PEDAGOGY IN PRACTICE: AN EXPLORATION OF WRITING INSTRUCTION IN A HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

KACIE D. NEAMTU
Bachelor of Arts, University of Lethbridge, 2010
Bachelor of Education, University of Lethbridge, 2010

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KACIE NEAMTU

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Dr. D. Slomp Thesis Supervisor	Associate Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. R. LeBlanc Thesis Examination Committee Member	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. L. Fowler Thesis Examination Committee Member	Professor Emeritus	Ph.D.
Dr. T. Hodges External Examiner University of Alabama Tuscaloosa, AL, USA	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. A. von Heyking Chair, Thesis Examination Committee	Associate Professor	Ph.D.

DEDICATION

For my boys, Lukas and Noah. Without your unwavering support and flexibility, I would not—and could not— have accomplished this. I love you.

ABSTRACT

This study sheds light on the practice of one Albertan high school English teacher over one semester as she instructs her students through the multidimensional practice of writing. In this single case study, teacher practice is compared to a model of writing pedagogies to answer two questions. First, what pedagogical understandings are embedded in the practice of writing instruction of a high school English Language Arts teacher? Second, how do key pedagogical understandings guide the writing instruction of that same teacher? Using a thematic analysis of data, what is discovered is that writing pedagogy appears frequently, but although present, are not the primary guiding force for writing instruction. What we are left with are probing questions that necessitate further study into what teachers know about writing pedagogy, how it is used, and how our systems can better inform and prepare teachers to utilize them in their classrooms.

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Chapter One: Introduction

When I was in high school, my English teacher once told me that my writing had beautiful voice. She told me how, even though teachers don't officially have "favorites", that when my papers came across her marking pile, she got excited to read my work because she could always hear *me* so clearly. At the time she may have thought she was merely writing encouraging words on a student's (probably less than amazing) work, but little did she know she was solidifying my career choice, and the fall after graduation I eagerly began my journey on my way to becoming a teacher. It was a dream I had since I was a child; teaching runs in the family, after all. I spent years of my childhood deciding what grade I wanted to teach, but it was not until I finished my high school English classes that I was set. Upon entering university, I was wide-eyed and green; excited to learn the ins and out of teaching. Excited to learn what I assumed would be a balanced blend of two of my strengths: procedure and heart. My field was English Language Arts, a discipline that requires multifaceted instruction as it builds on multiple skills, often working together in tandem. I figured there would be certain and explicit theories to learn and rules to follow. I was not wrong. But I certainly was not right.

At that time, the Alberta English Language Arts program of studies was freshly updated, having been recreated in 2003, and its aim is twofold: first, "to encourage, in students, an understanding and appreciation of the significance and artistry of literature" (Alberta Education, 2003, p. 1) and secondly "to enable each student to understand and appreciate language and to use it confidently and competently for a variety of purposes, with a variety of audiences and in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning" (Alberta Education, 2003, p. 1). It would still be a few years before I got my hands on the curriculum, but once I did, one word stood and continues to

stand out: variety. The Program of Studies lists required and suggested various forms of text that students must create from grades 10-12. In that list are broad categories of responses including personal response to texts and contexts, and critical/analytical response to literary texts, and other print and non-print texts in varying contexts—vehicles for extensive choice among writing tasks and projects. To accomplish this, students are required to write in many forms including fictional and non-fiction prose, informative and persuasive forms including of essays, commentaries, articles, and reviews. Creative forms include poetry, script, and oral, and visual/multimedia presentations (Alberta Education, 2003, p. 11). The possibilities seem endless, and the application of these broad categories of text creation are equally vast.

To fulfill the requirements of the broad strokes of the program of studies, teachers will often fit as many genres and sub-genres of text into their classes. In my own classroom, my students write in a range of forms and genres, including:

- Personal essays
- Journals
- Narrative in the forms of story, poetry, and essay
- Multi-genre poetry including free verse, haiku, and sonnet
- Friendly letters
- Business letters and emails
- Advertisement campaigns
- Satire
- Character analysis
- Analytical literary essay
- Letters to the editor
- Newspaper articles
- Human interest articles
- Screenplay
- Storyboards

That is a snapshot of 15 different, highly nuanced, genre forms in nearly as many weeks. Even almost ten years into my career and with a wide array of skills and

knowledge (and dare I say, mastery, over course content), it is unrealistic to directly teach the qualities and format of each genre—there simply is not enough time. On top of the genres for my class, I only lightly scratch the surface of the forms students will be expected to write in other classes and other levels of their education. In addition to this struggle, I must admit a bit of humility. I am not a professional writer. Sure, I love to write, but there are individuals who dedicate their careers to mastering only one of these genres, and even then, only some do it successfully. In terms of a high school classroom, I am constantly left questioning where the line is between being an expert in the field of writing, and teaching students the skills to find their own way through complex and unfamiliar writing situations.

Among the expanse of options in teaching English Language Arts, the curriculum stresses the importance of language in our world. It highlights the nature of language as:

- a way to explore meaning (p. 1)
- an important element of culture and relationships (p. 1) – both of which are highly contextual and dynamic
- recursive (p. 2)
- requiring critical thinking (p. 2)
- metacognitive (p. 2)

When considering these elements of language, it may make one question whether the use of prescriptive teaching methods to maximize output, such as the ones I used in the beginning of my career, are at all at odds with the intention of the curriculum itself. And if so, what is it, exactly, that teachers need to know to effectively teach writing?

Teaching writing is complex. It demands that a teacher know the nuances of the writing processes, articulate that process, guide students through it, all while attending to language conventions that students must apply to their work. The problem with writing instruction, however, is that it may or may not be rooted in pedagogical understandings.

Anecdotally, during my time completing my education degree, I learned a lot about curriculum delivery, planning effective units and lessons, responding to varying social contexts, and a variety of other educational and classroom issues. What I did not learn were strategies for teaching the complexity of writing. Not strategies, not pedagogies, not theories of writing. It was not until I participated in a study about writing instruction that I realized how much I might be missing. The writing teacher holds the power to teach writing with whatever knowledge they have, but the question then stands, what pedagogical understandings do writing teachers *need to know*?

This quandary led me here— building a study to investigate the presence of writing pedagogy in the high school English classroom. My study addresses two key research questions:

1. What pedagogical understandings are embedded in the practice of writing instruction of a high school English Language Arts teacher?
2. How do key pedagogical understandings guide the writing instruction of a high school English Language Arts teacher?

Though my graduate study research, I developed a construct I simply call the "Writing Pedagogies Model" that synthesizes the literature on pedagogical understandings and competencies of writing instruction. In the study, I use this model as a framework for understanding real-world teaching practices where I compare the practice of a high school English teacher to the writing pedagogies model to better understand how pedagogy functions in a writing classroom. It is my belief that by understanding how writing is taught in classrooms and what pedagogical beliefs these practices are rooted in we can better understand what knowledge teachers have, what skills and strategies they

utilize in their practice, and where they need support to expand and (perhaps) better their practice.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Frameworks

Conceptualizing Writing Ability

Before one can explore the practice of writing instruction, it is necessary to create a common understanding of its goal(s). It makes sense that the heart of these goals is to shape students into capable, competent writers. However, if there is no clear and common understanding about what writing ability is or even what it means to be a "good" writer, then teachers are like sculptors carving with dull tools. Understanding the root of writing ability provides a foundational goal to build towards.

Unfortunately, there is no tidy definition of writing ability. There remains contention among scholars and practitioners as to what writing ability is, how to measure it, and how to teach it. This debate ranges from philosophies that define composition as both social and developmental (McKoski, 1995), goal-centric and hierarchical (Flower & Hayes, 1981), considerate of audience (Mitchell & Taylor, 1979), authentically set (Ronald & Volkmer, 1989), asserting of socio-political and socio-cultural standing (Ivanic, 2004), and reliant on intrapersonal qualities (Slomp, 2012). The question remains, if writing ability is so intricate and an essential skill in a student's education, how can we communicate a clear understanding of writing ability by which teachers can select the sharpest tools for their craft?

In the most basic conceptualizations of writing ability, attention is primarily paid to the finished product and the writer's ability to produce it. Adherents to this paradigm of writing ability called current traditional rhetoric believe, as explained by Hairston (1982), "that the composing process is linear, that it proceeds systematically from prewriting to writing to rewriting" (p. 115). Over time, scholars have come to see this approach as too rigid, unresponsive, and unreflective of the cognitive and social processes that inform

writing choices. Belief has shifted away from writing as merely form and ideas, to a multipart cognitive process (Behizadeh & Engelhard, 2011).

Beginning with Emig's 1971 study "The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders", which concluded there is a need to a shift from a focus on forms of writing to the mental processes of writing, researchers began to embrace the cognitive model of writing. A 1981 review by Flower and Hayes called "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" identified four cognitive tenets that make up writing ability. First, that writing is a process that is orchestrated and organized while writing. Second, the processes of writing are organized hierarchically based on the needs of the writer and "may be called upon at any time and embedded within another process of even within another instance of itself" (p. 375). Thirdly, the process of writing is goal-directed. This means that during composition writers create a network of goals that guide their process. Lastly, Flower and Hayes argue that writers create their own goals by generating supporting sub-goals to meet a purpose and by changing their top-level goals as they learn. Their study demonstrated that a complex model of cognition that occurs at the time of writing. What is learned is that the writing process, contrary to previous understandings, is a non-linear, reflexive process based on the constraints of the writing context. Important to their research was the use of protocol analysis which, for the first time, enabled the researchers to listen to the writer as they write. This form of self-reporting not only accounted for reporting errors in their findings but led to an understanding that cognitive processes occur while writing happen moment-to-moment. This important method revealed that if we are to understand writing ability with any degree of accuracy, researchers must take a closer look at the writer in the moment of composition. This leads to writer-centric understandings of composition

including cognitive processes, metacognition, understanding of language conventions, understanding of audience, and other socio-cultural situations.

A lot has been built upon the foundation of writing as a cognitive process since 1971. Contemporary research has indicated a failure in relying solely on cognitive process models to conclusively improve students' writing ability. Graham and Sandmel's 2011 meta-analysis of the process writing approach indicates that process writing strategies improved writing of students in regular classrooms, however, the improvement was small. Targeting only the process of writing did not improve struggling writers' ability, nor did it seem that teacher education, grade level, or genre of writing were substantial. Consequently, the researchers discovered that across 29 studies compared "the process approach to writing instruction is an effective, but not particularly powerful approach" (p. 404) for general education. However, the researchers acknowledge that the strength of the 29 studies was not exceptional, and there is still room for further research into the extent that process writing strategies can help student achievement. What this study reveals is that despite understanding that there are recursive cognitive stages during the writing process, tapping into those alone is not enough in improving writing ability.

Extending from the cognitive processes involved in writing is the presence of metacognition: the process of monitoring and evaluating one's own thinking (Hacker, Keener, & Kircher, 2009). Branching from Flower and Hayes (1981), the idea of making choices as we are writing has become a focus for contemporary scholars. Slomp (2012) notes, "In the process of creating meaning, we actively manipulate and reshape knowledge to suit our evolving purposes" (p. 82). Evidence also suggests the metacognitive processes that mature writers undertake is not solely based on goal setting and evaluating the genre (Flower & Hayes, 1981), but reflecting on the expectations of

the discourse communities who will receive the writing (Slomp, 2012). The choices that are then made act specifically to shape the text to suit the needs of the audience, not only the needs of the writer. As such, metacognition is central to writing ability.

In defining writing ability, I would be remiss to ignore the relevance of language mastery in connection to ability. In “Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write”, Ivanic (2004) asserts that competent writers are able to apply the “skills discourse of writing” (p. 226), or the execution of linguistic skill in a given context, including application of “a set of linguistic patterns and rules for sound-symbol relationships and sentence construction” (p. 226). For instance, she recognizes that in contemporary settings, it may be acceptable to change patterns of sentence construction, so long as the writing is “shaped by social purposes” (p. 227), and the purposes serve the discourse community, as explored above. What is suggested is a writer’s ability to recognize various linguistic patterns in varied contexts contributes to their skill. There is data to suggest an important connection between a student’s ability to fluently produce text and overall writing quality, as Kent and Wanzek (2016) explore in their meta-analysis, “The Relationship Between Component Skills and Writing Quality and Production”. The conclusions drawn indicate that producing text that is structured and coherent, including developed ideas and appropriate use of grammar conventions, have “small to moderate correlations with the quality of student writing and the amount of writing produced” (p. 594). These findings make sense, because as a student’s understanding of language conventions improve, it stands to reason their confidence, as well as their ability to metacognitively reflect on their process and audience, likewise improves.

In the 1979 study, “The Integrating Perspective: An Audience-Response Model for Writing”, Mitchell and Taylor explore the importance of attending to audience as a

determining factor in writing ability. They argue that when compared against subconscious cognitive theories of writing, the audience response model equips students to better understand that "good" writing includes values that coincide with the audience they are writing for. Their idea is that writing is a transactional process between writer and audience, and therefore "audience not only judges the writing, it also motivates it" (p. 250). They rationalize this argument by asserting that weak writers are not weak because of laziness or inattention, but the inexperience or unfamiliarity with the expectations of writing standards for specific communities.

While some researchers assert writing processes are a reflection of social constructs (Gee, 1989; Ivanic, 2004; Luke, 2012: McKoski, 1995), knowledge of rhetorical problems (Flower & Hayes, 1981), and component skills (Kent & Wanzek, 2016), many accept that the construct of writing ability is "broad, multifaceted, situated, contextual" (Slomp, 2012). It is more than just syntactic and rhetorical skills but includes a vast array of cognitive and social factors. Writing ability requires understanding more discourses than just discourse community expectations. Researchers including Behizadeh and Engelhard (2011), Gee (1989), Ivanic (2004), and Slomp (2012) have argued that writing ability is dependent upon and situated within the contexts of identity, sociocultural, sociopolitical, and intrapersonal practice. Ivanic (2004) discussed six discourses of writing ability, two of which are writing as social practice, and writing as a socio-political power dynamic that must be navigated by the writer. Her argument stems from the idea that writing ability is learned "implicitly by participating in socially situated literacy events which fulfill social goals which are relevant and meaningful" (p. 238). These social goals, while responsive to the expectations of the reader, additionally fulfill personal goals related to identity.

Writing has consequences on the identity of the writer as they represent themselves in writing. Here, discourse community holds power over the writer, as "writers are not entirely free to choose how to represent the world or themselves… but these are to some extent determined by the sociopolitical context in which they are writing" (Ivanic, 2004, p. 238). One's identity and personal characteristics may also play a crucial role in writing ability. Slomp (2012) argues that the role of intrapersonal factors such as personality traits, prior knowledge, levels of motivation, self-efficacy, and current goals have been overlooked in previous studies of writing ability, especially related to transfer of skills.

Researchers are still investigating the possibilities and connections between writing transfer and writing ability, and whether transfer indicates ability. Slomp (2012) suggests there are a number of problems with writing transfer, firstly that the metaphor of transfer implies a linear process. From what is apparent about writing ability, it is anything but linear, and yet there is an expectation for skills to transfer directly from one task to another. This theory is at odds with the construct of writing ability altogether. Slomp continues, stating there is little evidence to support the idea that students can transfer knowledge about writing from context to context, and that "knowledge about writing is too situated in specific contexts to make far transfer possible" (p. 82). What remains to be seen is how transfer theory may be reimagined to better explain the limitations of far transfer in writing. As he states, "What is needed is a conception of transfer that holds all these factors in balance so that researchers and assessors can develop a full picture of the array of factors that influence development" (p. 84). With a greater understanding of transfer, we may become able to understand how to unlock writing ability across diverse settings, disciplines, and tasks.

As one can see, writing ability is not a simple concept to define. For teachers it is important to consider the multifaceted nature of writing and determine the writing skills and abilities to aim for in instruction. After examining decades of various approaches to this process, what is apparent is writing is a blend of concepts that recognize it as a cognitive process (Emig, 1971; Flower and Hayes, 1981; Ivanic, 2004; McKoski, 1995; Slomp, 2012) that includes contextual and metacognitive demands (Behizadeh & Engelhard, 2011; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Ivanic, 2004; Luke 2012; McKoski, 1995; Slomp, 2012: Ronald & Volkmer, 1989). The breadth of these findings suggests writing ability is not just one thing. To simplify this definition of writing ability, I have created Figure 1, which demonstrates the process of active and complex cognition including attention to audience, discourse, and social context. It requires skills of transfer and metacognitive reflection all while executing acceptable standards of language convention.

Figure 1

Writing Ability Model

Theories of Writing Pedagogy

To understand the choices a teacher makes in their writing instruction, it is essential to have an overarching sense of writing pedagogical theories from which these choices may come. Even if these classroom choices are not deliberately tied to a theoretical paradigm, what might be considered “tried and true” or “common sense” strategies are likely born from these pedagogies. It may be unrealistic to expect the average teacher to have knowledge of the myriad of pedagogical writing theories, but as most lessons are thoughtfully planned and deliberately executed, it stands to reason that the strategies a teacher uses come from somewhere. This section breaks down various dominant theories of writing pedagogy and explores their applicability to the writing classroom.

In my research of writing pedagogies, one thing became immediately clear. There is no shallow bottom to the literature, no lack of theories to understand. This discovery required me to build connections between the theories and synthesize them into condensed pedagogical focuses that make them easier to digest. In this synthesis, three dominating focuses emerged: product, process, and social pedagogies. Product pedagogies capture pedagogies that prioritize the finished product. Process pedagogies capture those pedagogies that acknowledge aspects of the writing process as central to instruction. Social pedagogies include theories of writing instruction that reflect the importance of social, political, or personal contexts of writing. Each of these categories hold differing specific pedagogies studied by various scholars in the field of writing instruction. Some of the pedagogies may appear in more than one focus, as the interrelationship between some pedagogies can not be simply severed. Table 1 provides

an overview of the pedagogical focuses, individual theories, and the scholars who have offered definitions and explorations of these paradigms.

Table 1

Classifications of Writing Pedagogies

Focus	Pedagogies	Scholars
Product	Current Traditional Rhetoric	Young (1978), Hairston (1982), Hillocks (2002)
Process	Cognitive Process Model	Flower and Hayes (1981)
	Collaborative Pedagogy	Bruffee (1984), Moore-Howard (2001), Kittle (2008), Gallagher (2011), Atwell (2015), Kittle & Gallagher (2018)
	Expressive Pedagogy	Burnham (2001)
	Mentorship Models	Kittle (2008), Gallagher (2011), Atwell (2015), Kittle & Gallagher (2018)
	Rhetorical Pedagogy	Covino (2001)
Social	Collaborative Pedagogy	Bruffee (1984), Moore-Howard (2001), Kittle (2008), Gallagher (2011), Atwell (2015), Kittle & Gallagher (2018)
	Critical Pedagogy	George (2001), Luke (2012)
	Cultural Theory	George and Trimbur (2001)
	Mentorship Models	Kittle (2008), Gallagher (2011), Atwell (2015), Kittle & Gallagher (2018)
	Multiliteracy Theory	The New London Group (1996)

Understanding Product Pedagogy

For decades, the prevailing pedagogical theory was Current Traditional Rhetoric (CTR), a product-based pedagogy which limits the study of language to the memorization and execution of strict rules and conventions (New London Group, 1996). In her essay, “The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing” (1982), Maxine Hairston outlines assumptions that adherents to traditional paradigms, such as Current Traditional Rhetoric, believe justify product pedagogies. They are:

- writing process is linear with clearly established stages (prewriting, writing, and editing)
- competent writers know what they are going to write about in advance of composing
- choosing the form to organize the information is of utmost importance
- teaching editing skills is to teach writing (Hairston, 1982)

This paradigm is neat and tidy—appealing because it is easily defined, and the concepts can be simply taught; merely follow the rules and, over time, you will become an expert writer. The goal of product pedagogies is to create an organized, linear, and efficient means of completing a writing task where writing “proceeds systematically from prewriting to writing to rewriting” (Hairston, p. 115). The focus is entirely on creating the most efficient ways to compose a written product, regardless of contextual sensitivities or rhetorical needs. In my own teaching practice, it was the most straightforward way of approaching writing tasks, however, the result was the production of standardized writing by standardized writers. Product pedagogy looks a lot like highly structured teaching; it includes strategies such as sentence stems, “do this then that” outlines, and strict adherence to the 5-stage writing process. The research suggests that over time, what educators and researchers began to realize was the neat, linear, and product-focused

approach was not preparing students to be real-world writers, to deal with complex rhetorical situations, and to find an authentic voice (Hairston, 1982).

