachers College Record*, 104(3), 377-420.
- Street, B. (2003). What's 'new' in new literacy studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(2), 77-91.
- Street, B. V. (2005). Recent applications of new literacy studies in educational contexts. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 39(4), 417-423.
- Strong, W. (1988). Report: Inside the New Hampshire writing project. *The Quarterly*, 10(4)
- Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing critical ethnography*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- United States Census Bureau. (2015). QuickFacts.
- Watson, S. (1980). Knowledge: A dimension the writing project model neglects? *The Quarterly*, 17(1), 1.
- Watson, S. (1981). Teachers into action: Heart of writing projects' success. *English Education*, 13(2), 93-96.
- Weaver, M., Calliari, M., & Rentsch, J. (2005). In Alberts J., & Howard L. (Eds.), *The saginaw teacher study group movement: From pilot to districtwide study groups in four years*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Whipp, L. (1979). Inservice must be teacher centered. *The Quarterly*, 2(1)
- Whitney, A. (2006). *The transformative power of writing: Teachers writing in a national writing project summer institute* (Doctor of Philosophy in Education). (3218828).
- Whitney, A. (2008). Teacher transformation in the National Writing Project. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 43(2), 144-187.
- Whitney, A. E. (2009). Writer, teacher, person: Tensions between personal and professional writing in a national writing project summer institute. *English Education*, 41(3), 235-258.
- Whitney, A. E., & Friedrich, L. (2013). Orientations for the teaching of writing: A legacy of the national writing project. *Teachers College Record*, 115(7)

Wilson, J., Ringstaff, C., & Carr, K. (2010). Going the distance for rural science teachers. *Journal of Staff Development, 31*(5), 44-47.

Woolfolk, A.E., & Hoy, W.K. (1990). Prospective teachers' sense of efficacy and belief about control. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82*, 81-91.

## Appendix A: CRWP “Why Argument Writing” Flyer

# Why Argument Writing

## Big Picture Goals for Argument

---

*A goal of education is to expand students’ sense of their possibilities and roles in the world. Argument writing plays a part in students’ identities in their careers, as college students, and as participants in a democratic society.*

### Students as future participants in democracy

Thoughtful participants in democracy read, criticize, analyze, and create arguments daily: reading the paper, watching the news, surfing the internet, talking among friends, family, and co-workers. These small moments in everyday life make up a strong democracy.

### Students as future college students

Argument is the common language of academic writing. Successful college writers know about making a claim, supporting it with relevant evidence, and citing evidence according to academic conventions.

## Goals for Argument in the Present

---

*Developing skills in argument writing is not just about students’ future. By practicing arguments, students become more thoughtful members of their school, better learners, and more capable test-takers.*

### Students as learners

Researching and writing arguments improve student learning beyond specific skills in writing. Students learn content knowledge, broaden their ideas, and stretch their mental capacities. Skills in argument writing improve learning in all subject areas.

### Students as test takers

New assessments that reflect high college and career-ready standards in writing stress using textual evidence and understanding arguments, exactly what the CRWP is helping students do. Argument helps improve reasoning. Daily practice in argument can help students in test-taking situations.



## Appendix B: Interview Protocol, May 2013

### What is it like to be a student in White Clover Valley?

---

- ✧ What do we know about student writing?
- ✧ What do we want to know about student writing?
- ✧ What do we know about student reading?
- ✧ What do we want to know about student reading?

### What is it like to be a teacher in White Clover Valley?

---

- ✧ What do we know about professional development in Berryville? (What have teachers received? What do they want?)
- ✧ How comfortable are teachers with CCSS?
- ✧ What kind of writing is already assigned?
- ✧ What kind of writing would teachers like to assign?
- ✧ What kind of reading is happening in the classroom, and are there common texts?
- ✧ What kind of reading would teachers like to see in their classrooms?
- ✧ Is there any integration happening across disciplines, and is this something that interests teachers? If so, are there social studies, science, math, agriculture, business etc. teachers who would be likely to be interested in this work?
- ✧ What are the logistics at play? (ex. Are there district rubrics? Specific requirements for texts? Units that need to happen at a certain time of year? Common planning time in vertical/horizontal teams)
- ✧ What types of technology do teachers have access to? What do they need?
- ✧ What is the best way to share information with teachers?
- ✧ What days/times work best for teachers?
- ✧ What goals do teachers have for student writing?
- ✧ What goals do teachers have for teacher writing?

## Appendix C: Full “Rikki Tikki Tavi” Mini-unit Plan

### Mini-Unit Sample: Adding the Argumentative Strand to Existing Plans

Note: Last year, students listened to an audio version of “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” and read along. Brief mini-lessons over setting, character, plot, and descriptive elements were given, along with a discussion of what students liked about the text and why it is still pleasurable to read more than 100 years after it was written. Also, the “Mongoose vs Cobra” video was viewed by students and highlights/reactions were discussed. Approximately a day and a half was spent on this activity.