In his 1978 article, Richard Young described the traditional composition paradigm as emphasizing the composed product, limited discourses that focused primarily on usage and style, and a preoccupation with “essay” (p. 31). Traditional paradigms so heavily stress form, particularly expository form, that students’ abilities were limited to a single realm of writing. Table 2 summarizes the core tenets of product pedagogy.

Table 2

Tenets of Product Pedagogy

Pedagogical Theory	Category	Core Tenets	Beliefs about writing	Beliefs about instruction	Goals
Current Traditional Rhetoric	Product	Focus on form and organization Focus on usage and style “Stresses expository writing to the exclusion of all other forms” (Hairston, 1982, p. 115)	Writing is linear and static Writers write in a singular voice for singular contexts Writers know subject matter of writing before composition “It posits an unchanging reality which is independent of the writer and which all writers are expected to describe in the same way regardless of the rhetorical situation” (Hairston, 1982, p. 115)	Focus on the creation of the finished product in terms of style, correctness, and convention ‘It makes style the most important element in writing… and finally they believe that teaching editing is teaching writing” (Hairston, p. 115)	To create an organized, linear, and efficient means of completing a writing task where writing “proceeds systematically from prewriting to writing to rewriting” (Hairston, p. 115)

Current Traditional Rhetoric was a linchpin of writing instruction for decades, and due to its prevalence and relative step-by-step simplicity, has been held on to long beyond advances in writing pedagogy research. In their upcoming article “Monster’s, Inc: Curing Ethical Blindness in an Era of Test-based Accountability”, Slomp and Broad (in press) maintain that “once you have a vast cultural, theoretical, and industrial infrastructure established with one way of seeing and doing things, it is extraordinarily difficult to change those methods (p. 2). Due to the prevalence of standardized exams at the high school level, educators have tried to find ways to help their students achieve well on these high-pressure exam situations. Slomp and Broad argue that is this narrowing of both writing instruction and the focus of student learning to the artificial standards of the test that hinder student achievement in writing (p. 2). Across time, critics have linked CTR approaches to standardized exams and have identified the negative impact such a static approach to writing has on learning to write (Hillocks, 2002; Applebee & Langer, 2011; Slomp, Corrigan, & Sugimoto, 2014) and with the advent of new cognitive, metacognitive, and contextual approaches to writing, there has been gradual resistance to idly accepting CTR as a go-to strategy.

As such, critics of product-focused pedagogy claim that the narrow focus of only the finished product limits writers and does not account for all that is known about the recursive nature of writing. Hairston (1982) claims that current traditional rhetoric “neglects invention almost entirely, and that it makes style the most important element in writing” (p. 115). They are quick to point out the flawed thinking that writing is a linear process, as we know that writing is orchestrated and organized and revised while writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981). The identification of these flaws in a purely product-focused approach is answered by the introduction of a new focus: process pedagogies.

Understanding Process Pedagogies

Through the breakthrough work of Emig (1971) and Flower and Hayes (1981), process pedagogy emerged. Understanding what writers experience during the writing process became a keystone in the teaching of writing, and the central focus of writing pedagogy shifted from teacher as arbitrator of knowledge to coach and facilitator. Hairston (1982) noted that to teach writers to write well we must understand how products came to be and why it assumed the form it did. She states, "We have to do the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than the easy thing, evaluate the tangible product" (p. 121). Process pedagogy is about exactly that, considering the *journey* of the writer not only in our instruction, but our evaluation.

Process pedagogy highlights student-focused writing that gives an opportunity for coaching during the writing process. This involves providing feedback and opportunities to make changes in authentic and varied writing tasks (Tobin, 2001). According to Tobin (2001), successful writing pedagogy "is not so much a matter of teaching students new rules or strategies but of helping them gain access to their "real" or "authentic" voice and perspective that traditional school has taught them to distrust and suppress" (p. 5). He argues that the writing process is messy, organic, and recursive and needs to be taught as such. He continues, suggesting uninspired writing is a sign of an uninspired writing process, which in turn is symptomatic of uninspired pedagogy. The overarching goal of process pedagogy is to shift focus away from the final product and towards the cognitive awareness a writer undertakes during the process of writing. By sharpening the writer's awareness of *procedure*, the writing will improve. Table 3 offers an overview of the core tenets of various process pedagogies.

Table 3

Tenets of Process Pedagogy

Pedagogical Theory	Category	Core Tenets	Beliefs about writing	Beliefs about instruction	Goals
Rhetorical Pedagogy	Process	Consists of encouraging writing that goes beyond acontextual, formulaic expressions of syntax and self-expression, but instead responds to a variety of situations and circumstances (Covino, 2001, p. 37)	Writing is a set of complex rhetorical situations and contexts Requires attention to audience discourse communities “The audience not only judges writing, it also motivates it” (Mitchell & Taylor, 1979, p. 250)	Writers must learn about the interaction between reader and writer Requires coaching and facilitating (Covino, 2001)	To encourage writing that is responsive to the effect context has on meaning (Covino, 2001, p. 48) To encourage writers to understand the interaction between author and reader, and that those circumstances are ever-changing (Covino, 2001, p. 48)
Cognitive Process Model	Process	Stages of writing are concurrent with the writing process “The act of writing	Non-linear Intuitive Hierarchical	The role of the instructor is to guide the process of setting goals, revising goals, and helping students	To encourage writing that is reflexive, flexible to the mental process of the writer

		involves three major elements which are reflected in the three units of the model: the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 369)	arrangement of interconnected processes and sub-processes (Flower & Hayes, 1981)	understand the recursive nature of the mental processes and sub-processes of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981)	as they attend to the rhetorical problem and the needs of the audience (Flower & Hayes, 1981) Metacognitive awareness
Expressive	Process	Rejection of rigid traditional practices Believes primarily in the power of the writer's voice and identity in the social, personal, and public world. (Burnham, 2001)	Writing is imaginative, psychological, social, and spiritual Formation of identity Egocentric-- the writer must be sensed in the writing, "even in research-based writing" (Burnham, 2001, p. 19)	Stresses the importance of developing the writer's authentic voice Free writing as a gateway to building connections to the world. "Employs freewriting, journal keeping, reflective writing, and small-group dialogic collaborative response" (Burnham, 2001, p. 19)	To encourage writing that centred around the writer and their social, imaginative, psychological, and spiritual development (Burnham, 2001, p. 19) To foster the expression of the writer's reality, free from the constraints of traditional pedagogies

Collaborative	Process/ Social	Student focused Highlights the importance of the community relationships embedded in the writing process and the written product (Moore Howard, 2001)	Responsive to needs of audience	Teacher as facilitator and coach Peer to peer collaboration Teacher to student guidance Writing centres "enables community meaning-making that far exceeds what any single individual could accomplish" (Moore Howard, 2001, p. 58)	To solidify learning through conversation and collaboration (Moore-Howard, 2001, p. 54) To provide students "practice in common forms of work-place writing" (Moore-Howard, p. 57) To allow students to "discover things that individually they might not" (Moore-Howard, p. 59)
Mentorship Models	Process/ Social	1. Direct instruction comes from minilessons using deliberately chosen mentor texts to model "real world" writing 2. The teacher must	Writing skills can be modeled Writing and talk exist together because "talk deepens thinking and learning" (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018, p. 15) Real-world writing is	Lessons should be structured to stretch writers by first reading models, second analyzing models, and third emulating models (Gallagher, 2011, p. 226) Teachers should model right moves, not wrong	To model expert-writing for students to emulate (Gallagher, 2011, p. 226) To build student skills through targeted minilessons (Atwell,

		be a mentor for the writing process, not an instructor. They must demonstrate their own writing process as they tackle writing tasks. 3. Essential to student success is the role of collaborative writing during the writing process. This includes conferences with the teacher and other peers to workshop their writing. 4. Students must learn to assume the identity of a writer.	more impactful than traditional genres. Teaching only traditional genres "stunts the creativity and flexibility" (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018, p. 15) that students need after high school Reading and writing are connected and should not be taught independently. (Atwell, 2015).	moves (Gallagher, 2011, p. 234) "A good minilesson is practical, relevant, accessible, and far-reaching. It's a whole-group conversation about writing problems, proven solutions, and productive directions" (Atwell, 2015, p. 101)	2015, p. 101) To blend the experience of reader and writer to encourage writing that takes effective pieces of expert writing and create original text (Atwell, 2015)

Rhetorical Pedagogy

Rhetorical theorists believe that essential to the writing process is negotiating complex rhetorical situations and discourse communities. The researchers Mitchell and Taylor (1979) are quick to point out the importance of considering audience when choosing both the form and tone of one's writing. They claim that "good" writing is about more than just what is perceived by an English teacher but is about what coincides with the values of the audience. They state that "audience not only judges writing, it motivates it" (p. 250), and therefore understanding rhetorical pedagogy is an essential element to guiding the writing process.

Over time, the concept of 'rhetoric' has shifted from its early definition—truth. With the practice of teaching writing as rigid language rules and product-focused, the definition of rhetoric, too, became a rigid concept encompassing anything from manipulation tactics in writing to a study of the "mismatch between constructed and actual experience" (Covino, 2001, p. 47). Modern rhetorical pedagogy, is no longer misunderstood as restricted to expressivist forms or acontextual creations of syntax and grammatical structures, but focuses instead on the skills and contingencies that apply to a variety of situations and circumstances for which a writer may be writing (Covino, 2001). The goal of rhetorical pedagogy is to encourage writing that is responsive to the effect context has on meaning and help writers to understand the interaction and between author and reader. What's more is that those circumstances are constantly undergoing change (Covino, 2001, p. 48), and writers need an arsenal of strategies to attend to those fluctuating contexts. These strategies may include completing a rhetorical analysis of the prompt, the audience or discourse community, and potentially the assessment tool being used to judge the work. It is through strategies like these that the writer is more likely to

understand that rhetorical situation they are presented with, which in turn will allow them to write appropriately for said situation.

Cognitive Process Model

As discussed earlier in this chapter, a 1981 study by Flower and Hayes identified four cognitive tenets that make up writing ability. First, that writing is a process that is orchestrated and organized while writing. Second, the processes of writing are organized hierarchically based on the needs of the writer and may be “called upon at any time and embedded within another process or even within another instance of itself” (p. 375). Thirdly, the process of writing is goal-directed. This means that during composition writers create a network of goals that guide their process. Lastly, Flower and Hayes argue that writers create their own goals by generating supporting sub-goals to meet a purpose and by changing their top-level goals as they learn (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Their study demonstrated that a complex model of cognition that occurs during writing. What is learned is that the writing process, contrary to previous understandings, is non-linear, reflexive, and responsive to the exigency of the writing context (Flower & Hayes, 1981). This model of writing is foundational not only in understanding the complexity of the writing process, but in understanding the other process-focused pedagogies that stem from its roots. Its goal is to encourage writing that is reflexive, flexible to the mental process of the writer as they attend to the rhetorical problem and the needs of the audience (Flower & Hayes, 1981) and increase the practice of metacognitive awareness. The practice of Flower and Hayes work may involve strategies that cue the writer to reflect to help them navigate through the multi-layered recursive process of writing. Asking students to stop and revisit the rhetorical problem they are addressing and

connecting what they have in a partial draft, or engaging in protocol analysis (explaining what they are doing as they are doing it) might be an example of attending to these reflexive demands.

Expressive Pedagogy

Expressive pedagogy is a rejection of rigid, traditional pedagogies that places the focus on the writer's imaginative, psychological, social, and spiritual development through the power of writer's voice (Burnham, 2001). Burnham states it is through development of that voice that a writer creates identity and takes back power in their social, personal, and public world. This pedagogical approach returns responsibility and control of learning back to the students as they learn to develop and harness their own, authentic voice. Expressivists utilize strategies such as free-writing, journal-keeping, reflective writing, collaborative and dialogic group work to foster a writer's abilities. These exercises allow writers to make-meaning out of language towards continued self-development. Britton's (1970) conceptualization (as cited by Burnham, 2001) of the writer in his account of expressivism, stating that there are three roles a writer assumes. First there is that of Participant, or creator of transactional writing. Second, there is that of Spectator, or creator of poetic or artistic writing. Third, there is the Expressive which is the middle ground between the two, allowing for the expression of immediate thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Burnham argues that during the writing process, writers "shuttle back and forth between participant and spectator roles" (p. 27) and the expressivist role is vital in taking those ideas and shaping them into "language that can stand on its own" (p. 27). The ultimate goal of expressivist pedagogy is to place the writer at the centre of the task and allowing them to respond instinctively and personally to a task. Through this, their ideas can develop and then through revisions the writing can be shaped into a rhetorically

appropriate response. In the classroom, you might see expressive pedagogy come through in stream-of consciousness writing, journaling, ranting, free writing, or other forms of unadulterated personal response.

Critics of expressivist pedagogy deride it as “arhetorical, atheoretical, anti-intellectual, and elitist” (Burnham, 2001, p. 20), or that it is standard-less and relativistic (Burnham, 2001). It is true that expressive pedagogy demands the attention on the writer’s unpolished thoughts and ideas, but the egocentricity of expressivism is also argued to be the key to its success. The strength of the pedagogy lies in the belief that all concerns should originate in personal experience and be written in the student’s own voice. It claims that the presence of the writer should be sensed in writing, and without expressing it, one will not understand how to include it explicitly, implicitly, or not at all (Burnham, 2001).

Collaborative Pedagogy

Collaborative pedagogy can occur in several ways, and Moore Howard (2001) discusses the importance of peer to peer, and teacher to student collaborative practices. The goal of collaboration in the writing classroom is to solidify learning through conversation and collaboration (Moore-Howard, 2001, p. 54), and to provide students “practice in common forms of work-place writing” (p. 57). She maintains that collaborative work in the writing classroom allows for students to engage deeply with a text and does so in a context that fulfills the role of writing and communication in a community. Moore Howard also references the work of Bruffee (1984) who articulated three principles of collaborative learning that have become a part of composition studies canon. First, that thought is just internalized conversation, so thought and conversation work in the same way. Second, that if thought is internalized talk, then writing is also

internalized talk made public. And third, to learn is to work collaboratively by establishing and maintaining knowledge among a community of like-minded learners (Bruffee, 1984). This makes collaborative communities essential in the writing classroom as writing is a collaborative process between reader and writer. Thus, it is the teacher's role to familiarize students with the expectations of the communities they are working with, knowingly and unknowingly.

For collaborative groups to function properly, the teacher must remove themselves from the centre and facilitate communication between the peers. Instead of peers assuming the teacherly role, the only job of the peers is to serve as readers to "give the writer a heightened sense of audience" (Moore Howard, 2001, p. 60). Firstly, the writer should read their piece aloud. This allows their peers to listen as an audience, not judge as a critic. Thus, a dialogue can be sparked about how the reading made them feel as they received it, not whether it was "good" or "bad" (Moore Howard, p. 60). This gives power to the writer as they test their writing on an audience and adjust their rhetorical moves to what worked and removing what did not. In this case, the teacher and peers are then able to coach the students on how to "change their writing process with regard to specific rhetorical and/or mechanical issues" (Hobson, 2001, p. 166).

Per Hobson's 2001 article, "Writing Centre Pedagogy", a form of collaborative pedagogy, relies on a flexible learning environment that includes goal setting, active listening, guided response, and summary of learning. Most importantly, it is non-evaluative. The model blends with rhetorical theory by asking students to reflect on how their writing accommodates an audience, how their writing affects the reader, and how their purpose is executed in their writing (Mitchell & Taylor, 1979). By creating a space

for feedback and communication, the currency is no longer on the grade to be attained by the final product, but the knowledge learned through reflecting on the writing process.

Mentorship Models

More recent pedagogical approaches to writing instruction have included the adoption of mentor texts and workshop models as a reframe of the writing classroom. Practitioner-researchers such as Nancie Atwell, Kelly Gallagher, and Penny Kittle have been on the forefront of reimagining writing instruction to include aspects of process and social theories such as collaboration, self expression, and attention to social and rhetorical purpose. These practices, which I shall refer to as "mentorship models" of writing, approach writing as a learned practice where the young writers are mentored by exploring the texts of real world authors and the process of the most experienced writer they know—their teacher. It is through this process of mentoring students that they assume the identity of writer themselves, practicing and even playing with different styles, genres, forms, and techniques as they see them in "real-world" texts. The goal is to produce writing that is modeled in style, techniques, or form after a mentor-writer (either a teacher or an author). The teacher works along side students by coming "out from behind the curtain" (Gallagher, 2011, p. 225) to model what good writers do through minilessons (Atwell, 2015), conferences, and workshops (Atwell, 2015; Gallagher, 2011; Kittle, 2008).

The core beliefs of mentorship model thinkers appear to fall into four general categories from which classroom decisions are made. The first highlights the importance of authentic modeling of real-world texts (Gallagher, 2011). This requires teachers to scour the literary canon for examples of common and applicable forms and genres of writing to teach both form and technique. In *Write Like This: Preparing Students for*

Writing in the Real World (2011), Gallagher notes the importance of choosing mentor texts that have real-world applications, stating "If I want my students to work towards becoming real-world writers, I need to shift the focus of my writing instruction toward real-world writing purposes" (p. 9). Teaching students not only how to write, the varied purposes and discourses of writing engages students in thinking like writers and making choices like writers. Gallagher notes, "It is critical that my students be able to move beyond simply telling me what a text says; I want them to begin to recognize *how* the text is constructed" (p. 20) and this all stems from the selection of appropriate mentor texts from which to explore purpose, style, technique and form.

In her 2002 teacher resource guide for mentor text mini lessons, Nancie Atwell explains that in order for students to understand the elements of mature writing and produce their own literature, students—no matter how immature their writing skills upon entering the writing classroom—need to understand certain literary qualities (p. XIII). It is through minilessons using mentor texts to highlight various qualities of writing that students see the example in its finished state, and it is an essential part to the writing workshop classroom (Atwell, 2015). This is the role of effective mentor texts; texts that have been chosen by the teacher as exemplary and applicable to the students' own writing practice.

Second, mentorship model highly values teacher-as-writer. The 2008 book *Write Beside Them* by Penny Kittle is one of many mentorship model texts that highlights the necessity of the teacher as a model for the writing process. In it, Kittle notes that "all of those authors of books in my room were great models of *product*, but not *process*" (p. 9), and it is the process that students need to learn if they are going to become fluent writers. A lesson where the teacher is the mentor might look like this: The teacher delivers a mini

lesson on a specific quality or technique of writing using a mentor text. Then, once students have seen what the product looks like, the teacher demonstrates in live-time their attempt at recreating that quality or technique in their own writing. Atwell, in her 2015 edition of *In the Middle: A Lifetime of Learning about Writing* maintains, “The point is for young writers to see how someone event slightly more experienced thinks on paper, changes his or her mind, considers what he or she understands about good writing, and pushes for voice and meaning” (p. 108). In this scenario, teachers write in front of students to model how one engages with words, ideas, and the recursive process of writing to problem solve their way through a task (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018). It is through watching the teacher engage with the writing process that students can mirror their own practice, not only in product but in process, which according to Kittle (2008) is where the instruction is most powerful. If students cannot see how a writer navigates the complexity of the writing process and instruction is only focused on the finished product or the polishing of drafts to achieve a certain product, nothing in the students’ skills change (Kittle, 2008). The power of the teacher mentor can be summed up from Gallagher’s (2011) belief:

> “When my students see me wrestling with decisions as my writing unfolds, it gives them insight on how to compose their own pieces. I don’t tell them how to draft their papers; I show them how I draft my papers. I am the best writer in the room, and as such, I need to show them how I grapple with this mysterious thing we call writing” (p. 15).

The idea that Gallagher advocates for here is sort of a writing process compass—by showing students what an expert writer does it will help students stay on track in their own writing, not to outline their writing for them.

The third tenet of the mentorship model is a belief in conferencing, workshopping, and collaboration as a vital aspect of the writing classroom. In the collaborative work

between Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle entitled *180 Days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Empower Students* (2018), the authors reflect on the power of talk in deepening thinking and learning (p. 16). It is through sitting down with a student in a workshop-based conference setting that a teacher can instruct based on individual student needs and skill gaps. Gallagher and Kittle contend that student conferences should be had with four goals in mind:

1. Students will develop confidence in generating ideas for writing
2. Students will use the writing process to help develop their ideas
3. Students will develop independence by making decisions about what to do next
4. Students will see texts as mentors of writing craft. (p. 94)

Successful conferences hinge on the teacher's ability to guide the student to explain and explore their choices as writers and then make their own choices as a writer based on the discussion as it unfolds. It is this one-on-one collaboration that holds power, as Hairston (1982) discusses, teachers must act as a coach, not as the arbitrator of knowledge, and without time to confer with them teachers can "understand *how* that product came into being, and *why* it assumed the form that it did" (p. 121). It is the third piece of the mentoring relationship—to talk to students about their choices as writers.

The final core tenet of mentorship models is a student's ability to assume the identity of "writer". This, according to Atwell (2015), Gallagher (2011), and Kittle (2008), is imperative in their writing development. Gallagher and Kittle (2018) write "We want our students to live as writers. Writing creates an opportunity to understand life better and to navigate its challenges and opportunities. Writing is for life, not just for school" (p. 14). By allowing students to put on the cloak of a writer and treating them as though their work is "real" and valuable, teachers shift the power from themselves as "arbitrators of knowledge" (Hairston, 1982) to the students thus creating autonomous

writers who can own their writing choices in active ways. Part of this mission is to allow students to write in ways that are significant and impactful to them. Gallagher and Kittle (2018) note that “Students are too often denied the opportunity to write from their own experiences, a paradox since writing what is personally meaningful is where writers invest the most” (p. 15) and “When young writers are required to repeatedly write the same essays as their peers, their unique writing identities do not emerge” (p. 15). As noted by socio-cultural theorists, the connection between writer, task, and world is an imperative that cannot be ignored if we are to have a comprehensive understanding of language. Ivanic (2004) contends that what is happening in the minds of the producers of language is vital in understanding the purpose and execution of writing, including writing as a social practice.

Through these four tenets, mentorship models of writing instruction blend pedagogies including collaborative, rhetorical, and expressive to teach students to create writing products by attending to the process of real-world writers and the identity writers must assume to get there.

Understanding Social Pedagogies

One would be hard-pressed to find a modern process theorist who wouldn’t agree that writing serves a greater purpose in our world than utility. Social theorists, including critical, cultural, collaborative, and multiliteracy theorists, believe that writing is a function of the relationship we occupy with our social realities. The goal of such theories is to keep social contexts as the central consideration when instructing writing. To teach writing, one must adapt and accept the social contexts and individual languages of students and incorporate them into their writing lives. The following table (Table 4) again highlights the nuances between various social pedagogies. It is important to note that

social pedagogies live in a context of subversion—a place where power is redistributed to the writer—and as such, the possibilities of lenses for social theories are virtually limitless. Any marginalized person or group will have its own lens from which to democratize writing. From feminist theory to queer theory and other cultural writing theories, Table 4 is by no means and exhaustive list of social writing pedagogies but a selection of distinct themes.

Table 4

Tenets of Social Pedagogy

Pedagogical Theory	Category	Core Tenets	Beliefs about writing	Beliefs about instruction	Goals
Collaborative	Process/ Social	Student focused Highlights the importance of the community relationships embedded in the writing process and the written product (Moore Howard, 2001)	Responsive to needs of audience	Teacher as facilitator and coach Peer to peer collaboration Teacher to student guidance "Students can teach each other; more important, together they can discover things that individually they might not" (Moore Howard, 2001, p. 59)	To solidify learning through conversation and collaboration (Moore-Howard, 2001, p. 54) To provide students "practice in common forms of work-place writing" (Moore-Howard, p. 57) To allow students to "discover things that individually they might not" (Moore-Howard, p. 59) To teach students the role of the audience as a listener and responder, not as a critic, to learn for their own writing and the benefit of their peers. (Moore-Howard, 2001, p. 60)

Critical Theory	Social	A political, ideological, and cultural exploration of text. Exploration of power dynamics within text creation (George, 2001) "Refers to use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rules systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life" (Luke, 2012, p. 5)	Primary focus of writing about material realities. Writing is goal and problem oriented. "Reading the word, then, entails "reading the world" (Luke, 2012, p. 5)	Education for citizenship Teachers aim to develop student's critical consciousness, or "the ability to define, to analyze, to problematize the economic, political, and cultural forces that shape but do not completely determine their lives" (George, 2001, p. 93) Teaching students the analysis of a range of texts and attending to "lexico-grammatical structure, ideological contents, and the identifiable conditions of production and use" (Luke, 2012, p. 8)	To develop the "critical consciousness" (George, 2001, p. 93) of students so they can understand the forces that shape their lives To connect students to the forces at play in the world and develop language they can use to respond to, and exert power over, those forces (George, 2011, p. 103) Diversity in representation and voices (Luke, 2012)

Multiliteracy Theory	Social	Sensitive to the social outcomes of language learning. A reflection of the changing social contexts as well including media and varying modes of communication globally	Meaning-making is a dynamic process, not one governed by static rules. (New London Group, 1996) "When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles, and approaches, they gain substantively in meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic abilities, and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions" (New London Group, 1996, p. 69)	Instruction should be framed as situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice (New London Group, 1996, p. 89)	To encourage writing that is dynamic and representative of regional, ethnic, or class-based dialects or other social and cross-cultural discourses (New London Group, 1996, p. 69) To embrace the subjectivities of language based on social context and create text that represents them To embrace different modes of meaning such as linguistic, audio, spatial, visual, and gestural design of text.
Cultural Theory	Social	Understanding of writing and literature as inclusivist and considerate of social and cultural contexts (George & Trimbur, 2001) Allows students to contribute to the discourse of their	Writing reflects social realities Writers bear individual languages Allows for diverse voices (George & Trimbur, 2001)	Importance on related text and literature to the writer's lives Use of pop culture and media as instructional tools (George & Trimbur, 2001, p. 81)	Encouraging writing that embraces and reflects the cultural (ethnic, pop-culture, social etc.) world (George & Trimbur, 2001) Encourage writing that fits into the public discourse or the cultural

		world Embraces the evolution of language over time and space “An effective theory for writing instruction, therefore, must recognize, involve, and engage the students’ individual and cultural differences, thereby allowing them to muster the resources at their disposal as they negotiate a writing task” (McKoski, 1995, p. 9)			reality. (George & Trimbur, 2001, p. 86)
Mentorship Models	Process/Social	Assuming the identity of “writer” is essential for student growth and development in writing (Kittle, 2008)	If students do not see themselves as writers, they will never emerge as writers. “We want our students to live as writers. Writing creates an opportunity to understand life better and to navigate its challenges and opportunities”	Teachers mustn’t focus only on the writing task, but on the approaches students can take to access and connect to the writing task. “Students are too often denied the opportunity to write	To model expert-writing for students to emulate (Gallagher, 2011, p. 226) To allow students the space to write from their own experiences and what is meaningful to them (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018, p. 15)

			(Gallagher & Kittle, 2018, p. 14) "When young writers are required to repeatedly write the same essays as their peers, their unique writing identities do not emerge" (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018, p. 15)	from their own experiences, a paradox since writing what is personally meaningful is where writers invest the most" (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018, p. 15)	To build student skills through targeted minilessons (Atwell, 2015, p. 101) To blend the experience of reader and writer to encourage writing that takes effective pieces of expert writing and create original text (Atwell, 2015)

Critical Theory

Critical theory asks writers and writing instructors to using writing as a means to critically understand the social world around us. According to Luke (2012), this practice allows for subversion of classical visions of literacy and makes room for diverse voices to be represented and explored. In a classroom, this might mean teaching students dialectical differences between regions and time periods, and then exploring the nature of the differences between language and what that might reveal about a person or the world. It asks students to connect with their own languages and the languages of those around them to represent truth. In "Critical Pedagogy: Dreaming of Democracy" (2001), Ann George states that student writing is bound to improve if they can connect language use to their private lives. The goal of critical theory is to connect students to the forces at play in the world and develop language they can use to respond to, and exert power over, those forces (George, 2011, p. 103). Through encouraging critical studies, including studies of disadvantaged, marginalized, or underrepresented groups, students engage in writing that requires them to select their rhetorical strategies precisely, as well as express their views and lives honestly in text. Luke (2012) sees this as essential in creating text that represents the diversity of voices our world holds.

Multiliteracy Theory

Multiliteracy theory centres around the idea that language does not conform to a single set of conventions, but the conventions are dictated by the social context of the language. In order to excel in writing, writers need meta-linguistic skills, or multiliteracy skills, that understand that evolving of language and the context-sensitive nature of it. The New London Group (1996) highlights the need to embrace the globalized world of

cultures and communications and that “to be relevant, learning processes need to recruit, rather than attempt to ignore and erase, the different *subjectivities*” (p. 72) students bring to learning. They maintain students gain a wealth of meta-linguistic abilities and can learn to navigate a wealth of unfamiliar written and social contexts by exposure to the subjectivities of the social and technological world. A goal of embracing multi-literacy theory is to create writers who understand more than the lens of their time and place and can slip in and out of many literacies, languages, and contexts. In the classroom, this involves high exposure to global literature and cultures. Instead of measuring dialect against our own “regional correctness”, students are encouraged to hear and see the reason and beauty of socially constructed text. Additionally, encourages teachers to embrace the multiplicity of media forms such as the “visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioural and so on” (p. 64) to create a multi-modal version of literacy in the classroom. This might mean exploring aspects of text including vocabulary and metaphor, the information structure, music and sound effects, geographic meanings, colours and perspective, physical gestures, as well as the feelings and affect of a text (p. 83). It is the acknowledgment of all communication that transpires in our social world.

Cultural Theory

Cultural theory is another branch on the social-context tree. It shares similarities with Critical and Multiliteracy theory, but its goal differs in that it seeks for students to not only understand the impact that others’ cultures have on created texts, but to create texts that also reflect their own cultural realities (George & Trimbur, 2001). Experts of cultural and social studies advocate that cultural considerations are essential in the composition classroom because it gives readers opportunity to relate text and literature to their own lives. Classroom practice can reflect these sensitivities, George and Trimbur

(2001) express, by integrating popular culture and media allowing students to write on a topic that is close to them. Doing so, students can contribute their voices to the "rhetoric of public discourse" (p. 86) which allows students to be active contributors in their world.

A Note about Collaborative and Mentorship Models

Table 4 includes two other pedagogical models under social pedagogies: Collaborative and Mentorship Models. There is overlap here as these pedagogical approaches also appear as a process pedagogy. The nature of these pedagogies is such that they attend to both aspects—the writer's process and the contextual situations of the writing task. In Collaborative Theory, the writer learns to create text that is responsive to the reader's experience. This is a social influence—the writer adjusts based on expectations and pressures of the audience— not solely a process-based one, so for that reason it also belongs in the social pedagogy category. The same goes for Mentorship Models which advocate for the voicing of student experiences and interests. There is the belief that a writing task must be socially and personally meaningful to students and "students are too often denied the opportunity to write from their own experiences, a paradox since writing what is personally meaningful is where writers invest the most" (Gallagher & Kittle, 2018, p. 15). These fine details among these two pedagogies allow them to exist in between process and social, embracing aspects from both types.

This pedagogical knowledge is a lot to digest and may be overwhelming for classroom teacher to take in all at once and envision what they look like in their own practice. As such, Table 5 offers a synthesis of various strategies a teacher can employ to incorporate various writing pedagogies into their practice.

Table 5

Teaching Strategies for Pedagogical Connection

	Pedagogy	Moves and Strategies
Product Pedagogies	Current Traditional Rhetoric	Sentence stems, "do this then that" outlines, inflexible graphic organizers, strict adherence to the 5-stage writing process
Process Pedagogies	Rhetorical	Rhetorical analyses of prompt, audience, discourse community, social context variables, and/or assessment tool
	Cognitive Process Model	Prompting questions about the rhetorical problem, their work in a partial draft, defending choices in relation to the task, or talking through what they are doing as they are doing it
	Expressive	Stream-of-consciousness writing, journaling, free-writing, ranting, formless personal response
Process/Social Pedagogies	Collaborative	Sharing of work with other students Students serve as readers only, not critics Small-group draft sharing Discussion with peers and/or teacher about a draft or partial draft One-on-one conferencing between students and/or teacher
	Mentorship	Conferences Writing Workshops Teacher guided modeling Mentor Texts
Social Pedagogies	Critical	Exploring regional dialects Exploring the forces that shape language development Analysing own use of language and writing in new voices
	Multiliteracy	Global literature and writing tasks Exploration of merits of various modalities of literacy including linguistic, audio, spatial, visual, and gestural aspects of text creation
	Cultural	Integration of popular culture Integration of media Contribution of student voices to larger public forums

Constructing an Educational Model

Now that a base of knowledge had been established, the next phase to answer my research questions involved synthesizing that information into a conceptual model that reflects teacher practice. As it is not realistic to expect all practicing teachers to be familiar with the wealth of writing theories that exist, the goal now becomes discovering what it is that teachers do in their classes and compare those real-world practices to the model of pedagogical understandings. As such, I have created a conceptual model rooted in the academia of writing instruction that includes five pedagogical domains that, according to the literature, are important in in informing writing instruction. The term "pedagogical understanding" refers to the various aspects of writing pedagogy that, when utilized, lead to effective writing instruction. They are:

- *Metacognitive Process Knowledge* which focuses on the importance of the reflexive during the writing process (Mitchell & Taylor, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hairston, 1982; Slomp, 2012: Atwell, 2015)
- *Writing Theory Knowledge* which focuses on the specific pedagogical awareness that teachers apply to their instruction
- *Collaborative Process Knowledge* which focuses on effective collaboration in the writing classroom (New London Group, 1996; Moore Howard, 2004; Atwell, 2015)
- *Contextual Factors of Writing Knowledge* which focuses on the context in which a writing task is assigned, written, and received (Taylor & Mitchell, 1979; McKoski, 1995; Slomp, 2012),

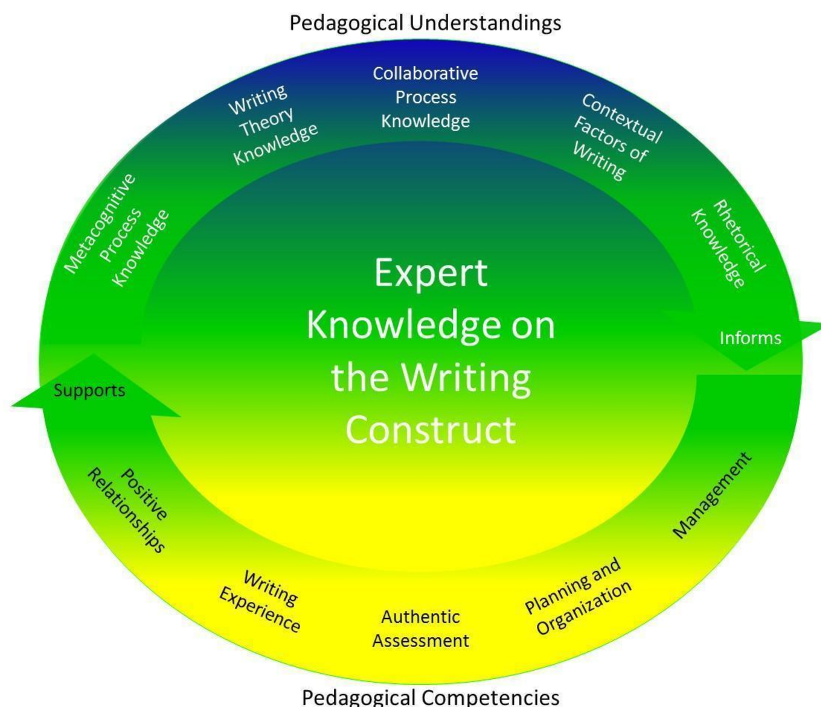
- *Rhetorical Knowledge* which focuses on the specific writing "moves" a teacher must instruct for students to fulfill the writing task, primarily in relation to the genre, audience, and purpose (Salibrici, 1999; Covino, 2001).

My goal in creating this construct (see Figure 2) was not to merely summarize various pedagogies and make value statements on which are "more or less important" than others (for example, mentorship models vs. rhetorical vs. socio-cultural etc.), but to synthesize the commonalities found in the literature among the dominant pedagogies into central pillars for teachers to be familiar with and utilize in their practice. This model, then, may become useful for teachers to selects various elements of different pedagogies and use them to achieve specific lesson goals.

It was through mapping common features among the various pedagogies that my five pedagogical understandings were born.

Figure 2

Model of Writing Pedagogies



The Pedagogical Understandings

Metacognitive Process Knowledge

Metacognition is a hallmark feature of the writing process (Atwell, 1998; Flower and Hayes, 1981; Hairston, 1982; Mitchell & Taylor, 1979; Slomp, 2012). Mature writers constantly ask themselves questions about their writing goals, their purpose, the discourse community, and language choices. Metacognition is a process that is undertaken at every step of a writing task and educators must have the knowledge of how to best integrate metacognitive practice into their instruction if students are to develop the ability to evaluate their writing and their processes. Without metacognitive practice, writers will not learn the important role their thinking plays in the writing process. They must learn to consider all facets of writing as a point of reflection, particularly in matters of audience and purpose. Taylor and Mitchell (1979) indicate that “audience not only judges writing, it also motivates it” (p. 250), and as such, for a writer to mature, their metacognitive capacity must develop to adapt to the complexities of the audience-authorial relationship.