**Texts:** “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” short story by Rudyard Kipling  
 Yellow Mongoose Image - Arkive  
 “Mongoose vs Cobra” National Geographic Video  
 “Africa’s Deadliest: Mongoose Power” National Geographic Video  
 “Mongoose” National Geographic Article

#### Day 1

1. Writing Sprint: Text #1 - Yellow Mongoose image
  - Question (Bell Ringer): What do you know, think you know, or guess about this animal? What questions do you have?
  - Share responses with elbow partner and/or a few aloud
2. Text #2 - “Mongoose vs. Cobra” video
  - It Says: Watch once with no notes; Watch second, possibly third time and write down anything that stands out about the animal in question.
  - I Say: Based on information added by the video, what new thoughts, understandings, and/or questions do you have about this animal? Give possible sentence frames to help students structure a paragraph response: “With this new information, I am thinking \_\_\_\_\_”; “One thing I don’t understand is \_\_\_\_\_”; “At first I thought \_\_\_\_\_, but now I understand that \_\_\_\_\_.” Also have the class generate a list of key words they heard in the video and encourage students to “borrow” some for their response.
  - Have students search paragraph for words, phrases, or sentences that came from the video and underline them. Discuss how they used these as support for their thinking.
  - Share responses with elbow partner and/or a few aloud.
3. Text #3 – “Africa’s Deadliest: Mongoose Power” video
  - It Says: same as above
  - I Say: same as above
  - Underline support in paragraphed response.
  - Share with elbow partner and/or a few aloud.

#### Day 2

4. Text #4 – “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” short story
  - Bell Ringer: Read Rudyard Kipling mini-biography (1 short page). Why might writing this old be included in current school literature books?
  - Read aloud for enjoyment; filter for what makes it a pleasurable story to read

- Verbal reader response with elbow partner, then whole-class discussion: What makes this story pleasurable to read? What was done well?
- It Says, I Say: Relevant to the mongoose, what new understandings or questions do you have after reading “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi”? (Use sentence frames and write paragraph response.)
- Underline support from text within paragraph.
- Share with elbow partner; read a few aloud.

### **Day 3**

#### 5. Literary Focus

- Bell Ringer: Using the list provided, what specific things do you notice in the craft of “Rikki-Tikki-Tavi” that was well done? Use examples from the text as support. (List: character description, setting detail, plot development, sensory detail, figurative language, dialogue, word choice)
- Mini-lesson: Plot diagram & literary devices visual – whole class
- Small Group Literary Analysis (assign each group one topic – draft on paper, transfer to chart paper, present to class):
  - sensory detail in character description
  - sensory detail in setting description
  - figurative language
  - vivid verbs, adjectives, and adverbs
  - effective dialogue
  - plot diagram
- Notecard response: In your opinion, why is this story still being read and enjoyed more than 100 years after it was written?

### **Day 4**

#### 6. Text #5: “Mongoose” article

- Bell Ringer: Based on your knowledge of the mongoose so far, do you think it would make a good pet? Use information from previous texts as support.
- Read “Mongoose” silently.
- It Says: Use 3 green post-it notes to mark parts of text that strike you and 3 blue post-it notes to mark parts of text that you have questions about.
- I Say: Use sentence frames and key words list for paragraphed response.
- Underline support from text within paragraph.
- Share with elbow partner; read a few aloud.
- Record an opinion about the mongoose on a notecard and hand in at the end of class.

### **Day 5**

#### 7. Short Argumentative Piece

- Bell Ringer: Look at your opinion notecards from the last 2 days. List as many reasons (briefly!) as you can to explain why you have that opinion. Rank your reasons from strongest to weakest with 1 being strongest.
- Response structure in paragraphs:

- Introduction: What do you know about mongooses (facts)? What is your claim (opinion)?
  - Reason 1: Use information from text to support claim.
  - Reason 2: Use information from text to support claim.
  - Reason 3: Use information from text to support claim.
  - Conclusion: Firmly restate your opinion and summary of reasons.
- Inform students that they have just written an argumentative essay.

## **Day 6**

### 8. Citations

- Bell Ringer: In yesterday's essay, underline examples of text support within each body paragraph.
- Mini-lesson: Show students a completed bibliography of the texts used in this unit. Demonstrate how to cite sources within the essay.
- Have students add citations within their essays and attach a copy of the bibliography to the back.

## Appendix D: Analytic Writing Continuum for Source-Based Argument Scoring Attributes

### Analytic Writing Continuum for Source-Based Argument Scoring Attributes

**Content (Including Quality of Reasoning and Use of Evidence):** The content attribute describes how effectively the writing presents an argument supported by reasoning and developed through the use of evidence from sources.

**Structure:** The structure attribute describes how effectively the writing establishes an order and arrangement to enhance the central argument.

**Stance:** The stance attribute communicates a perspective through tone and style appropriate for the purpose and describes how effectively the writing establishes credibility.

**Conventions:** The conventions attribute describes how effectively the writing demonstrates age-appropriate control of usage, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing.

## Appendix E: Student Writing Samples, Mid-year Partnership Meetings 2014, 2015

### Middle School Sample, January 2014<sup>11</sup>

Learning cool facts about hurricanes can also help protect people. "A hurricane is a storm with a violent wind, in particular, a tropical cyclone in the Caribbean." Hurricanes mostly form in the Southern Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Eastern Pacific Ocean. The hurricane season is most active in mid-August through mid-October. Hurricanes can happen anytime that it's hot.

If there wasn't heat, hurricanes would never form. The sun starts the first process by heating the ocean or sea to at least 82 degrees Fahrenheit. According to the website Library Think Quest, hurricanes use the heat of the air to spin faster and faster and to help the air rise. Also, hurricanes mostly happen when it's hot or warm. That proves that hurricanes definitely need heat or warmth.

Drastic damage results from hurricanes. Multiple buildings can be destroyed. They can be taken down because of the high wind speeds that blow them down. There can also be a high chance of floods. Floods can happen because of the huge amount of rainfall. According to National Geographic the effects of hurricanes can destroy cities and kill people.

This paper shows that hurricanes can happen anytime in warm or hot weather and that cities affected by a hurricane can be destroyed. In summary, hurricanes can form in many seas and oceans and can destroy almost everything in its path.

### High School Sample, January 2014

Throughout my life, I have been in the outdoors. My family has had farms, woods, forest, and many other things. So the outdoors has been a big part of me always. Such as the first time I ever got in a deer stand. I climbed up without my dad's permission and he made me jump out and into his arms. It wouldn't have been so bad if the stand hadn't been twelve foot up. I almost cried, but I managed to jump and and make the twelve feet into my dad's arms. I was little so I was very scared to do this. As well as having this memory, it was probably the first time I ever had to face my fears and do something I didn't want to. Dad still teases me about it, but I think it was something very brave. I mean, even most people that are fifteen or older would be scared to jump of a twelve foot drop.

Another time when I was very connected to the outdoors is when I killed my first deer. I killed it with my dad's .270 Bowning. He got it with some money that his mother left him when she did. It cost around 1,500 dollars without the scope, but anyways I killed a little six point with a couple of little stickers all on the bottom of his antlers. The deer wasn't very big, but I thought it was the biggest thing in the world. I told everybody I saw. My grandpa and grandma made me feel really special and made me think I had done something amazing, but now since I've killed much bigger deer I've realized that it wasn't that big and they just told me all of that because they love me and they want me to get better and kill bigger and bigger deer.

As you can tell, I have been very close to nature when I kill animals. I killed my first turkey when I was about six or seven years old. I was using my grandpa's old pump. He's had it ever since

---

<sup>11</sup> Student writing samples were typed for ease of reading. Errors of grammar and spelling were unedited.

his dad gave it to him when he was about fourteen. He gave it to me about a year and a half ago when I turned thirteen. We go in the stand one morning and waited for a couple minutes before I started to use a high-pitched call that sounds like turkeys coming off of the roost. So after a couple minutes, two toms and two hens come through the brush and headed right towards us. I saw that one of what we thought was toms as a jake. So I got the tom to come into about twenty yards and I put my marble-tip sight on the turkey's head. I pulled the trigger and my grandpa was asleep so he jumped up and got scared before he saw that I had killed a tom. We jumped up and went crazy before we went to go and see how long of a beard and how good of feathers it had. It's one of my favorite memories with my grandpa.

By far, my most favorite memory is the one of when I got my first gun. I've got a couple guns on holidays like Christmas, but one year I got a shotgun that my dad gave me. I hadn't had a very good day at school, but I came home to my dad standing in the middle of the living room with a long box. He said I got you something when he got a big smile on his face. I thought it was going to be something stupid, but at this point anything would've been great. So he pulled out the first gun I ever shot, a little Browning .410 shotgun. It doesn't look like much, but it meant a lot to me for one big reason. It was my dad's first gun and the first he ever shot. I got really excited and we went out to shoot crows. I can remember taking it and we spent all of the rest of the day shooting and just messing around to have fun. This was by far the best memory that I have ever had with my dad. I love him to death and it'll kill me when he's gone someday, but I know that I'll see him in heaven where we can spend all day shooting crows, laughing, and having fun together.

## Middle School Sample, January 2015

### On-demand Writing Samples

SAMPLE 3 – 6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Prompt:** Should schools have dress codes?