Writing Theory Knowledge

The expanse of writing pedagogies is vast. However, it is arguable whether teaching practitioners are formally familiar with many, or any, of them. While being able to learn all writing pedagogies is about as difficult as being able to practice them all in a classroom, knowledge of the varied lenses from which writing can be viewed is an important part of choosing writing tasks, and instruction on how to complete them. Whether the pedagogical lens is one of multiliteracies—a reflection of the changing social contexts, media, and varying modes of communication (The New London Group, 1996), a student-centered process approach in which students receive feedback and opportunities

in real and varied writing tasks (Tobin, 2001), or centred around the self (Burnham, 2001) teachers must have a sense of *what* they are doing, *why* they are doing it, *what options* they have to teach, and the *validity* of those choices. This is not to say that teachers must know *all* writing pedagogy, but their awareness of varying writing pedagogy will enrich the teaching and learning experience.

Collaborative Process Knowledge

For some educators, the idea of collaborative writing tasks, peer review, and conferencing sessions may seem overwhelming at best. The truth is that writing, especially in current times of technological exchange, is a social and collaborative process (New London Group, 1996). Collaborative learning and writing are a valuable part of teaching as both of those things allow for students to engage deeply with a text and in a social context that fulfills the role of writing and communication in a community (Moore Howard, 2004). Over the past several decades, collaboration in the writing classroom has evolved, but it may not be quite what practitioners initially think. When imagining a room of collaboration, one may worry about poor feedback, students who ride on the coat tails of their classmates, and a potential management nightmare. Upon doing a deep dive into the research on the collaborative process, key features are revealed that may differ from current practice. For example, collaboration is not about having students assess one another, instead, "group members respond to a paper by describing how it makes them feel" (Moore Howard, p. 60)—they respond as readers, not as teachers. Atwell (1998) reinforces this approach by allowing her students to "partner up with another writer—if possible, someone who knows them—and read aloud what they have so far. The goals are for a friend to hear what may be missing from a writer's list and for writers to be inspired by the ideas their friends have captured" (128).

Collaborative process has the potential to be effective, or ineffective, depending on implementation. A teacher's knowledge of the correct approaches will define how much or how little students get out of the opportunity to participate in a community of writers.

Contextual Factors of Writing

Writing is situational; at any given time, we may be writing for a new audience, in a new form, or identifying ourselves in a new way. Often, writing is taught only within humanities courses (particularly English class), and the audience is almost always the same – the teacher. When considering the realities of writing in the real world, teachers must understand the contextual sensitivities writing tasks demand. The writing output students provide will look, sound, and be composed differently depending on the context it is situated in. Taylor and Mitchell (1979) argue for the importance of understanding the frames of discourse in writing instruction, saying "basic writing students lack the appropriate discourse frames and the associated information about how to use them. Lacking the appropriate frames, they cannot respond to certain kinds of discourse situations" (p. 263).

Outside of the discourse itself is the students' own bio-ecological and cultural differences at the heart of writing production. Each student comes to the writing desk with a different set of experiences, knowledge, and attitudes towards a writing task. McKoski (1995) argues effective writing instruction "must recognize, involve, and engage students' individual and cultural differences" (p. 9) which will allow them to utilize the resources at their disposal while grappling with a writing task. In addition to these varying contexts for writing also may lie the heart of skill transfer from task to task. Without writing for varying contexts, it is not possible to accurately assess whether students are able to transfer their writing skills to demonstrate competency in writing

(Slomp, 2012). There is much to be considered in the contextual situation of writing, and teachers of writing must be sensitive to these dynamic and impactful factors.

Rhetorical Knowledge

Related closely to contextual factors of writing is rhetorical knowledge. The concept of rhetoric has, over time, shifted its meaning from truth, to manipulation, to construction of experience and expression (Covino, 2004). Teachers must have knowledge over the appropriate rhetorical moves to make, in varied writing contexts, if they are to guide their students to learn to adapt to these contexts. Salibrici (1999) asserts that "reading and writing activities constructed around a students' ability to become, over time, rhetorically aware of the complexity of language will ultimately lead to greater critical thinking… and thus, greater critical reading and writing skills" (p. 629). These contextual and metacognitive questions are at the heart of audience response, effective communication, and purpose in writing tasks. Covino (2004) articulates "The dynamism of rhetoric is apparent in models that take into account the effect of context on meaning, and acknowledge that the interaction of author and read always occurs in specific circumstances, and that those circumstances are constantly undergoing change" (p. 48). Teachers are the facilitator to understanding these rhetorical strategies, and their rhetorical knowledge rounds out the domains of pedagogical understandings to complement metacognition and context of writing.

For clarity, Table 6 demonstrates the alignment between the literature referred to earlier in this chapter about writing pedagogies and the pedagogical understandings present in my construct model. The checkboxes indicate where there is overlap between the beliefs of a particular pedagogy and the pedagogical understanding I have identified.

Table 6

Alignment of Writing Pedagogies with Construct Pedagogical Understandings

		Metacog-nitive Process Know-ledge	Collabor-ative Knowledge	Writing Theory Knowledge	Contextual Factors	Rhetorical Knowledge
Product Pedagogies	Current Traditional Rhetoric			✓		✓
Process Pedagogies	Rhetorical	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Cognitive Process Model	✓		✓		
	Expressivist			✓	✓	
	Collaborative		✓	✓	✓	
	Mentorship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Pedagogies	Collaborative		✓	✓	✓	
	Critical	✓		✓	✓	
	Multiliteracy	✓		✓	✓	
	Cultural			✓	✓	✓
	Mentorship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Pedagogical Competencies

In addition to the five pedagogical understandings, the bottom half of the construct includes five pedagogical competencies to which teachers must attend to effectively teach writing. While not the central focus of my research, these competencies were also referenced by numerous scholars as essential to the organization, delivery, and environment of a writing classroom. The pedagogical competencies identified are: management (Smit, 2004), planning and organization (Atwell, 1998), authentic assessment (Hairston, 1982; Hobson, 2001; Mutnick, 2001), writing experience (Atwell, 1998; Smit, 2004), and positive relationships (Atwell, 1998; Hobson, 2001; Moore Howard, 2001).

Despite being bracketed out of the study to ensure a focus on my research questions, I suggest that these two aspects, understandings and competencies, interact with one another to impact delivery of instruction. Knowledge of the five pedagogical understandings informs choices in the pedagogical competencies (for example, how a teacher might change the management their classroom on a day where they are doing collaborative writing) and these competencies support continued learning and practice of the pedagogical understandings (for example, the more successful the lesson goes, the more likely a teacher is to ritualize that approach). At the centre of the construct, much like a bullseye on a target, is teacher awareness of writing ability as a metacognitive, contextual, process (Behizadeh & Englehard, 2011; Gee, 1989; Ivanic, 2004; Luke, 2012; McKoski, 1995; Slomp, 2012).

Management

Solid classroom practice involves sound management practices, made up of techniques a teacher uses to ensure their lessons are controlled, organized, and as disruption-free as possible. Management in the writing classroom involves the creation and monitoring of appropriate collaborative groups and idea Smit (2004) regards as “a knowledge of how to teach groups and especially how to organize or conduct classes in a way that deal with issues of gender, power, and class” (p. 176). Managing the writing classroom is a competency as important to productivity as any other.

Planning and Organization

Any seasoned teacher understands the importance of planning and organizing for instruction; this is no different in the writing classroom. Pre-attending to issues of instructional strategies regarding the domains of writing ability, as well as planning for

how you'll model your own process, encourage collaboration, and attend to the metacognitive aspects of writing (Atwell, 1998), are all essential in effective instruction.

Authentic Assessment

Deborah Mutnick (2001) asserts one of the many aspects vital to writing instruction: authentic assessment. She reminds the reader of the importance of incorporation of writing studios and portfolio work to demonstrate learning over time. Hobson (2001) echoes these sentiments by stating that writing tasks should be flexible and non-evaluative, and therefore come from a place of authentic learning and not grading. Finally, Hairston (1982) advocates for allowing for students to engage in authentic learning tasks that emphasize engaging with the writing process, stating "We cannot teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. We must also understand *how* that product came into being, and *why* it is assumed the form that it did" (p. 121).

Writing Experience

At the heart of the writing teacher should be knowledge of how to write. A teacher's own writing experiences directly shape the versatility of their approach and instruction to various writing tasks. Atwell (1998) recommends showcasing one's own experiences as a writer within the classroom, showing students how to plan, change the mindset, confront problems, weigh options, make decisions and use convention to make her own writing look and sound the way she wants. (p. 25). Without solid experiences as a writer, this would be difficult at best. Smit (2004) reiterates the importance of teacher as writer stating:

> The model here is of teacher-practitioners, who know how to write particular kinds of discourse themselves, are self-consciously reflective and insightful about their own writing and how that writing participates in the workings of the larger

> discourse community, and are capable of sharing their knowledge and insights with others (p. 167).

It is clear that teacher-as-writer is a significant competency for the writing teacher.

Positive Relationships

Lastly, the vulnerability of the writing classroom demands the presence of positive relationships between writer and audience (in many cases, student and teacher, but in terms of collaboration, student-to-student relationships). Rebecca Moore Howard (2001) sees collaboration at the heart of writing as “students who work together retain more” (p. 54), however this working together must come from a place of mutual respect and community. These communities require careful construction through guidelines including a willingness to have students read their work aloud. This allows students to “more readily assume audience roles and can better focus on their responses rather than their judgments” (p. 60). Hobson (2001) likewise encourages the use of writing tutor centres, to allow writer and audience to “play the role of an engaged and supportive, yet simultaneously critical audience for texts in development” (p. 166). Clearly, the creation of supportive and positive relationships within the classroom is a key to productive collaborative time.

Construct Underrepresentation

Because my study’s focus is on one teacher’s pedagogical understandings, elements that are being underrepresented are the importance of pedagogical competencies. In fact, my suspicion is there are likely more competencies than I have listed, and more research is needed to conclusively substantiate their importance.

Additionally, to dive into the specifics of the interaction between pedagogical understandings and competencies is also not elaborated on. To know that they interact is

important, but how they inform and support one another is also underrepresented in this construct.

Setting Up the Study

The consolidation of all the pedagogical information and the transformation of it into a construct model that is useful in a classroom has set up the basis for my field research. The study explores the presence the pedagogical understandings as they present themselves in real-world writing instruction. The aim is to answer the questions:

1. What pedagogical understandings are embedded in the practice of writing instruction of a high school English Language Arts teacher?
2. How do key pedagogical understandings guide the writing instruction of a high school English Language Arts teacher?

By observing a teacher over the course of a full semester and looking for emergent pedagogical themes in the same way I sought pedagogical themes among the literature, I can begin to formulate an understanding of how pedagogy informs writing instruction and/or where gaps may exist in teacher knowledge and practice.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Research

The practice of educational research is steeped in controversy over paradigmatic, theoretical, and methodological approaches that will best uncover the answer to important questions. While each belief may assert itself as the ultimate in unveiling "truth", not all approaches are of equal validity in every case. My choice of qualitative research was embedded in the need to gain a deep understanding of teacher practice and how instructional choices are guided by pedagogy. This requires the use of multiple inquiry methods, many of which cannot be quantitatively measured. The benefit of qualitative research is that it does not privilege one method over another (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) due to the accepted fact that "inquiry methodology can no longer be treated as a set of universally applicable rules or abstractions" (p. 97). My use of varied methods of data collection including observation notes, photographs, short and long interviews, artifact collection, and detailed note taking allowed for better triangulation of results which not only created a richer understanding of pedagogy in practice, but a deep understanding of the contextual influences that impact instructional decisions.

I acknowledge there are challenges in choosing qualitative research such as authenticity and validity, but feel those challenges are outweighed by its nature of confronting the changing world and allowing for the formation of new intellectual positions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Through case selection, allowing for participant voice, and multi-modal data collection, I retained the validity of the results, despite the subjective nature of the study.

Theoretical Framework: Case Study

Case study is a widely defined and applied choice of qualitative research. In its most basic description, it is the exploration of a case, or potentially in my situation, a

collection of cases, phenomenon within those cases, population, or general condition (Stake, 2005). Stake articulates that collective, or multiple, case studies "are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (p. 446). Ultimately, the results my research, while not conclusively generalizable, reveal more information and further theorizing about teachers and their teaching.

There are many advantages and disadvantages in the pursuit of case study as a methodology. Flyvbjerg (2011) outlines some common misconceptions about case study work in the field of qualitative research. He highlights the strengths and weaknesses that case study presents, including among the strengths "depth, high conceptual validity, understanding of context and process, understanding of what causes a phenomenon, linking causes and outcomes, fostering new hypotheses and new research questions" (p. 314). In relation to my own study, these strengths lend themselves well to my work, particularly the depth and conceptual validity case study allows. Through developing a working construct for writing pedagogy and comparing it against writing instruction in practice, I was able to come to a greater understanding of my subject's teaching practices and where they take root.

The case I selected was the writing pedagogy of a single teacher across her teaching of two different English Language Arts courses. Initially, I considered investigating multiple classrooms, but upon further reflection into demands of the depth needed to create a robust picture of instruction, I chose to deep-dive into one teacher's practice. This creates problems when it comes to generalizability of results. Case study, by nature, does not lend itself to generalizing to a larger population (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Because it is so context specific, what can be learned from the study applies to one case

and opens up questions for further inquiry into other cases. It is not my intention to generalize a wide-sweeping claim as to what all teachers know and perform when it comes to writing pedagogy based on my observations of this single case. As Flyvbjerg (2011) states, “knowledge may be transferable, even where it is not formally generalizable” (p. 305), and it was, though, by exploration of a this one case that new questions for inquiry arose, and a greater understanding of teaching in that case may be understood.

Other cited weaknesses that Flyvbjerg (2011) presents include “selection bias may overstate or understate relationships, weak understanding of occurrence in population of phenomena under study, statistical significance often unknown or unclear” (p. 314). In conducting my research, I was looking for a participant who met certain criteria. The participant needed to teach High School English in a specific school division so that I could represent the relevant contextual factors that may impact the style of instruction. I chose the division based on my own knowledge and expertise—it is the one in which I have worked for 10 years. I have a detailed understanding of the expectations of classroom practices at the division level. The second criteria I was looking for was a teacher whose teaching load included multiple grades This was to get a better sense of how teaching practices vary across the high school curricula. Thirdly, I was looking for an experienced teacher. The reason for this is I wanted to engage in discussions of pedagogy, professional learning, and changes in practice over time. This is simply something that new teachers cannot yet offer, so it was important to me that my case study be set with someone more able to articulate their instructional choices in theory or a history of professional development. This, of course, is an assumption, and now that my study is concluded it would be interesting to see what differences present themselves

between early teachers and experienced teachers. With these criteria in mind, I approached English teacher colleagues I knew in the division to gauge interest. The first individual I approached to participate, a teacher who will be referred to by the pseudonym "Maggie", expressed interest and accepted. Upon successful completion of an ethics review and permission from the superintendent, my research commenced on the first day of Semester 2, January 31, 2019. My observations concluded one week before the end of classes on June 3, 2019.

Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology

Central to the research questions at hand, a researcher must decide on a paradigm that best fits the ontological, epistemological, and methodological requirements of such questions. Upon exploration of the paradigms of positivism, post-positivism, critical theories, constructivism, and participatory theory, the decision became clear. As I was not testing a hypothesis, determining facts, laws or widely generalizable cause and effect relationships, nor exploring the power dynamics of writing instruction in terms of structural or historical insights, (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, Table 8.2, p. 194), positivist, post-positivist, and critical theory did not serve as a best fit for the study. However, there was an ontological and epistemological alignment, and some degrees a confluence, between constructivist paradigms, participatory paradigms, and my goal. It was with that knowledge that I armed myself with constructivism with borrowed elements of participatory paradigm.

Ontological Alignment

According to Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011), the constructivist paradigm assumes an ontological belief that there are multiple, relativistic, realities (p. 98). This relativism refers to the locally constructed and co-constructed realities of the context

(Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 98) and is central to my questions as I chose to explore the teaching realities over time—the length of a high school semester. This is not to generalize, but to garner more information about the pedagogical choices that are made by writing teachers. This shared and "living knowledge" (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 101) is a blend of the ontological beliefs of constructivist and participatory paradigms that will be best suited to uncovering the realities of writing instruction while allowing for meaning-making to take place.

Epistemological Alignment

Both participatory and constructivist paradigms value critical subjectivity and transactional findings that are co-created between researcher and subject (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 100). The reflexive nature represented by these paradigms are a fit for how I made sense of my observations of classroom practice. My goal was not to "test" Maggie on her knowledge of writing instruction pedagogies, but to see how current practices reflect these pedagogies, and explore her reasoning as to how these understandings guide her instruction.

Methodological Alignment

In addition to ontological and epistemological alignments, methodological choices must align with the research design choice. The dialectical and dialogic nature (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 100) of a constructivist paradigm opens the door for meaningful conversations to shed light on the questions at hand. These methods are far more suited to the project than those of positivist, post-positivist, and critical paradigms as I am not searching for singular answer or to uncover systemic power discrepancies (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 102). Instead, my aim is that as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), not only to build or construct meaning out of methods of observation,

but to assume the relativist ontology, subjectivist epistemology, and naturalist methodological procedures (p. 13) to uncover a deep understanding of how, in this case, writing is taught in comparison to pedagogical understandings rooted in research.

Data Gathering

Maggie's teaching load included one section of English 30-2 and one section of Language Arts 9. Over the course of the semester, I observed a total of 23 lessons, aiming for one to two visits to her class per week. Due to Maggie taking on a practicum student which lasted from the beginning of March until the end of April, I did not observe Language Arts 9 during that eight-week period. Once her student teacher had completed her placement, I resumed my observations of Maggie's LA 9 class as she prepared them for their Provincial Achievement Test which was written in early May. The total number of classes I observed were seven LA 9 lessons and 16 English 30-2 lessons. Most of my conclusions have come from my observations of the grade 12 class, with some definition shading from my limited observations in Language Arts 9.

I gathered data in multiple modalities over several steps. Step 1 was the observational stage. It involved a brief pre-lesson interview to gauge the direction for the lesson, writing thick descriptions of the classroom, and finally observations of the lesson. I recorded these observations by gathering documents such as student handouts and relevant plans, documenting the chronology of the lesson, and then considered how those related to the construct by using annotations and a checklist lesson recording sheet (see Appendix A) to monitor and keep a record of the "moves" the teacher makes during instruction and how they addressed different pedagogical domains. However, as this is a case study, I remained open to what occurred in the classroom, documenting as much as possible whether it aligned with the construct or not. When I had a moment, either when

there was a break in instruction during the observation or as the lesson concluded, I completed a first round of tentative construct coding wherein I tentatively mapped observations onto the Writing Pedagogy Model.

Step 2 was the reflective period. During this time, post-lesson, I highlighted moments from my observation and collected documents such as handouts, copies of slideshows, and photographs of anchor charts to discuss further with the teacher. I took a few minutes before conducting a post-observation interview to review my notes to formulate questions based on my observations. Any coding of documents done at this stage, again was initial and tentative upon review after the next stage. I also made a few additional anecdotal notes of interesting details and occurrences from the day. I have reconstructed these moments in narrative excerpts throughout my description of the study.