All these new cloths and I can't wear any of them to school. They don't meet dress codes. Dorothy Harper believes schools should be able to tell students what to wear. While Allen Lichtenstein believes just the opposite. That is why there is this controversy; should schools be able to tell students what to wear? As a [...] Middle School student who has to follow a dress code I say schools should not be able to tell student's what to wear because it limit's freedom of expression and individuality and some teachers let it slide anyways.

First of all, dress codes limit's freedom. In the article "Should schools be able to tell student's what to wear," Allen Lichtenstein says "America has always prided itself on the individual's right to self-expression. I agree with this statement because I think kids need to show there self-expression off to people and I think what they wear on the outside is how they feel on the inside!

Second of all, some teachers don't say anything about the dress code anyway. In the article "The Issues of Dress Codes in Middle Schools" it says "Often teachers let minor dress-code violation slide, making it difficult to punish students when they are cited for major violations." If a dress code is not enforced by all school employees, it can lead to division within the school and cunfution among parents and students.

On the other side I think we should have dress codes because having dress codes is generally safer. In the article "Should be able to tell students what to wear," Dorothy Harper says "Dress codes help students [set] standards of behavior." This results in safe and orderly classrooms.

I don't think we should have a dress code because it limit's freedom and some teachers don't even say anything about dress codes. maybe the only thing we couldn't wear would be something like a shirt with something bad on it or a see through shirt or see through pants and that's why I think we shouldn't have a dress code.

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 1:29 PM  
**Comment [11]:** Hook!

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 1:29 PM  
**Comment [12]:** Defining the controversy

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:37 PM  
**Comment [13]:** I say / claim

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:38 PM  
**Comment [14]:** They say

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:38 PM  
**Comment [15]:** I say / MEAN

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:39 PM  
**Comment [16]:** They say

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:41 PM  
**Comment [17]:** I say / MEAN

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 1:25 PM  
**Comment [18]:** Effort to include the counterargument – good move ☺

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 1:29 PM  
**Comment [19]:** I say

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 1:29 PM  
**Comment [20]:** They say

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 1:30 PM  
**Comment [21]:** MEAN



## High School Sample, January 2015

### On-demand Writing Samples

#### SAMPLE 1 - 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Prompt:** Write an essay in which you explain your position on the issue of “death with dignity” / “assisted suicide”. Use appropriate evidence from your reading, experience, or observations to support your argument.

The ability for people to choose whether or not they can die on their own terms provides a peaceful feeling. Brittany Maynard, a woman choosing “death with dignity” for herself says, “Having this choice at the end of my life has become incredibly important. It has given me a sense of peace during a tumultuous time that otherwise would be dominated by fear, uncertainty and pain.” I was talking with Mrs. Miner, and she had a relative that was dying of cancer. He wasn’t allowed the right to death with dignity, but at a point in time, he did have enough pills to take his life. He never used them to do so, but the sense of relief it provided him was astounding. In Thaddeus Pope’s essay, he makes the point to mention that “Since the Oregon Death with Dignity Act was enacted in 1997, more than 1,100 people have obtained life-ending prescriptions, and about 750 used them.” That means that only around 68% of people are using them. There’s still 32% (around 1/3) of people who aren’t using them, but had them prescribed. The people getting the drugs are seeking a relief, and this helps bring them one.

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:25 PM  
**Comment [1]:** I say / Claim

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:25 PM  
**Comment [2]:** They say

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:28 PM  
**Comment [3]:** MEAN / MATTER

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:26 PM  
**Comment [4]:** They say

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:27 PM  
**Comment [5]:** MEAN / I say

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 12:26 PM  
**Comment [6]:** MATTER / warrant

#### SAMPLE 2 – 10<sup>th</sup> grade

**Prompt:** Hard hits in youth sports can result in concussions that are sometimes temporary and always serious. What do you think adults in charge of youth sports should do about the risk of concussions? Why?

Many parents believe that protective equipment we have is working correctly. However, an excerpt from a resource published by the U.S. Center for Disease Control states, “Primary prevention strategies include: using protective equipment that is appropriate for the activity or position, fits correctly, is well maintained, and is used consistently and correctly;” Meaning that there is protective equipment out there for almost any sport, but in order for it to work up to par it must be taken care of and used as instructed. An athletes protective equipment is like their armor if you want it to work you must use it. I believe that if all equipment was used correctly there should be less concussions.

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 11:58 AM  
**Comment [7]:** SAY

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 11:58 AM  
**Comment [8]:** MEAN

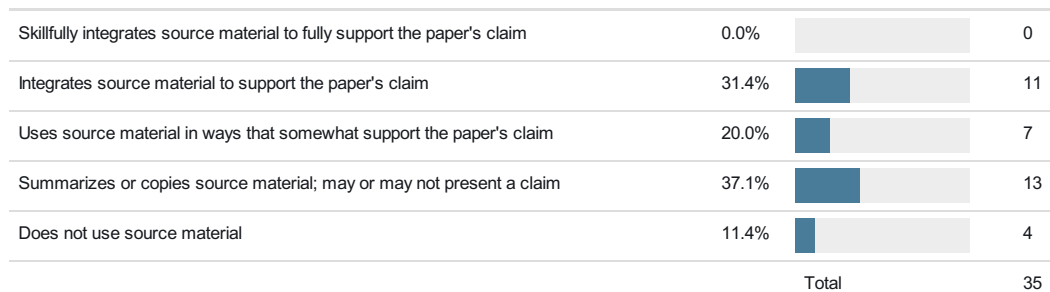
NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 11:59 AM  
**Comment [9]:** MATTER / Warrant

NWA Writing Project 6/19/2015 11:59 AM  
**Comment [10]:** I say / Claim

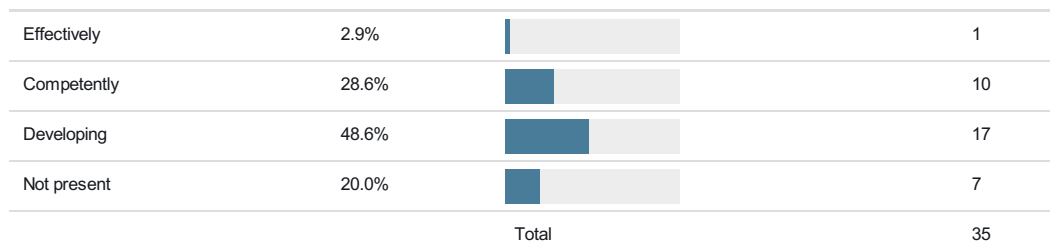
## Appendix F: Using Sources Tool Results – November 2014, January 2015

### November 2014

1. Overall, how would you describe the writing's use of source material? Select the option that best describes the writing's overall use of source material.



2. Does the writing distinguish between the student's own ideas and the source material, including the use of clearly indicated paraphrasing, quotation marks, or signal phrases?



### 3. Does the writing comment on the source material?

Effectively	5.7%		2
Competently	14.3%		5
Developing	42.9%		15
Not present	37.1%		13
Total			35

### 4. Does the writing characterize the credibility of the source material or author?

Effectively	2.9%		1
Competently	11.4%		4
Developing	45.7%		16
Not present	40.0%		14
Total			35

### 5. Does the writing use source material for any of the following purposes? Check all that apply:

Illustrating   Use specific examples from the text to support the claim	71.4%		25
Authorizing   Refer to an "expert" to support the claim	42.9%		15
Extending   Put your own "spin" on terms and ideas you take from other texts	51.4%		18
Countering   "Push back" against the text in some way (e.g., disagree with it, challenge something it says, or interpret it differently)	45.7%		16
None of the above	17.1%		6
Total			35

## January 2015

---

**1. Overall, how would you describe the writing's use of source material? Select the option that best describes the writing's overall use of source material.**

Skillfully integrates source material to fully support the paper's claim	8.7%		8
Integrates source material to support the paper's claim	41.3%		38
Uses source material in ways that somewhat support the paper's claim	34.8%		32
Summarizes or copies source material; may or may not present a claim	12.0%		11
Does not use source material	3.3%		3
Total			92

**2. Does the writing distinguish between the student's own ideas and the source material, including the use of clearly indicated paraphrasing, quotation marks, or signal phrases?**

Effectively	21.7%		20
Competently	21.7%		20
Developing	47.8%		44
Not present	8.7%		8
Total			92

### 3. Does the writing comment on the source material?

Effectively	3.3%		3
Competently	34.8%		32
Developing	47.8%		44
Not present	14.1%		13
Total			92

### 4. Does the writing characterize the credibility of the source material or author?

Effectively	13.0%		12
Competently	13.0%		12
Developing	45.7%		42
Not present	28.3%		26
Total			92

### 5. Does the writing use source material for any of the following purposes? Check all that apply:

Illustrating   Use specific examples from the text to support the claim	72.8%		67
Authorizing   Refer to an "expert" to support the claim	68.5%		63
Extending   Put your own "spin" on terms and ideas you take from other texts	35.9%		33
Countering   "Push back" against the text in some way (e.g., disagree with it, challenge something it says, or interpret it differently)	33.7%		31
None of the above	6.5%		6
Total			92

**Appendix G: Student Writing Samples, Extended Researched Arguments****Sixth Grade Sample: School Policy Issue**

## Introduction

A Friend is someone who is always there for you. Many students think we should sit by our friends in class, but some middle schoolers prefer assigned seats. As a middle school student who likes to socialize, sitting by my friends is important to me because I talk to my friends about everything. Students should sit by their friends in class because on group projects I would feel more comfortable with my friends than strangers, And class will be better. Lastly teachers should be able to control students.