Step 3 is the post-observation and formal long interviews. Interview audio was recorded for later transcription. The questions I asked during post-observation interviews were created based on my observations of the lesson. These questions were open-ended and were framed in a way to invite the teacher to explain why she made the choices she did. I conducted post-observation interviews after every lesson I observed, making sure to capitalize on discussing things I had just observed and inviting the teacher to offer her immediate explanations. I began these interviews by asking reflective and open questions like "Tell me about this choice" regarding a few—no more than five or six—specific things I noticed during the observation. The second type of interview I conducted was a long interview. I led three of these throughout the semester—one at the beginning, middle, and end of term—each one lasting approximately 60 minutes. During these interviews, I asked questions that invited the teacher to explain her context, her experiences, her beliefs, her observations, and her pedagogy. These interviews were

dialogic in nature, and while I had a list of questions (such as, "tell me about your beliefs about the purpose of teaching writing to high-schoolers"), much of what was revealed came through natural conversation. These interviews were where I found the most beneficial information in understanding her as a teacher. These conversations allowed for the presence of her voice, reflection, and rationalization of her choices. Often, I would clarify her words for accuracy, saying, "what I think I hear you saying is this. Is that correct?" This allowed for any correction in my interpretation of her words.

Flyvbjerg (2011) notes that developmental factors are important in the exploration of case study, meaning that a single snapshot of a case is not enough to draw complete understandings of a case. To accommodate for this, I was present for the entirety of each class from the beginning of the term to the end, and during interviews asked her questions about the differences in her approaches throughout the school year.

The fourth and final step is coding and analysis. At this stage, I reviewed the data collected during observation, documentation, and interview, and coded based on emerging themes.

Coding and Analysis

The process I undertook in interpreting this data aligns with the methodology for case study in that case study demonstrates "understanding of context and process [and] understanding of what causes a phenomenon" (Flyvbjerg, p. 305). The thick descriptions, detailed observational notes, interviews, artifact collection, and multi-layered data coding was done in an effort to accomplish exactly that—understand deeply this specific classroom case. The coding was done in the likeness of a thematic analysis which Braun and Clarke (2006) define as a method for "identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (as cited by Nowell, Norris, White &

Moules, 2017). According to Nowell et al (2017), when done properly and procedurally, thematic analysis provides a thorough picture not only of how the data was read, coded, and interpreted, but can elucidate a detailed understanding of a specific case. This procedure is outlined in six phases:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

The procedure I undertook in interpreting my data set mirrors this procedure in an effort to be as transparent and trustworthy as possible.

Data interpretation occurred in seven stages. The first stage involved immediate reflection on observations and interviews. After each observation or interview, I would spend a few minutes documenting my initial impressions, thoughts, or things that stood out to me. Sometimes that would be as simple as marking down the pedagogical domains I noticed as I noticed them, expanding shorthanded abbreviations such as “SR” into “Student Response”, or writing clarifying notes to expand on the lesson procedure so that when I was to revisit it I would improve my recall when conducting my analysis.

The second step was interview transcription. To become as familiar as possible with the content of the interviews, I elected to complete the transcription of the 26 interviews and one teacher-student writing conference on my own. To ensure accuracy of transcription, for every transcribed page of I would play back the interview. Filler words such as “uh”, “um”, were removed from transcription only in the writing of this paper. This was to ensure a comprehensive understanding of context and tone as I completed analysis.

After transcription was complete, I began my first of three rounds of coding. For this, I used the software NVivo 12 Pro, where I was able to scan and upload all artifacts including photos, transcriptions, lesson observations, classroom handouts, assignments, and copies of student work to directly code and organize. Each theme, as it emerged, got a new title and was colour coded to allow for quick visual analysis of information.

This first round began as organically as I could—I was only looking for themes as they appeared out of the data I collected. What began to emerge were themes of pedagogical understandings, which even while trying to avoid colouring the interpretation with my own knowledge, emerged on their own. For clarity, I have attached a coding key (Appendix B) that outlines examples of what I was looking for when coding an action to a pedagogical domain. From this, I began to sort these competencies into categories—some of these categories aligned with my knowledge of pedagogical understandings such as collaborative process knowledge and contextual factors of writing. However, unrelated themes also appeared, as detailed later in this section.

These initial themes were the guide for my second round of coding which required me to look more deeply into each of these categories for nuances among them. For each of the codes within the theme, I gave a name that explained what aspect of that theme it was referring to. This process was rooted in looking for similarities between various codes to name themes that applied. The results are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Coding Themes per Round

First Round Coding Themes	Second and Third round coding subthemes	Description
Metacognitive Process Knowledge	Knowledge	Evidence of the interplay between the person, task, and strategies. Metacognition in relation to the product
	Skills	Evidence of monitoring and controlling the outcomes of a task. Related to the process of the task
	Challenges	Difficulties identified either by Maggie or students in participating in metacognitive activities
	Other	Miscellaneous
Writing Theory Knowledge	Collaborative	Evidence of collaborative pedagogy (such as group work, whole class discussion, peer editing, writing conferences)
	Expressivism	Evidence of expressive pedagogy (such as free writes, personal journal reflections)
	Socio-Cultural	Evidence of socio-cultural pedagogy (such as multiliteracies, cultural writing, authentic writing tasks)
	Current Traditional Rhetoric	Evidence of CTR pedagogy (such as graphic organizers, 5-step writing process, outlines)
	Mentorship	Evidence of mentorship models (such as mentor-text modeling, teacher as mentor)
	Challenges	References to difficulty either in executing a pedagogy or recognition of a pedagogy
	Other	Writing theory that was unidentifiable

Collaborative Process Knowledge	Large Group	Whole class collaboration (discussion, brainstorming etc.)	
	Peer to peer	Student to student collaboration (think, pair, share etc.)	
	Space	Evidence of use of space to encourage or discourage collaboration	
	Student-Teacher	Collaboration between Maggie and a student	
	Challenges	References to difficulties with collaboration in the classroom	
	Other	Miscellaneous	
Contextual Factors	Form	Context in relation to form of writing alone	
	Writing Situation (The writing task reflects a unique contextual situation)	Authentic	Tasks are authentic-- real world forms and audiences
		Inauthentic	Fabricated or inauthentic context has been manufactured
	Assessment	When students consider the rubric or assessment expectations as their main context	
	Student Responsiveness	Students reflect a knowledge of contextual responsiveness to writing task (authentic or inauthentic) that demonstrates how their role changes based on the task itself. Knowledge of self as author and creator	
	Acontextual	Writing task is considered acontextually-- writing for the sake of the task	
	Challenges	Reflects a challenge of contextualization	
Rhetorical Knowledge	Contextual Rhetoric	Attending to the varied rhetorical moves as they pertain to specific forms, genres, and contexts (example, using stylized dialects for different characters)	

	Format Conventions	Attending to the structural demands of a given form (example: appropriate greetings on a formal letter)
	Strategy Awareness	Paying attention to the moves to be made in a writing task (example: strategies for writing a hook)
	Challenges	Reflects a challenge when it comes to rhetorical knowledge
	Other	Miscellaneous
Writing Construct Knowledge	No sub-categories—only two references	References to what it means to be a “good writer”

In the above table, you can notice one subcategory that is divided into two more detailed subcategories. This is a result of the third round of coding. I felt this delineation was important as it demonstrated the presence of real-world or manufactured writing tasks and situations for students—an area that previously had no or little representation in the other sub-categories.

The final step in data interpretation was to begin to pull meaning from these emergent themes. I started this process by noting the frequency of occurrence of various pedagogical understandings and other practices. This gave me insight into what is commonly utilized in Maggie's classroom. It is from this point I was able to solidify my understanding of her thoughts, processes, and practices when teaching writing.

However, as I was looking for what organically emerged from Maggie's teaching practices, I was not surprised to find other initial themes. These other themes, not necessarily represented in my model of pedagogical understandings included: Content Development Strategies, Student Comments, Teaching Context Information, Test prep, Other. The results of the themes emergent in these categories are detailed in the following table.

Table 7

Outlier Themes and Subcategories

First Round Coding Themes	Subcategories	Description
Content Development Activities	Assessment	Notes pertaining to assessment of writing
	Structure-Based Generation	The use of graphic organizers or acronyms to elicit response
	Teacher-Led Development	Content development that comes from teacher prompting and questioning students
	Challenges	Areas of challenge for student content development
	Other	Miscellaneous
Teacher Context Variables	Beliefs and Values	Comments that indicate teacher beliefs and values
	Demographics	District, School, and Classroom demographic information
Test Preparation	LA 9 PAT	References to the PAT
	English 30-2 Diploma	References to the Diploma
Other	Assessment as a tool	The use of assessment to garner better writing
	General Challenges	General challenges of writing, otherwise indefinable
	Writing as a reading strategy	Writing Skills as they pertain to reading strategies
	Strategies (other)	Miscellaneous

Contextual Choice and Treatment of Resident Values

The sensitive contextual variables in which the subjects are situated are of primary importance in any given study. Acknowledgment of the individual, historical, cultural, and physical contexts are important to represent (Stake, 2005) and as a part of my first long interview I spent a lot of time asking Maggie to locate herself within her context. Aspects like class size, years of teaching experience, expectations for student performance on the personal, departmental, or administrative level, and how she measures student success were vital in understanding the motivations for the pedagogical choices a teacher makes in her classroom. These elements must be represented and vocalized as a part of the final study, which is why it was important for Maggie to have the agency to represent herself and those contexts in her own words.

Representing individual contexts is a delicate process which requires acknowledgement and respect of the values of the context that pre-exist the study. Guba and Lincoln (2005) describe this treatment as fairness to the subject and the context, stating "Fairness was thought to be a quality of balance; that is, all stake-holder views, perspectives, claims, concerns, and voices should be apparent in the text" (p. 207). This requires the voice of the subject to be accurately and fairly represented. My approach in the examination of the artifacts gathered from the study could not be separated from the values of the community in which they are situated, and in the reporting of my findings, which is why I consistently ensured that Maggie had the opportunity to offer her interpretations of her lessons, objectives, and motives before leading her into a line of questioning about my project that may alter her responses.

Accuracy

Trustworthiness is an important part of reporting a thematic analysis (Nowell et al, 2017), not only from the perspective of my thesis committee but from Maggie's. She is a respected and experienced professional, and it was important to me that I represent her, her beliefs, and her classroom practice as accurately as I could. To ensure this, I undertook a few steps as checkpoints along the way. Acknowledging that teacher/subject voice is important in a case study, I would often ask her a question during an interview and then paraphrase her answer back to her, asking something like, "just to be clear, what I hear you saying is…" She then had the opportunity to clarify, add, or amend any statements that did not represent her true meaning accurately. I did this continually, through the entire observation period, making sure that I had an accurate and trustworthy snapshot.

When the transcription was complete, I offered to send Maggie a copy of all the notes and transcriptions for her to review. She declined, largely due to time constraints of a full-time teaching job making it difficult to read through nearly 100 pages of interview transcription. Instead, at the end of the observation, transcription, and my final round of coding, I typed a document that outlined my initial impressions of her teaching practice. In it, I described what my observations indicated to be her most common pedagogical practices with a brief explanation of what each of those practices meant, or how they presented themselves in her teaching. For example, in reference to evidence of rhetorical knowledge I noted her practice is largely split between "teaching the rhetorical needs of various forms and genres (ex: what does a short story look like?), and specific strategies or "moves" students can make in their writing (ex: dialogue)" (personal communication, November 18, 2019).

In addition to common themes, I outlined my inferences about her pedagogical beliefs including the beliefs she holds in highest regard such as “wanting students to learn multiple writing forms and feel confident about their ability to complete them” (personal communication, November 18, 2019). Other areas I presented to her were areas where it was apparent she found success as a teacher and how she sees her role in the classroom. After detailing these areas, I provided her space to comment on these observations. Ideally, we would have completed this in a face to face interview, however due to scheduling challenges, this was not a timely possibility and she provided a typed response.

She made several comments, most of which were in agreement with my observations, at one point, when commenting on how I perceive her role in the classroom, stating “this is exactly what I’m going for” (personal communication, November 25, 2019). Other things she noted were general points of interest about the subject area I am studying and other things she found helpful for her instruction.

These insights into my observations were valuable for me as a researcher, and I was able to feel confident in my assertions of her practice, while pausing to reflect on areas she had deeper comments about such as the example above. In the end, I feel that my observations were accurate and reliable enough to proceed with formulating interpretations and conclusions in this project.

Construct Irrelevant Variance

Construct Irrelevant Variance (CIV) is inevitable in research. When I consider the external factors that may impact how I can map teacher practice to their understandings, there are a few things I am considering:

- Level of education of the teacher: There may be a difference between teacher understanding if I am sampling only teachers with bachelor's degrees, or teachers with master's degrees
- Years of teaching experience—this may impact teacher understanding of the writing construct, as well as their familiarity with the five domains of writing pedagogy I pose. (Example, more inexperienced teachers may not know as much about collaboration as experienced teachers, but that does not necessarily mean experienced teachers are "better" at teaching writing)
- Constraints of teaching context: Depending on the expectations of the community a teacher is in, they may have more or less experience with these domains due to pressures of diploma exam results, or standardized departments
- Access to professional learning opportunities: Teachers who access professional development regularly may also be more familiar with writing pedagogy than teachers who either choose not to access professional development or who do not have access to regular PD
- Class size/makeup: Implementation and knowledge of collaborative learning may be dependent on the size of a class or makeup, for example split grade classes

These are bio-ecological factors that are irrelevant to the construct itself but may in fact impact my work and results, especially should this study be replicated in a different classroom.

Limitations

The major limitations of this methodology and this project lie in the inability to generalize my findings. What I now know about Maggie's classroom offers insight into

teaching practice, but it is certainly no ticket into understanding the breadth of writing teachers' pedagogies nor does it offer certainty into what is common among teachers. Despite this challenge, Flyvbjerg (2011) notes in his chapter entitled "Case Study", the case study may offer knowledge that is transferable to other cases, even when its data is not formally generalizable. The intention of this study is not to make a case for what all English teachers do when they teach writing, but it is merely to offer insight into the *possibilities* of what teachers know, do not know, practice, and do not practice in their writing classrooms.

Additionally, this study looked primarily at two courses across the Alberta secondary curriculum. An important limitation is the consideration that instruction would not only be markedly different in a -1, or academic stream, English classroom, but the instruction may vary widely between grade levels. This observation cannot be taken for granted as each curriculum has different aims. During this semester, Maggie was only teaching these two courses and she had never taught English 20-1 or 30-1. These contextual variables force the question: would her approach vary if she had a wider teaching load on her plate or in her history? Going forward in the 2019/2020 school year she has taken on more of the academic course load, and it would be of great interest to touch base with her again to see how her practices have altered for more advanced material.

Thirdly, it cannot be ignored that high school English classrooms are not the only place where writing instruction occurs. A certain level of writing is commonly taught across all disciplines at the high school level, namely in Social Studies and other humanities. Even in science disciplines students are expected to respond to questions in a certain way and complete lab reports. These would also be fascinating settings for the

study of writing instruction, and what was accomplished in this study would very unlikely capture the practices in those contexts.

Chapter Four: The Case Study

January 31, 2019

I step out of my car and into the crisp, January air. I approach this building, a place I have been in many times; it's familiar to me. I open the door at the side of the building. Normally, this is a student door, but with the construction that has been occurring, it is now serving as a temporary main entrance. The smell is familiar—old buildings always seem to smell the same. I look left and climb the stairs to the top floor, ready to begin.

School Context

The school in which I set my study is in a small, rural, Southern Alberta town of approximately 8 000 residents. For relative anonymity of the school, town, and division, I will be referring to each of these by pseudonyms or general nomenclature such as "the school", "the town", and "the division". The division is home to 16 schools and, serves approximately 3550 students including one Christian Alternative School, three outreach schools, and an additional 18 Hutterian Brethren schools scattered throughout. The division's website defines it as a "21st century inclusive learning community that engages and empower all learners for success", and claims to value safe and caring learning environments, student-centered decision making, collaboration between staff and community partnerships, quality programming, and commitment to learning. It is with these elements in mind that I found myself in Maggie's classroom, a long-serving, well-respected teacher in this division and at this school—the largest school in the division.

Students in this town often go to elementary, middle, and high school with the same cohort of about 60 students per grade. At the time of this study, enrollment at the school was 375 students registered in grades 9-12. It pulls from two "feeder schools", one

from a local middle school and the other from a small, rural village about five-minutes east of town. According to Maggie, historically the school has had a fairly homogeneous racial and ethnic population consisting of largely Caucasian, middle class students, many of whom were devout members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. But, over the past several years, Maggie noted that the population seems to be shifting, commenting:

> I think I would say that's we're a changing population. It used to be, when I first came here, I would say, probably, students were about 50% LDS and then 50% nonreligious. The LDS population is getting smaller and we are gaining more immigrants for sure. We have probably about 10 families, right now—I know we have 30 ELL kids—but some of those kids are were born in Canada so they are only technically ELL because their families speak Low German at home. (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

These demographics impact decision making when it comes to instruction, particularly around culturally appropriate texts as well as English Language Learner instruction. Because the division prides itself on inclusive practices, distinct choices must be made by the classroom teacher to account for those differences in their instruction. For Maggie, "inclusion is purposeful and, for the most part, we try and keep our students in the classroom as much as possible working with their same aged peers working on materials that are appropriate for them" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). This can be a difficult balance to strike, especially when so many students work at so many different levels of ability and achievement. This, however, does not change the mandate of the teacher when it comes to writing instruction.

Maggie, herself, is a teacher with many years of experience. She has taught at the same school in the same teaching role for 14 years (minus two years of maternity leave). Across those twelve years of total experience, she has primarily taught Language Arts 9, academic Grade 10 English (English 10-1), and non-academic Grade 12 English (English

30-2). In addition to those courses, although more rarely, she has been assigned non-academic Grade 10 and 11 (English 10-2, 20-2), and for the first time will teach academic Grade 11 English Language Arts (English 20-1) in Fall 2019. Being that the school is the largest in the division, she has an opportunity to teach multiple sections of the same course each year and is well versed in not only the curricula but the age and grade-level expectations for students in those courses. She has marked diploma exams for English 30-2 and believes she has a solid sense of the provincial standards of writing to which the students are held.

To accompany her teaching load, Maggie has taken on another role in the school. Starting in the fall, she picked up a 50% FTE role as a Learning Support Teacher. This role involves the assessment of students with specialized learning needs, writing Individualized Program Plans and Individualized Student Plans for all students in the school who require accommodations or modifications to their regular classwork. She also works with other teachers in the building across varying subject areas in creating supportive learning environments for students and equipping teachers with the tools they need to be successful in implementing these programs. This is a role she last had in 2010, and then resumed a full-time teaching load until 2018 when they hired a full time Learning Support Teacher. The balance between teaching and acting as learning support is taxing, but it also adds insight and capabilities to her repertoire that are somewhat out of the "regular" classroom teacher's realm because she attends many meetings and professional development training sessions for students with specialized learning needs.