The first reason that students should sit by their friends is so that they will want to do more group work. Because according to Erica Loop during group work, students can still communicate with each other. Therefore they will want to do more group work. Also you usually do group work with people you sit by. Jeffrey Leung says during group work with people you don't know you feel awkward. I agree with Jeffrey Leung because I am shy around people I don't know. So I would feel awkward saying my opinion.

Secondly, Daniela Kim feels sitting by strangers makes you feel awkward and alone. I agree because when you sit with people you don't know you have no idea what to say. They only want to talk to their friends, not you so you will feel left out. We will lose interest in the class says Kim, I agree because we will get bored in class and get bored in class and not pay attention. We won't want to pay attention

Jeffery Leung believes assigned seats help you make new friends. I feel otherwise. If you sit by someone that is mean to you, you're miserable, and you most likely don't make friends with them. Phil Clinton (a principal) feels assigned seats are not necessary. He thinks teachers should be able to control the children without assigned seats. I agree, the teacher has to show them he/she is in charge.

After researching sitting by friends in class my opinion has not changed, that kids should sit by their friends in class. Sitting by my friends is important to me because I talk to my friends about everything. I have heard that many teachers feel assigned seats are necessary. I personally agree with Mrs. Smith when she said kids won't get their work done because when students do group work they can collaborate but get it done. A friend never leaves your side, so why should they at school?

## Twelfth Grade Sample: Banning High School Football

### **Introduction:**

As a female athlete attending college on an athletic scholarship, I am against the termination of football at the high school level. Nevertheless, I will look objectively at the opposing argument.

### **Definitions:**

Football is defined as *any person or thing treated roughly or tossed about* (Dictionary.com). Football is a game of aggression, of being physical with one another more than it is a game of mental capacity. To ban is to *prohibit, forbid or bar*, meaning it would be taken away or *not be of allowance to seize*. Studies show that banning football would increase the capacity in which the players can educate themselves inside the classroom. But, the definition of passion is *the object of such fondness or desire*. For many students that is where athletes come into place over education. How can we educate children if we are taking away what they are passionate about? Athletics is defined as *a person trained or gifted involving agility, stamina, or strength*. Then academics would be *theoretical or hypothetical training. not practical, realistic or directly useful*. Also defined as *learned scholarly but lacking worldliness*.

### **Opposing Perspectives:**



The conversation between those agreeing to banning the sport of football is based upon injury rate, cost efficiency, and the introduction of violence in a positive manner. Is football worth the risk, the overbearing cost, or teaching of bad morals? This topic is important to discuss with people to allow for a better understanding of why or why not football should be an athletics sport in high schools of America.

When many people ponder about football, the first thing that comes to most people is the physical aspect of the game. Who weighs the most, who tackles the hardest, who runs the fastest. Does anybody think, who has the largest mental capacity to carry this ball down the field? No! Because football is more of a physicality game than anything else. As Butler, an author in part to "Out of Bounds", likes to point out, "...football is the only game in which we use our head as a battering ram and as a spear" (Bounds 2014). Over and over again through every football game, kids will put on those helmets and run straight into the opposing teams offense or defense using their heads as weapons and without thinking of the repercussions of doing so. When did using our heads for the hitting of players in athletic sporting games become less dangerous? This shouldn't be a teaching method that young athletes are learning to use because it will only result in injury or death. This shows the injury rate dependant upon the teaching of invincibility of helmets for the subject of banning football. Then from injury the costs begin to roll in.

Injuries are not the only cost that one comes by when entering upon the sport of football. In "Getting Down to the Roots," the cost of football is shown with great despair. Elfin states, "It's no secret that football's an expensive sport, costing \$150-\$300 to outfit a youth player." This may not seem like very much money at all when taking count of one football team but as Elfin also points out, "believed that between 11 million and 12 million kids play tackle, flag, tag football" (Elfin 2014). That is way more than one football team and each child has to be supplied with shoulder pads, padded pants, socks, cleats, and most importantly, a helmet, which is not cheap in the slightest. So where does paycheck come from to order all of this safety equipment for the boys? It comes directly from the schools pocket. Just as Susan points out in "Out of Bounds" saying, "...when you don't have enough textbooks for kids, it seems silly to me that you should divert money to something else, especially something where almost everyone I know that's graduated from high school can remember somebody suffering either spinal cord or head injury during their time in high school" (Bounds 2014). So why would we fund this increasingly dangerous, injury prone sport, prior to the funding of the childrens' education? When do people draw the line of importance between this sport and the future education of the children at hand? Because of one decision on where the money goes should be made, education is supposedly number one in the mind of parents but perhaps not in the minds of our school administrators.

What is the school's money really paying for? Because each cent spent in the favor of football is teaching children that they need to "hit" their opponents as hard as possible to win each game. Should schools really be endorsing sports when the key to the game is being as violent as possible to your competitor? These questions were also being asked by Steve Almond in "Sack those Quarterbacks" when he states, "...can also foster values that represent a distorted sense of masculinity, one marked by violence, conformity, homophobia, and disrespect for women" (Almond 2014). Allowing schools to teach kids values that are commonly held within the sport and paying for them to learn things with such bad credibility instead the real education inside the school is

preposterous. Learning characteristics such as these can only hinder the childrens futures in a way that could potentially inhibit their ability to get certain jobs or benefits.

Opponents believe that football is far too dangerous and expensive to be even considered allowable among our youth. The risks far exceed the benefits, in which even then you are only receiving if you're perceive things as many say they do. The schools are allowing for danger to reach out its hand towards those in this sport and draw them closer to death with every tackle. Not only are schools paying for this sport, they are paying for the brain damage occurring to these children. When should education put a stop to the injustice.

### **Aligning Perspectives**

Now I will attempt to explain the aligning perspective to the ongoing debate on whether football should be banned in high school without using bias. Not only does football provide scholars with more opportunity, life skills, and intangibles, but it is a piece of passion they will never be able to forget.

Many people assume that young children who play football allow the sport to take over their life with no benefits. In many ways, these people are right because football is quite time consuming, but Ray Fittipaldo believes that there is more value that comes from this sport. Fittipaldo believes that football can, not only, bring joy, but a passion needed by all young people. Fittipaldo writes, "...high school football was the most important thing in my life at the time." In making this comment, Fittipaldo is saying that nothing was of greater importance to him in high school than to play this sport. Now this may seem contradictory to the point but you have to think more largely about his words. If football was the most important thing to him, then he must have been very dedicated to his studies. You cannot play sports in high school if your grades are not up to the status quo. Therefore, being important as football was, his studies would come to equal importance, making Fittipaldo a better scholar due to this game.

As well as pure love, it is often said that football is able to provide sensations that people would normally associate with heavy drug use. This may sound highly discourageable, but Lewis Jobe believes that football gives children a "high you can't buy". Lewis writes, "It can teach your son that there are healthy, productive ways to pursue adventure and 'highs' in this life." What Jobe is trying to say is that one does not have to obtain or take illegal and highly dangerous drugs to achieve the sensation as being what is often called being "high as a kite". This being that through the extreme adrenaline rush that the kids feel while playing, they will receive the same sensations yet in a healthier, safer environment. Not only that, but playing football could cut down the drug usage of athletes around the globe since they can receive these "highs" on the field without repercussions.

Many people assume that football is, alas, the most dangerous sport in the United States in which you may participate. This assumption can be made because we are always hearing about the incredible injuries and head banging stories that seem to accompany the sport, but is that just because of the popularity that is also tied within it? Scurran argues that football is not the most dangerous sport to be involved in, so why are we picking on the moral values behind football when there are indeed several other sports in which the objective of the competition is to beat ones competitor to a pulp. Scurran writes in "Behind the Face Mask", "Look no further than the violence that we associate with boxing; at one time, hard and multiple punches thrown during a match were considered the most violent thing imaginable. Now we have Mixed Martial Arts and Cage Fighting, which to me seems just as violent if not more than boxing; it doesn't make sense (Scurran)".

Basically, Scurran is insisting that if football is too dangerous, than sports such as Boxing, Cage Fighting, and Mixed Martial Arts are much too dangerous. Not only is boxing centered around hitting your opponent until they are KOed or knocked out, but when you add a cage and new increasingly intense moves, they result becomes incredibly too dangerous. Where do we draw the line at how dangerous a sport can be? The values in sports such as these seem to be more perilous than the game of football, yet football continues to be interrogated unlawfully.

On the other hand, Americans tend to believe that once you reach the average of anything on any level, the appropriate thing to do is stop working and/or trying to achieve greater than just the norm. While this seems perfectly acceptable, it's a growing issue among our nation and Peter King believes that football is the "last bastion" of true discipline in our country. The main issue according to King is that kids who do not play football are increasingly lazy and unmotivated to better themselves due to lack of goal setting and discipline among them. King writes, "Unfortunately, somewhere along the way, mediocrity became acceptable in this country and it happened in almost every part of society (King)". King implies here that football is one of the last parts of society that does not accept mediocrity. Mediocrity means of only moderate quality or not of very good being. What King is trying to say is that football refuses to allow average or mediocrity among its ranks. So if average is not allowable, football is teaching children the importance of perseverance and the ability to strive harder and further towards success. Having a mindset of being the best and always working to make things even better is a great mindset to have when getting ready to jump into the working world. In the "real" world, average is not accepted and to be something great one must be extraordinary.