Maggie is not alone in her school's English department. In addition to Maggie there are two other ELA teachers, and all three teachers collaborate on ideas, but their courses are more-or-less separate with very little overlap in each semester. Partly due to

differing course schedules and partly due to teaching styles, they most often work independently of one another. This allows for Maggie to have a fair amount of autonomy in her decision making as most decisions for texts for study and approaches are made at the classroom, not the department level.

Classroom Demographics

During my observations, Maggie taught two 80-minute classes each day. Her first class, which ran from 8:40-9:50 each morning was Language Arts 9. This class was composed of 20 students: 14 males and six females. Two of those students were on a Knowledge and Employability (K&E) program which is designed for students who may not have the learning abilities to complete a full high school diploma. Completion of a K&E high school program earns the student a "certificate of completion" which focuses more on the practical applications of each subject and requires only 80 credits to complete (instead of 100 for a full diploma). The LA 9 K&E course is a separate curriculum, and its focus includes "the development and application of reading, writing, and mathematical literacy and on essential employability skills" (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 1). Overall, Maggie believed this class to be a bit lower than the average LA9 group, noting, "I have regular 9, I have some students who are being adapted but doing the regular program, and then I have one student who is doing K&E with the potential of two other students that were also sort of viewing to move to K&E, and one student who is modified as well. So, this particular student who is modified, he is reading at a kindergarten level" (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Her second class of the day was English 30-2, another 80-minute block that ran from 10:00-11:20 every day. Maggie noted that this class composition more complex than the grade 9 class, explaining:

> My class list has changed every single day since the beginning of the term. Right now, I have 31 registered, but two students are not attending. But I got a few new kids yesterday so we're kind of trying to catch them up, and I also had a student withdraw yesterday, so, it's been a bit of a rotating door any trying to get kids caught up. (personal communication, February 14, 2019)

Even as the add/drop deadline passed, Maggie's 30-2 classroom was never quite static. In this course, she offers students two options, the first being to take the "regular" 30-2 which spans the entirety of the semester. The second option is to take an "abbreviated" version of the course, where students learn the entire curriculum into ten weeks and write their diploma exam in April. This, she asserts, is most often utilized by students who have only one course left in their schooling, are already invested in the workforce, or are otherwise "done" with high school (personal communication, February 14, 2019). This alters her delivery of the course, requiring her to front load the class so those students are ready to write their exam. She explained that preparing those six students to write their diploma at the beginning of April means that she was "kind of running two different classes simultaneously, so their assignments are sometimes a little bit different and the expectations are a little bit higher because they believe they are ready to write the diploma early" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). Generally, all the students are aiming at the same final target and need to master the same writing skills by the end, no matter if they are registered for ten weeks or for twenty.

Maggie's Classroom

> *January 31, 2019*
>
> *The school is abuzz with energy—after all it is the first day of the semester. Students are filing into new classes, some of them with new teachers. I step into Maggie's room, armed with my iPad and notebook ready to capture the lesson of*

the day. As I do, I look around, noticing the choices Maggie has made to set the tone. It is not my first time in this room, I have been here, given presentations, and even taught lessons between these walls, but it is not the same room I remember from my student-teaching days. Gone are the traditional single-desk rows and empty walls from my memory. In their place, are desk pairs, small working tables, and bookshelves that house novels for students to borrow. I photograph the room and take a seat at a desk clump near Maggie's desk, and eagerly await the beginning of class.

Maggie's classroom sits on the third and top floor of an objectively "old" schoolhouse (it opened in 1949). The school has since been renovated, and even during this project, it was undergoing yet another facelift in some of the other areas of the building. These renovations have, admittedly, put some pressure on the teaching staff as many must share classrooms and work in old science labs. Since Maggie teaches only 50% of the day, she shares her classroom with another staff member who uses her room for his science class. Other than her need to vacate the room shortly after I observe her classes, there are few reminders of the other teacher's presence in the room. The only exception is the homework that is written on the board for his Science 14 class.

This classroom has been Maggie's home-base for many years; almost her entire tenure at this school has been teaching between those four walls. The room itself is a pretty standard rectangle, each of the corners filled with some kind of shelving unit or desk clump. The students sit in the middle. When you walk in the classroom, the first thing that the eye is drawn to is a large, oversized, brown, lazy boy recliner next to an Ikea-eqsue faux-wooden bookshelf which sit close to the door. It is clear that the intention for this chair is for students to sit and read in a comfortable, well-worn space. On the wall

parallel to the chair and bookshelf is a bulletin board, which lies empty in wait of student work to be posted. Along that same wall is a table with two chairs—a space meant for conferencing with Maggie or for 1-1 work with the classroom assistant. This table sits next to a lunch station—a refrigerator and microwave that conveniently store and heat Maggie's lunch, eliminating the need for her to trek to the main floor staff room to eat. At the back of the classroom is Maggie's desk and filing cabinets, a modest workspace piled high with novels, binders, and other trappings of English teachers who are trying to stay organized. The walls are white and stark, but along the back wall are several motivational posters with quotes proclaiming the value of being a "nerd" and achieving your potential through the rigorous task of "adulting". Four windows allow natural light to enter the space, and above those the months of the year are displayed with space underneath for student names to ensure that no one's birthday is forgotten. It is these little traditions that allow even the "big kids" of high school to feel remembered. The far wall is home to another small bookshelf, an empty bulletin board and a half-length whiteboard. Against the front of the classroom is a third bookshelf, filled with novels, all leveled according to Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks. Next to it is a colourful drawing made by one of Maggie's young daughters, left on the whiteboard for her class's enjoyment. The room, with its white walls and gray linoleum floor might be considered almost cold if not for these small, homey details. This whiteboard, the main whiteboard, is partially covered by a pinned Canadian flag and adjoins with the Smartboard at the front of the room. This is almost blocked by a table with space for handouts and the hand in bins for student work. There is enough room for Maggie to work at the board and move around with relative ease, but there is a sense that space is limited in her classroom. Right next to the door is a closet, upon which hangs a handmade anchor chart that explains various "Proofreading

Marks"—the symbols that represent various corrections that need to be made on pieces of writing.

The most interesting feature of the room is the arrangement of student seating. While the students are not in what would be described as traditional rows, they are orderly and all front-facing in three distinct columns. Students are generally seated in pairs—some at two desks next to one another and some at half-hexagonal tables. There are four single desks available near the front of the room, and near the far side of the classroom is a horseshoe table with three chairs—ideal for conferencing and small group work. The arrangement is collaborative yet traditional, "new-age" yet old-school. As I observed Maggie's room more and more, the more I began to draw a parallel between the set up of her room and her style—a blend of what is contemporary and what is conventional.

Teacher Beliefs

As I observed Maggie's teaching and became familiar with her style, classroom context, students, and common practices I noticed themes emerging that reflected her beliefs about writing education and writing ability. What is apparent from observing Maggie's teaching is she values clarity and focus on the goal of a writing task. She focuses on the big ideas of a writing task first—she wants the students to clearly and succinctly either answer the question they have been asked or respond to the prompt they have been given. At the heart of her instruction, she demonstrates a belief in preparing students with the structural and procedural knowledge of writing forms, but also the critical thinking and application of appropriate content. I found this to be an interesting dynamic, the contrasting practices of product and process pedagogy, and one I will discuss further in my long-term observations. But when asked about her beliefs about

writing ability and the purpose of writing in the world, Maggie responded in a way that aligned with her classroom practice. She responded, “I think that the main, most important part is effective communication… most of my kids are going to go out into the work world, they may go and do apprenticeships, but thinking mostly about my 30s they’re not going to write as a form of learning, they are going to write as a form of communication” (personal communication, April 17, 2019). This response (and the complementary practices that support her reflection) demonstrate her beliefs about what it means to be a good writer in her demographic of students; it’s largely about the efficacy of the work. It is important that her students can express themselves clearly and execute their task in an effective manner. They need to be understood, not entirely for themselves, but for the sake of their responsibilities in the working world. One of Maggie’s top priorities is to prepare students to write in multiple forms so they can feel confident in their ability to complete them when they come across them in their lives outside of school. Writing, outside of the high school context, is a practical application, and whatever it might mean for them to communicate effectively in their given context is what is most important to her.

Not to be underwritten is another key aspect of Maggie’s beliefs about writing: she wants her students to learn *how to think* about a writing form so they know how to tackle it. She acknowledges that a central piece of writing ability is effective communication, but through her teaching practice she demonstrates the awareness that communicating in multiple forms is not only about knowing the forms, but knowing how to think about the forms when they are presented to you. Later, I will discuss the metacognitive moves Maggie makes in her lessons to engage students in this kind of thinking, but it is most often present in the early stages of the writing process as students

are figuring their way through how to tackle the task.

For Maggie, writing with clear and effective communication requires a combination of formulaic applications, deep thinking, familiarity with a variety of genres, and risk. Through her teaching, it is clear to see her attempt to balance these needs while preparing students for their next stage in life.

Beliefs About Writing Education

In a conversation during the second-long interview, I asked Maggie about her perception of how well high school writing instruction prepares students for real-world writing. I asked whether she felt that the purpose of real-world writing and the approaches used in teaching students to write aligned, both in teacher practice and curriculum. For her and her most common course assignments, which include students who are more likely to be non-readers and non-writers, she agreed. She explained, "I think that when they leave here they are equipped, and that they think that this is an important thing. That being understood is really important" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). She continued, clarifying that in recent years, she has observed a shift in the practice of many teachers away from a sole focus on product to attention to the writing process. She noted the ways in which "modern" teachers are approaching writing prepares students for the next phase of their lives. She claims that she does not believe modern teachers to be focusing on the five-paragraph essay or the ability to write a poem. She continues, "I think that a five-paragraph essay and a poem are very specific types of writing, but I think we talk about it in terms of skills. You know, can you develop a character? Can you explain an idea? I think about the professional development I've gone to and other teacher that I know who are teaching those courses and I think they are valuing skills over form" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). This is a significant revelation regarding

Maggie's beliefs about writing education. She believes that students should have quality education that prepares them for real-world writing, but the role of the teacher is not only to rehearse static forms, but to build the skills they need to apply to a wide array of forms. This is not, however, the way Maggie has always viewed writing education.

Upon graduating from university, Maggie was hired into her first full-time teaching position, the same position she holds now, teaching high school ELA. She expressed how she did not feel ready for teaching writing, and a lot of her knowledge came from her memories of her high school teachers (personal communication, February 14, 2019). She reflected on the potential disadvantage she felt having had no practical experiences at the high school level, which in turn resulted in a default to using "my own experience as a teacher" (personal communication, February 14, 2019) to guide her practice. She recalls that during her primary ELA curriculum and instruction course, instead of learning about strategies to teach students to read and write, "we learned how to make worksheets. So, did I know how to make a worksheet of basic knowledge, comprehension, and some application? Yes. I was not well equipped for teaching writing" (personal communication, February 14, 2019.) While it is impossible to generalize this anecdote of teacher education broadly, Maggie did make a connection between how she learned to teach English Language Arts and the practices of those she refers to as "older teachers". The connection she made is one of traditional, and in her view, outdated practices where "the focus has been on the things the diploma exam requires, or the things that we used to believe that kids needed to know how to do. I feel like most of the teachers who teach English now are really writing all different kinds of genres and really working again on skills as opposed to teaching and memorizing a five-paragraph essay" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). In her early years, she admits to being solidly

in the current traditional rhetoric camp, once describing herself as a “stand and deliver teacher” (personal communication, March 6, 2019), but now sees her role, and the role of the English teacher, much differently. As time has gone on and she has invested in professional development geared towards approaches in writing instruction. She has come to believe more in the adoption of mentor texts to teach various skills, and her role as the teacher has shifted “to encourage them, go through the same steps as them, and offering ideas. When a student really doesn’t know how to fix something, my job there is the “teaching”” (personal communication, April 17, 2019). As outlined in the upcoming chapters, it becomes clear that her practice lives and breathes in a combination of some process pedagogies with current traditional rhetoric strategies.

Chapter Five: Process and Thematic Analysis

March 25, 2019

It's mid morning and I arrive a few minutes before the bell signals the end of first period. Maggie's student teacher, "Michelle", is wrapping up her lesson and the LA9 class shuffles their papers around their desks aiming to cram them into their binders without bothering to lock them in place. The chatter grows—some acknowledge me as I walk in and place my belongings down on the small table next to the Lazy boy chair. I am a familiar face by now, and even greet a few of the students as I take my seat. The bell rings, ushering forth the class change. Slowly, and almost always in groups of two or three, Maggie's English 30-2 class filters their way in the door. They see me but look past me to return a "hello" to Maggie as she greets them. I start up my iPad and open the VoiceRecorder App, preparing for the pre-interview. I open my lime green field notes binder and open to a fresh observation recording sheet. I date it, indicate the class, and write down details from the previous lesson I saw that may connect to the one I am about to see. When she appears ready, I ask Maggie, "Can I ask you a few questions before we get started?" She obliges and I hit record.

Observational Process

This is typical of all my observations. A quiet entrance, getting settled, and then a shuffle of students cued me to prepare for my pre-observation interview. Before Maggie began her lessons, I would pose a couple of questions to prime myself for what I was about to witness. The questions ranged in phrasing, but essentially asked:

- "What do you have planned for writing instruction today?"
- "What is it you hope your students practice and/or learn to do today?"

- "What skill are your students going to be working on today?"
- "Are there any special considerations you made in your planning today for this lesson?"

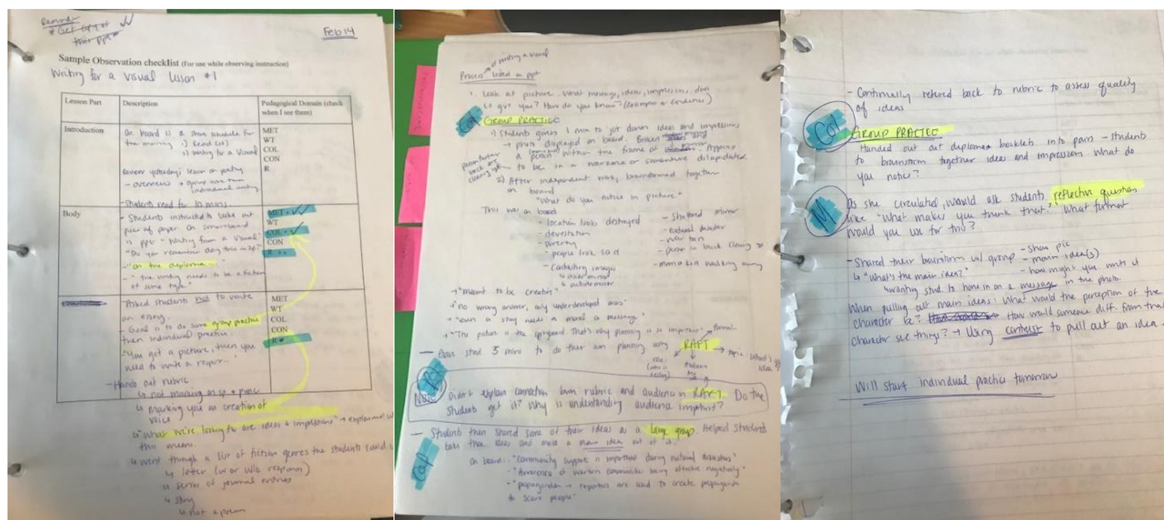
This interview would take no more than one or two minutes as she gave the overview for the day's events. The purpose of these short pre-interviews was twofold: first to set the stage for what I should watch for during class—to prime my own observational lens, and secondly to gain insight into Maggie's pedagogical method for the day. Some days the goal was product-pedagogy focused, such as "Today we are going to spend about half an hour getting them some skills to complete their essay… on Friday some where struggling with introductions and conclusions so I've prepared some materials for that." (personal communication, March 11), clearly demonstrating a lean toward CTR. Other times, she offered answers that focused more on process or social pedagogies, for example stating, "I want them to work together with more diverse groups today. They are really getting entrenched in their little pockets of two or three friends, so today we are going to break out of that" (personal communication, April 2), in this case indicating her approach for collaborative writing. These short interviews gave me a brief window into what I could anticipate seeing, as well as insight into her priority in supporting student learning about writing that day.

At that point I would shift my attention to my observational notes. No longer recording, I made note of everything I saw in the classroom that was different than the last time I was there. Was there a new poster or anchor chart displayed? Were there vocabulary words on the board? Were the desks arranged in a new way? My lesson observation sheet (Appendix A) was divided into three sections following the flow of the average lesson. All along the way, I would make note of what Maggie was instructing her

class to do, what she was saying to get them to do it and the student response. These observations were invaluable, as I gained detailed insight into her teaching practice. I became familiar with her lesson organization, and as she was instructing students I would check off practices that aligned with pedagogical understandings. Figure 3 is an example of a lesson observation (February 14) where my pedagogical alignments are indicated in the margins. For clarity, I have highlighted these alignments in blue so they stand out against my other notes.

Figure 3

Observation Notes, February 14



In times of a lull, like when students were working on their assignment, I would review the observational notes and indicate whether I saw evidence of a certain pedagogical understanding such as metacognition, rhetorical knowledge, or collaboration and scrawl a note about it to help clarify my thinking for later. Occasionally, I would get up and walk around to check in on student progress—not to include in the research itself but to note if they were actually using a strategy she taught them or not. I would listen in

on her conversations with students as she helped them get started or overcome some other writing hurdle they encountered. During these observations, I was linking what I saw to the goal of the lesson Maggie identified in the pre-interview. Consistently, I found that what Maggie set out to do in a day, she accomplished. Her anticipated pedagogical goals aligned with the pedagogical practices I witnessed, and these detailed observations allowed me to see her intentionality with her lessons, be it traditional approaches, collaborative approaches, or mentorship pedagogies. As revealed later in the study, though, when it comes to Maggie identifying specifically what pedagogy she is choosing, she is less sure. So, while there is strong evidence of writing theory practice, there is less evidence of writing theory knowledge.

Interview Process

The bell signaled the end the period and at this time, I prepared for my post-observation interview. The purpose of this semi-structured interview was to gain insight on the lesson I just witnessed by asking her to first reflect on the lesson, and then ask her to explain more specific choices I noticed she had made throughout the lesson. Figure 4 below shows a screenshot of the transcribed post-observation interview from the same February 14 lesson observed above. You will notice I would ask her these pointed questions in ways that would spark a dialogue and avoided simple yes/no questions as much as possible.

Figure 4

Sample of Post-Observation Interview Transcript, February 14

K	Okay. February 14, post observation interview. Um okay so can you just explain the writing task that the students were working on today? In the 30-2 class.
M	So I wanted them to experience taking a picture that they were given and having to write some kind of a response based on that picture. It's uh, part of the diploma exam that they have to be able to do and because I have six kids writing in April, I wanted to do a really similar one to what they're going to see on the diploma instead of starting a little bit more abstract. I basically chose a picture that they all had to respond to initially. I am forcing them to do fiction only.
K	Why?
M	Because I am going to force them to do non-fiction after and most often, kids rely on only being able to do one kind of writing, and they could literally get any kind of picture so I want them to have to write a story or have to create characters in some way and understand what it means to create voice for a character. Um and then because most of the students in 30-2 are fairly literal, we get a ton of essays, but a lot of times the fiction pieces are actually better. They're way more developed than the non-fiction pieces. I am trying to encourage them to branch out a little by forcing them to do fiction initially.
K	Why do you show students the rubric and go through the marking categories?

Often, these interviews would take 10 minutes or longer, but once the interview was complete, I took a few minutes to clarify my own written notes and add in any details to the lesson description that might be important in recalling it down the line. Maggie's responses were vital to understanding her practice. The responses she gave allowed me to further align her planning, lesson execution, and assessment with the Model of Writing Pedagogies. I was able to tag her explanations with preliminary codes and note questions to circle back to in our long interviews. Each lesson was different and her goal for each lesson varied in skill or focus, however it was through the interviews that I got the greatest sense of her intentionality.

Three times throughout the semester I met with Maggie for extended interview time. The goal of these interviews was to target more specific aspects of Maggie's

practice that otherwise may go unobserved in her practice. During these interviews I would ask questions such as "How do you view the goal of teaching writing?" and "what value do you see in collaboration/rhetorical instruction/contextual writing?" (second long interview, April 17, 2019), which were meant to give me a sense of her active knowledge about the construct of writing ability and writing pedagogies. Other times, I would ask her about the progress of her students and what she felt about her practice most attributed to that change (third long interview, June 3, 2019). Questions like these were more pointed towards her specific strategies, and I was looking to connect her ideas about her strategies to pedagogical understandings. For example, in responding to the question "were there any lessons or strategies you used this semester that you felt were especially effective?" she responded "The way that I teach letter writing is really effective. We just focus on key skills every day and then practice, practice, practice, and then eventually we put it altogether in a final letter" (personal communication, June 3, 2019). From responses to questions like these I was able to discern which pedagogical understandings are most familiar to Maggie and which ones she feels are representative of solid practice.

Document Collection

Throughout the semester, I collected over 100 documents including student artifacts, interview transcripts, lesson observations, and class materials. During the data coding and analysis phase of my research, 11 themes emerged based on these documents. Once materials were transcribed and scanned into Nvivo12, the process of initial coding began. By looking at the documents and analysing the things she handed out to students and the comments she left for students to read I was able to glean more insight into the alignment of practice, beliefs, and student tasks. Figures 5, 6, and 7 are examples of how the top three overall themes of Maggie's practice appear in a single document. The

highlighted portions of the document are the areas that represent a given pedagogical understanding. This document was given to both her LA 9 and her English 30-2 class, the only difference is the exemplar chosen was grade-level appropriate. It is important to note I have blacked our Maggie’s real name on the second page of the document. Note: See Appendix C for full view copies of the documents.

Figure 5

Presence of Rhetorical Knowledge

Revising Our Personal Writing

Revising vs. Editing

(Making it sound better) (Making it look better)

Turning worn out words into vivid words

Adding specific descriptions, explanations, and details

Changing letters to CAPITAL or lowercase

Correcting misspelled words

Adding, deleting, or changing punctuation

, ? ! .

Indenting paragraphs

Exemplar:

This is a section of a personal response about the experience one student had learning to overcome her fear of heights, leaning on her friends (both physically and metaphorically) for support.

The climb ascended steeply above us. Along the right edge, the jungle hugged the rocks; passage through its trees did not look feasible. The majority of my view was filled with rocks. Looming high to the sky, the boulders rose in a tiered manner. Peering back down toward the river, I saw a steep slope of rocks all the way to the water. All I could think about was how far it would be to fall.

My tense thoughts were interrupted by the realization that my friends were already beginning to climb! My anxiety increased as I watched them.

Do I turn back? My whole being shouted, "Yes!" *Will I regret it later? I really want to get to the top, but...*

I voiced my uncertainties to my friends. They dismissed my fears and encouraged me to stick it out. Questioning my own sanity, I decided at least to attempt the climb.

I chose a path that seemed easiest. My friend Tom was ahead of me. Then, suddenly, he slipped and slid backward about 10 feet! I watched, paralyzed, until he stopped himself and assured us he was all right. My heart was hammering.

Now those who had tried the other way came back; it had not worked. Consoling myself that my friend Seth would be right behind me, I shakily began the ascent. The "path" led up a narrow area between boulders. In it, we reached a place where there just were no good handholds. Seth braced my foot, and those above sent down words of encouragement. I was soon past the first challenge safely, but not feeling much better about the rest of the climb.

The difficulties only increased from that point on, with scary spot after scary spot. Though I knew I should not look down, I could not always ignore the long drop to the boulders below. My breathing sped up, but my heart pounded even faster, growing loud in my ears.

What do you notice? – These notes are what the students discussed or [redacted] offered

- Too much punctuation, particularly commas and periods.
  - what effect do too many commas have? → distracting
  - " periods " ? → choppy
- Began sentence with "my" a lot

What is this piece of writing made up of?
- words
- narration and dialogue

[redacted] stresses the importance of dialogue in narrative as it shows instead of telling

Goals for improving your own writing:

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

Note. The highlighted section of the Venn Diagram includes advice about how to make one's writing "sound better". The highlighted section in the brainstorming box says Maggie stresses the importance of dialogue as it shows instead of telling

Figure 6

Presence of Writing Theory (Traditional Linearism)

Exemplar:

This is a section of a personal response about the experience one student had learning to overcome her fear of heights, leaning on her friends (both physically and metaphorically) for support.

The climb ascended steeply above us. Along the right edge, the jungle hugged the rocks; passage through its trees did not look feasible. The majority of my view was filled with rocks. Looming high to the sky, the boulders rose in a tiered manner. Peering back down toward the river, I saw a steep slope of rocks all the way to the water. All I could think about was how far it would be to fall.

My tense thoughts were interrupted by the realization that my friends were already beginning to climb! My anxiety increased as I watched them.

Do I turn back? My whole being shouted, "Yes!" *Will I regret it later? I really want to get to the top, but…*

I voiced my uncertainties to my friends. They dismissed my fears and encouraged me to stick it out. Questioning my own sanity, I decided at least to attempt the climb.

I chose a path that seemed easiest. My friend Tom was ahead of me. Then, suddenly, he slipped and slid backward about 10 feet! I watched, paralyzed, until he stopped himself and assured us he was all right. My heart was hammering.

Now those who had tried the other way came back; it had not worked. Consoling myself that my friend Seth would be right behind me, I shakily began the ascent. The "path" led up a narrow area between

The difficulties only increased from that point on, with scary spot after scary spot. Though I knew I should not look down, I could not always ignore the long drop to the boulders below. My breathing sped up, but my heart pounded even faster, growing loud in my ears.

What do you notice? — These notes are what the students discussed or [redacted] offered

- Too much punctuation, particularly commas and periods.
  - what effect do too many commas have? → distracting
  - periods " ? → choppy
- Began sentence with "my" a lot

What is this piece of writing made up of?
- words
- narration and dialogue
  - [redacted] stresses the importance of dialogue in narrative as it shows instead of telling

Goals for improving your own writing:

1. ____________________

Note. The highlighted section of the Venn Diagram is an explanation of step three and four of the 5-Step writing process, Revision and Editing. The editing balloon details the final steps in completing the finished product. The Exemplar that is highlighted was coded as "Writing Theory—Mentorship", not "linearism"

Figure 7

Presence of Metacognitive Knowledge

Revising Our Personal Writing

Revising vs. Editing

(Making it sound better) (Making it look better)

Turning worn out words into vivid words

Adding specific descriptions, explanations, and details!

Changing letters to CAPITAL or lowercase

Correcting misspelled words

Adding, deleting, or changing punctuation

, ? ! .

Indenting paragraphs

Improving the quality of the writing

Exemplar:

This is a section of a personal response about the experience one student had learning to overcome her fear of heights, leaning on her friends (both physically and metaphorically) for support.

The climb ascended steeply above us. Along the right edge, the jungle hugged the rocks; passage through its trees did not look feasible. The majority of my view was filled with rocks. Looming high to the sky, the boulders rose in a tiered manner. Peering back down toward the river, I saw a steep slope of rocks all the way to the water. All I could think about was how far it would be to fall.

My tense thoughts were interrupted by the realization that my friends were already beginning to climb! My anxiety increased as I watched them.

Do I turn back? My whole being shouted, "Yes!" *Will I regret it later? I really want to get to the top, but...*

I voiced my uncertainties to my friends. They dismissed my fears and encouraged me to stick it out. Questioning my own sanity, I decided at least to attempt the climb.

I chose a path that seemed easiest. My friend Tom was ahead of me. Then, suddenly, he slipped and slid backward about 10 feet! I watched, paralyzed, until he stopped himself and assured us he was all right. My heart was hammering.

Now those who had tried the other way came back; it had not worked. Consoling myself that my friend Seth would be right behind me, I shakily began the ascent. The "path" led up a narrow area between boulders. In it, we reached a place where there just were no good handholds. Seth braced my foot, and

The difficulties only increased from that point on, with scary spot after scary spot. Though I knew I should not look down, I could not always ignore the long drop to the boulders below. My breathing sped up, but my heart pounded even faster, growing loud in my ears.

What do you notice? — These notes are what the students discussed or [redacted] offered

- Too much punctuation, particularly commas and periods
  - what effect do too many commas have? → distracting
  - " " periods " ? → choppy
- Began sentence with "my" a lot

"What is this piece of writing made up of?"

- words
- narration and dialogue
  - [redacted] stresses the importance of dialogue in narrative as it shows instead of telling

Goals for improving your own writing:

1. ____________________

2.

Note. The highlighted section of the Venn Diagram includes advice about considering what one's writing is doing, such as "help the writing flow", "helping the reader read along smoothly". The highlighted section in the brainstorming box is a question Maggie posed to the students as they looked at the task asking, "what is this piece of writing made up of?" The final lines indicate a space for students to set goals for their writing

From document collection and analysis, I was able to garner a stronger sense of what sort of thinking she expects from her students, and coupled with observations, interviews, and I gathered information that I believe captures Maggie's pedagogical understandings and how they present themselves in her practice. The most commonly occurring pedagogical themes (in order of highest to lowest frequency) were rhetorical knowledge, writing theory implementation, metacognitive knowledge, collaborative practices, and contextual knowledge factors. The following sections of this chapter detail Maggie's practice, the aforementioned most common pedagogical understandings and other emergent themes.

Evidence of Rhetorical Knowledge

> *"Look at this poem and tell me what you notice. What is the poet doing in this writing?" (Maggie, English 30-2 Lesson 9, March 25, 2019)*

Understanding the rhetorical needs of a writing task requires complex thinking on behalf of the writer. It involves understanding multiple facets of the text: the audience, the form, and the techniques involved in completing the task itself. Covino (2001) asserts that a rhetorical pedagogy "consists in encouraging writing that is not restricted to self-expression or the acontextual generation of syntactic structures or the formulaic obedience to rules, but instead keeps in view the skills and contingencies that attend a variety of situations and circumstances" (p. 37), a definition that interlaces the necessity for contextual variables to shape the rhetorical response to a task. While it is true that rhetoric is responsive to a context, those contexts must be understood not only as the social situation of the writing, but also in the form of the piece itself. It is only within the confines of the interaction between writer, audience, and context that appropriate

rhetorical choices can be made (Covino, 2001), and a writer can successfully deliver a convincing and appropriate text.

In Maggie's classroom, rhetorical knowledge and practice dominates her lessons. Among the 23 lessons I observed, Maggie referenced or put into practice rhetorical strategy awareness 221 times. During our first long interview, I asked Maggie about her knowledge and her perceptions of her teaching in the five pedagogical areas I propose in the Writing Pedagogies Model. Her definition and exploration of rhetorical awareness mirrors what we see in Covino's (2001) exploration. She notes that rhetorical awareness is directly linked to the expectations of the audience, especially in 30-2, when students are told ""The audience is the diploma marker so do this", or having them recognize "hey you have to fill out this application. You have to write a cover letter, let's talk about what that audience sounds like"" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). The requirement for rhetorical needs to reflect the expectations of the audience and form are evident in her understanding. She continues, describing the importance of rhetorical scenarios mimicking the "real world". She tells students to "recognize that you're going to do stuff that people are going to judge you on" (personal communication, February 14, 2019), which she sees as a vital part of successful writing.

There appeared to be three common strategies Maggie utilized to target rhetorical awareness. The first was the use of exemplar texts to analyze various structural and stylistic choices. During these lessons, Maggie would provide students with various levels of exemplars. Most often, this was done as a preparatory measure for the English 30-2 diploma exam, where students were then asked to analyze the writing for its rhetorical strengths and weaknesses. Students would read the writing and then highlight lines they found effective, or choose an aspect of the writing such as supporting evidence, and

create an argument for why they felt it scored the way it did using the rubric as a guide.

The second strategy was to ask students to examine rubrics for keys to understanding the audience. Over the course of the sixteen weeks I observed her, I saw Maggie go over rubrics with her students for almost every assignment. She would discuss with them the meaning of each category and ask students to reflect on why that would be important to the audience they were writing for. Often, again, this was done in the context of understanding the provincial standards as a way to prepare students for their standardized exam.

Lastly, Maggie would include direct instruction on form and various features of a genre. For example, when reviewing with her students about writing an expository body paragraph, she reminded them of the acronym PEEL (which stands for point, evidence, explain, and link) as a way for students to remember the structure of a well-developed paragraph.

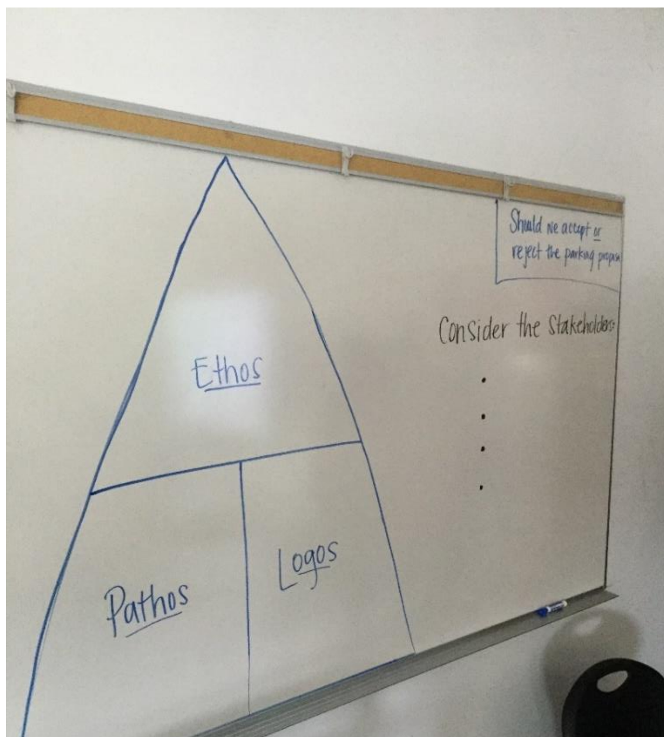
From the data compiled on rhetorical knowledge awareness, two themes emerged from her practice. The first was attention to the rhetorical strategies a writer can use and the second, most prevalent, was the rhetorical features of a form or genre. Most often, Maggie would focus on the text features of a form, so students had a “template” of sorts to work from and reference in the form of a mentor text. Sometimes, that mentor text was an exemplar from a student, and sometimes it was an author’s professional and published piece of writing. The dissection of the mentor text into its features served as a guidepost for her students to begin their own work, and it was, by far, the most common form of rhetorical instruction.

Her attention to the rhetorical strategies a writer can use was also present, although it was not the central focus of her teaching. For example, in a lesson with her

English 30-2 students about writing introductory paragraphs, Maggie discussed writing "hook" sentences. The bulk of the focus of the lesson was prompting kids to identify the purpose of the hook through questioning like "what should a hook *do"*, "why is a hook important?", and "where does a hook belong in an introduction and why?", and much less about strategies students can employ to write a hook such as rhetorical questions, bold statements, providing context or a definition (English 30-2 Lesson 7, March 6, 2019). Again and again, Maggie utilized varying strategies to allow student to explore the rhetorical weight of a text, primarily through what it should look and sound like. In her grade 9 class, Maggie introduced the persuasive business letter assignment by reviewing the three classic rhetorical appeals of ethos, logos, and pathos (LA9 Lesson 4, April 30, 2019). From there, she would ask students to consider the stakeholders of the issue. This is a process she repeated for her grade 12s as they prepared for their own persuasive writing task. Figure 8 is a photograph of her whiteboard at the beginning of this lesson where through group discussion, information about the rhetorical appeals and audience considerations were documented (English 30-2 Lesson 13, May 27, 2019).

Figure 8

Rhetorical Appeals Brainstorm Organizer



Another example, from a lesson about writing thesis statements for literary exploration essays, included a presentation on developing an effective main idea which introduced the topic of main ideas to students by stating that, “Every piece of writing has a main idea”, and showing two examples from different advertisements (English 30-2 Lesson 6, March 5, 2019). At that point, students were divided into groups where they chose one of two essay topics to create a meaningful thesis about. They had three objectives:

1. You must: Choose on and come up with an answer (this is your main idea)
2. You should: Be as specific as you can
3. You could: Relate it to a text and explain how it’s true (English 30-2 Lesson 6, March 5, 2019).

Students collaborated to develop a thesis statement, then as a group analyze and evaluate the quality of other groups’ work. From there, Maggie began a discussion about the parts of a successful thesis statement, what it is made of, and what it needs to include. This lesson exemplified an organic approach to teaching the rhetorical demands of a form—students were able to view, create, analyze, and discover the strategies for

themselves.

However, what is most interesting about Maggie's understanding of rhetorical awareness is that her theoretical knowledge and her practices are not fully aligned. As I thematically analyzed the data from her lessons including lesson process, handouts, assignments, prompts and discussions, two dominant forms of rhetorical awareness took shape. The first was attention to the rhetorical needs of a specific form. In a more abstract approach, this includes reminding students of the different parts of a story, or in the case of a lesson about crafting a visual response, stating "organization for an essay is different than for a story or a poem", then asking students to recall what they know about the difference between those structures (personal communication, 30-2 Lesson 2, February 1, 2019). In a more direct approach, this practice looked like memorization of form. For example, when teaching her LA 9 class about the business letter, her primary rhetorical strategy was memorization of the elements of the form and she focused many consecutive lessons of "drill" type practice to ensure that students met the criteria for form. This meant frequently quizzing students on correct completion of a task (personal communication, a product focused pedagogy), but as she worked towards students generating content for their letters she shifted in her approach. She as she wanted to ensure students knew to be clear about their intentions to fulfill the purpose of the letter, and by such she made sure to discuss, review, and practice identifying and using varying rhetorical appeals in persuasive writing. She noted that she felt "they have a pretty good handle on ethos, pathos, and logos and we're going to talk about how you incorporate that into a letter," (personal communication, April 17, 2019). When inquiring about this process, she noted that "I am hoping its a key to helping them memorize, basically. And that's something we talked about yesterday, that sometimes you just have to memorize

things and you just have to know what order they go in, so what I was hoping was that the continual practice would just help them to memorize it" (personal communication, April 30, 2019).

Her beliefs about students sometimes "just needing to memorize" form for the sake of a standardized test is an extreme example of her practice, but it is one that she utilizes in that context yearly. She strongly believes that in order for students to find success, they need to have been shown exemplars, have rubrics explained to them, practice, and explicitly instructed on rhetorical techniques. She notes the importance of teaching them the format like, ""Okay if you want to write something that looks like this, this is how you do it", and teaching them "this is what goes into your introduction. This is what goes into your body paragraphs. How do you transition?" (personal communication, June 3, 2019) allows for her students to find success in this context.