On a greater scale, there is a large belief that our society can only continue in a worthwhile path as long as it stays strong through its people. To stay strong, one must possess the ability to be "tough". The meaning of tough is to be strong enough to withstand adverse conditions, difficulty, or hardship. Writer, Jeff Scurran, of "Behind the Face Mask" believes that the ability to be tough is a key component to society AND football. He thinks the game of football could solve all the problems to the "soft" society in which we are headed towards. In his article he writes, "We can't take the toughness out of football. Toughness is valued in our society. Every family endures tough times, every business goes through tough cycles, and our country values toughness in its leaders (Scurran)". In other words, Scurran is trying to say that if you take the tough factor out of this sport, not only will you lose a piece of the game, but you will suggest the loss of a key area within surviving this hardship called life. He is questioning the ability of even being able to survive without toughness because it is used so thoroughly within our society. How does one go without being tough? From everyday life to the great people who run our country, where do we draw the line to obliterate toughness skills.

Ultimately, what is at stake here is that our country is trying to ban a sport from high school that is of key importance to the rearing of the young minds of tomorrow. Not only does football teach you irreplaceable intangibles, but it changes your mindset of your lifestyle choices and could potentially save your life. So, the real question is, why not football?

### **The Conclusion**

Since 1892 when it was first introduced to America, football became a national symbol for our country. The game started from just a spark of interest that grew into a burning flame that encompassed the attention of America. Although football is such a popular sport here, not all

Americans agree with this game being held on such a high pedestal. I on the other hand, was faced with such great confusion in what I believed in from where I started my paper and where I am now. In fact, I find myself leaning more heavily toward my opposing views than my aligning views.

For those who are opposed, the strongest allegations against such sport is the physical trauma that seems to leave a long history behind it. Not only does football bring danger when it is played but is thought to bring unnecessary danger in the minds of many. Bounds explains that football is the only sport that associates the head of the body with a battering ram or a spear of sorts. He questions the necessity of a sport in which we are only bringing physical harm to our bodies for amusement and entertainment of fans. As a result, there is really no gain from football other than pure joy in playing. Is that really a reason to be doing something when the negative consequences outweigh the positive gains?

Following the opposing view on physicality, for those who agree with the physical aspect of the sport refute that football is not even the most dangerous sport in which we allow here in America. Scurran pointed out in his article that you don't have to look farther than the sport of boxing to find violence, so why is America attacking football when there are more dangerous and less popular sports that should be looked into first. On top of that, toughness is an important part of life and a major factor within the this sport. Without that ability to be tough, making it through difficult situations is almost impossible. So why do we attack the aspects of football that make its competitors tougher and more able to cope with hardships?

By extension to the opposing view, a second area of great concern is in the values that the sport is teaching our young generations. Almond claims that football "fosters values that represent a distorted sense of masculinity, one marked with violence, conformity, homophobia, and disrespect for women." What he is trying to say is that the values in which are being boldly taught are those of extreme distaste. Does playing football teach kids that this sort of disrespectful behavior is okay? Is this the kind of person we want the future to hold as its leaders and business corporates?

Although the previous values are shown to be true to some extent, the aligning views counter that lessons such as these are not what football is teaching our young. King refers to football to be the "last bastion of true discipline". He believes that long ago America started accepting mediocrity among our society and that football is the "last line of defense". The drills and fierce competition and peer review keeps a constant challenge, and the strict enforcements keep the children in line, teaching them that staying in their "rank" is the only way to survive. Therefore, kids are facing adversity and learning to overcome and strive for success. But do we want our children to think that they have to be robots to be successful?

When I first started this paper, I was beyond sure that there wasn't a single idea, comment, or quote that could possibly change my attitude towards the ability for one to play the sport of their choosing. Being a college bound athlete, I feel as if sport, of any danger or kind, all have their place and an importance in this life to be played as long as somebody has the desire to play it. I know I cannot agree with both sides, because that defeats the point of this paper, but as much as I believe that people should be able to play a sport of their choosing, I think football should be banned from high school. Put aside the fact that it will never actually happen because football is just too important to our society, but football is the most unintellectual and dangerous sport I have come to find. I never realized the danger in which these children put themselves in to physically hit one

another every Friday night. Yes, there is thought put into setting plays and carrying those plays out, but it all comes down to “how hard can I hit my opponent until he hits the ground?”. When did this kind of brutality become such an important thing to the people of America? Football should not be advertised as a high school sport, and if America is as smart as we like to think we are, they would ban it from our schools.

## Appendix H: IRB Approval



Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board

March 20, 2015

### MEMORANDUM

TO: S. Nikki Holland  
Christian Goering  
Sean Connors

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 15-02-545

Protocol Title: *Teaching Argument Writing*

Review Type:  EXEMPT  EXPEDITED  FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 03/20/2015 Expiration Date: 03/19/2016

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

**This protocol has been approved for 615 participants.** If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).