It is important here to note that when it comes to a standardized exam such as the LA 9 PAT, the expectations of student writing is "very prescriptive" (personal communication, June 3, 2019), and she jokes she has become "institutionalized" when it comes to accepting her role in preparing students for the forms required of them. She observes that in end, "they have to write these exams and while I would like the opportunity for them to get more creative, I am there to teach curriculum and make sure we pass" (personal communication, June 3, 2019). This is a sentiment widely shared by teachers, as evidenced by scholars such as Applebee & Langer (2011) and Hillocks (2002), who note the direct impact standardized exams have on instructional delivery. When, during our final long interview of the term I asked her about certain practices that she feel are effective, she names her memorization and writing-drill based approach to rhetoric as one of her more successful endeavors, stating that after all the rote practice her

class did “they totally got it” (personal communication, June 3, 2019).

The more I looked at the process by which Maggie employed techniques of rhetorical awareness, the more I came to notice a small misalignment between some practices and what she first identified as central to rhetorical awareness: the reciprocal nature of form and writing to audience. As the data analysis portion of my research wrapped, the more this made sense as contextual factors of writing were her least attended to pedagogical understanding. This is one of the greatest challenges of rhetorical instruction in Maggie’s practice. The lack of real-world writing forms and exercises severely limited her ability to offer students genuine practice with responding to the expectations of an audience. Despite her understanding of its importance, the lack of authentic rhetorical opportunities is a missed opportunity for more powerful writing instruction. Most often, she would attempt to recreate this process by rubric analysis, whereby students would look at the marking rubric to get a sense of the audience, or in this case, Maggie as “the marker” for the assignments, expectations in terms of rhetorical approach. This most often existed in specific categories pertaining to voice, organization, and syntax, but even so it creates a limited reality in which to write. Other challenges of rhetorical awareness in the classroom included a shortfall in student skills. When asked about areas that she sees knowledge gaps, she identified a number or rhetorical form or strategy areas that students struggle with. For instance, she referred to their lack of confidence and ability with the form of essay introductions and conclusions (personal communication, April 17, 2019), understanding more than one way to write an essay (personal communication, March, 5, 2019), and variance in transition words and phrases (personal communication, April 17, 2019) as key areas that students, over years of her teaching, continued to be challenged by. It is difficult to say what the root of these

challenges is, but my senses would guide me towards looking at a dependence on CTR models and the five-paragraph essay throughout their schooling.

Evidence of Writing Theory

Theories of writing pedagogy provide a guidepost for teachers when planning and executing lessons and assessing student work. A lot of teacher practice is littered with evidence of writing theories from socio-cultural, expressive, collaborative, mentorship models, and current traditional rhetoric. Even if a teacher does not have the specific vocabulary to name the theory behind their practice, what is done in a writing classroom is often done with intention. This was evident in Maggie's practice in many of her approaches from rhetorically analyzing a text to keeping students on a linear path to completion, she could express her goals behind the strategies she used. Through this study, a point of interest that was revealed was to what extent do teachers need to be able to name their practice? In their 2016 project entitled "Naming What we Know", Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle aimed to answer that question. By compiling information from scholars in the field, their aim was to provide, in a sense, a "guidebook" of threshold concepts in writing instruction. The purpose, they argue that these 'threshold concepts are critical for continued learning and participation within a practice" (p. 2). It is by understanding the threshold concepts, which in this case roughly translate to the pedagogical understandings of my model and the expanse of writing theories outline, that a teacher can harness their power in their own instruction. Although teachers in Alberta must hold, at minimum, a four year undergraduate degree, the questions I must ask is at what point in their education do teachers learn the essential questions of *how* should they teach writing, and *why* should they teach it that way?

Maggie grappled with this question when I posed it to her: “how did you learn how to teach students how to write?” (First Long Interview, February 14, 2019). Her answer, I believe, is a revealing and likely all-too common one. She explains:

> The curriculum gives you a little bit of direction, like what are the musts and the should, [but in the beginning], I think I relied a little too heavily on my own experiences as a student. I got a little bit of support from one of my colleagues who was sort of like “here are some strategies you can sort of use, some outlines”, and of course, the internet (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Maggie openly revealed how when she finished her undergraduate training, she did not feel prepared for the specifics on how to teach students to write. She acknowledges the difficulty in teacher training programs like the one she graduated from in preparing teachers for teaching a wide range of grades. (In the program she graduated from, undergraduate students complete practicums at almost all levels ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 12, which poses potential difficulty in deep diving in any one area). By the end she admits she knew how to do a lot of basic instructional tasks such as creating comprehension questions for reading but was not well equipped for teaching writing (personal communication, February 14, 2019). Over time and experience, Maggie now feels that her initial understanding of writing instruction was flawed, and after 12 years and more specific professional development in this area, she knows that writing is a process that is made up of different skills; it is not an innate gift that some have and some don’t. She notes that she wants her students to see writing as a process, where students automatically learn approach a writing task thinking, ““the first thing I am going to do is plan, okay the second thing I am going to do is draft”, so no matter where they are, no matter what the context, they’re going to do those things” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). While discussing this with her, I could not help being struck by the

enduring question, how different might her instruction look if she left her university program being able to name what is known about writing?

During my observations, Maggie engaged in many activities and strategies that are connected to writing theory. For example, she utilized peer revision, the writing process stages, and rhetorical analysis on more than one occasion. However, when asked directly about these choices, she could not name these theories in a refined way, despite their frequent presence in her repertoire. While she may not know how to articulate the academic nomenclature, her practice revolves around two dominant, yet oddly oppositional, writing theories: Current traditional rhetoric and mentorship models. Other writing theories that present themselves are used more as supportive strategies in the development of ideas: collaborative theory, expressivism, and socio-cultural theories.

Presence of Current Traditional Rhetoric

April 30, 3019

I find myself seated in my usual place in the classroom, ready to observe my first LA9 class since the departure of Maggie's student teacher. The plan for the day includes discussing the format of a business letter, a required writing task on the grade 9 provincial exam. As the lesson proceeds, Maggie asks the students to take out their notes and copy information regarding format on the board. At the end of the lesson, she reminds them they will have a quiz on this information the next day.

Current Traditional Rhetoric (CTR) refers to a linear approach to writing instruction where product creation is central to the purpose of writing. In Maggie's classroom, she incorporates many strategies that align with product-based writing practices such as direct instruction on a form, drill based practice and quizzes on parts of

a letter (LA9 Lesson 4, April 30, 2019), and a focus on a linear writing process—"first I plan, and then I draft" (personal communication, April 17, 2019)—providing structures in which students can complete phases of the writing process in—to develop content. For example, she provided students with numerous planning outlines and she impressed upon me her belief in the use of the acronym PEEL (Point, Evidence, Example, Link) when instructing her students to write effective paragraphs (personal communication, April 2, 2019). While discussing the purpose of implementing a structure like that for students, Maggie responded saying "I am hoping that kids are seeing that the structures we provide for them in the instruction are actually helpful" (personal communication, February 15, 2019). In scenarios like these, the focus of the lesson is to have students produce a text with semi-firm expectations of form. By doing this, Maggie retains her position in the classroom as instructor, as she imparts knowledge and strategies to students, much like the traditional role of teacher has been. Figure 9 is an artifact from one such lesson, a cloze notes sheet on format.

Figure 9

Fill in the Blank Notes on Business Letter Format

Parts of the Business Letter

1. Heading: The heading consists of ____.

501 Spring Street
Regina SK R3T 4N7
January 3, 2007

2. Inside Address: The inside address consists of the ____________________________ of the person to whom you are writing. It usually appears four lines below the heading if a word processor is used or one line below if it is handwritten.

Sam Hunt, Director
The Knitting Mill
1409 3 Avenue
Toronto ON L3V 7O1

3.______________________: The most traditional salutation or greeting for a business letter is ________ followed by Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Miss and the person's last name, followed by a ________.

Dear Mr. Smith:
Dear Ms. Black:
Dear Mrs. Brown:
Dear Miss Green:

4. Body: The body is the main part of the letter in which you write what you have to say to the addressee. Skip ___________________________ after the salutation.

- Be concise. Ensure that sufficient information is given so that your purpose is clearly understood and your request well received.
- Business letters are usually formal, so the language that you use should also be formal.

5. Closing: The closing is the ending to your letter. It appears at the ____, directly under the body. Only the first word in the closing should be capitalized. It is always followed by a ____________.

___________________________,
___________________________, These are the two you should pick from.

6. Signature: The signature is your full name signed. Your signature should appear directly below the closing. It should always be ___________________________.

7. ___________________________

Presence of Mentorship Models

In contrast to her use of CTR methods, Maggie also embraced impactful elements of mentorship models of instruction. She acknowledges the influence of current thinkers and practicing teachers such as Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher who she has invested time and professional development resources into learning and adopting similar practices. In her practice she states:

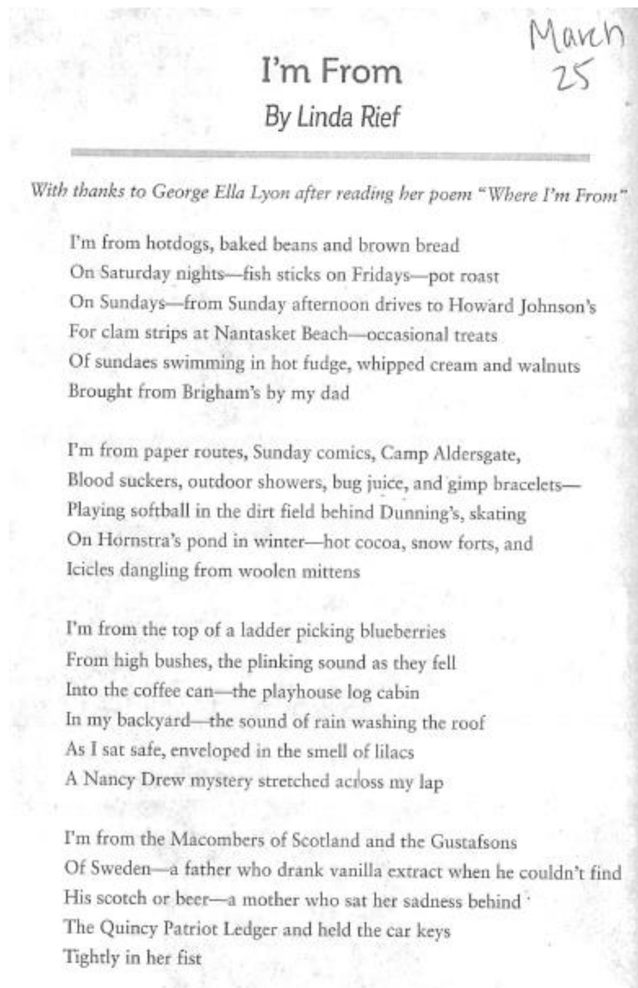
> For me it's really about using exemplars and mentor texts. It was really life changing for me. It was a part of the era as a student that you made the directions vague enough that students could do anything, but really there was a right answer. And so as a teacher, that was initially my feelings; it was that we never gave rubrics, we never showed kids what we expected them to able to do because that was giving them the answer… and that's not at all what we need to do. We need to show them the bar so that they can meet or exceed it. The more we use mentor texts and the more we use exemplars, the more we show them what really good writing looks like and allow then to experience that really fantastic writing and then hopefully emulate those skills in their own. (personal communication, February 14, 2019)

These mentorship sessions are accompanied by individualized writing conferences, which she tries to do at least once a term with her students. Given the size of her classes and the needs of her students, she recognizes that in an ideal world these conferences would be held much more often (personal communication, May 27, 2019), as the benefit of them is significant. It is important to note that there is some risk in adhering too closely to mentor text models. While the idea behind providing models from which to work from, a teacher may fall into the trap of aligning those mentor texts too close to templates. In this practice, the value of mentor texts is tarnished as students are now following CTR strategies in different clothes—where mirroring strategies becomes mimicry. An important distinguishing characteristic of mentorship models is to engage students in the contextual situation of a piece of writing and talk through those choices, not only the rhetorical moves a writer makes for effect.

Along with the theories of researcher/practitioners like Kittle and Gallagher, Maggie follows the basic model of Fisher and Frey (personal communication, 2007): I do, we do, you do. This method utilizes direct instruction, followed by guided instruction, and lastly independent practice. Maggie does this many times, first modeling the process through exploration of a mentor text, then in small group practice or talk, and finally by introducing the assignment. Her rationale for this approach was “I am hoping by using mentor texts or exemplars to do that [metacognitive reflection] will help, but part of it is having them listen to my thinking…representing my metacognition.” (English 30-2 Lesson 8, March 25, 2019). Figure 10 is taken from a poetry lesson where she exemplified this process. She gave the students the poem “I’m From” by Linda Rief, had them read it through making note of what they noticed. After discussing what stood out to students in terms of content and description, she read aloud her own version of the poem she had written the night before.

Figure 10

"I'm From" by Linda Rief



March 25

I'm From

By Linda Rief

With thanks to George Ella Lyon after reading her poem "Where I'm From"

I'm from hotdogs, baked beans and brown bread
On Saturday nights—fish sticks on Fridays—pot roast
On Sundays—from Sunday afternoon drives to Howard Johnson's
For clam strips at Nantasket Beach—occasional treats
Of sundaes swimming in hot fudge, whipped cream and walnuts
Brought from Brigham's by my dad

I'm from paper routes, Sunday comics, Camp Aldersgate,
Blood suckers, outdoor showers, bug juice, and gimp bracelets—
Playing softball in the dirt field behind Dunning's, skating
On Hornstra's pond in winter—hot cocoa, snow forts, and
Icicles dangling from woolen mittens

I'm from the top of a ladder picking blueberries
From high bushes, the plinking sound as they fell
Into the coffee can—the playhouse log cabin
In my backyard—the sound of rain washing the roof
As I sat safe, enveloped in the smell of lilacs
A Nancy Drew mystery stretched across my lap

I'm from the Macombers of Scotland and the Gustafsons
Of Sweden—a father who drank vanilla extract when he couldn't find
His scotch or beer—a mother who sat her sadness behind
The Quincy Patriot Ledger and held the car keys
Tightly in her fist

This mentor-text lesson was fairly fluid, allowing for students to pick and choose text structures that appealed to them as well as meaningful examples from their own lives. The context of this assignment was personal reflection, so not a lot of time was spent on dissecting it beyond discussion around what the details the poet chose tells us about her life. Initially, this assignment was meant to be a formative assessment, but students took to it so well that she decided after reading the finished products to assign a grade. She explained, "we've spent so much time on it, and I feel like they are doing a really good job of it that I will assess it… I think I just want to honour the fact that they have spent so

much time on it and that they have put some genuine effort into it by grading it" (English 30-2 Lesson 8, March 25, 2019). By doing this, she believed that the grade served as a reward for the student's time and genuine effort.

Presence of Other Theories

Other theories present in her instruction are first that of collaboration, which occurs either as whole class or small group discussion to generate ideas. Collaboration will be discussed further in the section about collaborative knowledge, but in terms of practice as it related to theory, the important takeaway from my observations was that most of this practice occurs in the pre-writing and post-drafting stages. None of my observations or collections of evidence captured collaboration during the writing stage, which I believe to reflect her CTR approach. There is, to some extent, a belief that the writing part of writing is an isolated activity, and only once completed should it be shared and evaluated by others.

Occasionally there would be evidence of other theories as well, namely expressivism and socio-cultural theories. When students would be asked to write in their response journals, they were often encouraged to free write their thoughts, ideas, and opinions without consideration for form, audience, or broader purpose. Most often, the purpose of this kind of writing was merely to express and explore an idea for oneself—an articulation of expressive pedagogy. Expressions of Socio-cultural theory were more limited, though, only presenting themselves a mere three times. The first, was in reference to teaching grammar and syntax. Maggie struggled with the best approach to integrate lessons into her practice, especially at the grade 12 level as it is a course already pressed for time. She acknowledges understanding that the research suggests that teaching those concepts outside of a social context doesn't work (personal communication, February 4,

2019), however her success when attempting to teach it in a context has not been fruitful either. In relation to improving voice, she later goes on to note the importance of students to try out voices and styles in a playful environment, finding a voice to suit the situation (personal communication, April 17, 2019), which was a practice reflected in her lesson of that day where students had to write on the same prompt from three different perspectives (English 30-2 Lesson 11, April 1, 2019). Finally, she notes that the nature of her feedback in writing conferences is sensitive to the individual student, their context, and abilities, so this context sensitive theory is reflected in her approach with assessment, and less with instruction and writing tasks.

Writing theory presents several challenges in the classroom. First, it is easy to root practice in theory if you have comprehensive knowledge of various theories. However, it is not true for all teachers to have that kind of detailed knowledge, based on their teacher education program and/or their access to professional development later in their careers. After reading through my initial interpretations of her practice, Maggie noted that she was pleased to hear that her practice was not devoid of any writing theory, stating “Honestly, I think I've been teaching writing in a way that makes sense to me and in a way that I think kids will respond well to. I never think about it from a theory perspective, but it seems that theory and what I would call best practice are the same” (personal communication, November 18. 2019). This demonstrates a potential problem, that where teachers gain the knowledge to implement sound theories in their classroom is problematic—either they don’t receive it early enough in their education, don’t know where or how to access it later in their careers, or they may not recognize these practices as sound for any specific reason.

Evidence of Metacognitive Knowledge

According to Veenman, Hout-Wolters and Afflenbach (2006), metacognition is foundational in executing writing. It is the ability to reflect upon the requirements and skills that task requires. They assert metacognition can be divided into two facets: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive skill. They explain metacognitive knowledge refers to the interplay between the writer, the writing task, and the strategies required to complete that task. It is declarative knowledge; an ability to execute the function of writing (p. 4). In the context of Maggie's classroom, this was a frequent occurrence, having students often reflect on the text they were emulating (or creating), the strategies needed to fulfil the goal, and thinking about how they, as the writer, could complete it in their own voice.

On the other hand, metacognitive skill refers to the monitoring, or the attention to the feedback loop of the thoughts and behaviours performed while writing and controlling of outcomes of a task. In practice, it is the writer asking themselves, "What am I doing?". Controlling the outcomes refers to the ways in which we modify thoughts and behaviours to evaluate the effectiveness of what you are doing. It is asking, "is this working?" and "how can I change it to make it work better?" Metacognition, both in the knowledge and the skills, is vital for students to work across genres, contexts (Brent, 2011) and to be a successful writer when outside the safety of classroom walls. As a writer completes the writing process, they must monitor and evaluate the progress of their thinking by reading, re-reading, reflecting, and reviewing to ensure their text completes the requirements (Hacker et al., 2009). This process, while seemingly invisible, is not intrinsic to all

writers. It is a process that requires instruction, and in Maggie's classroom is an area of high frequency.

During our first long interview, I asked Maggie to explain her understanding of metacognition as it pertains to writing ability. Her response reveals a basic understanding of the meaning, practices, and importance of metacognition, reflecting that:

> It's about identification of metacognition, even at the grade 12 level. Understanding that creativity and authorial intention are really about making decision and so identifying that. So, in grade 10 for example, we take a piece of literature and the have to write it from alternative perspectives. But we talk about initially, why might a person make the decision to write like this? What does that do? So, thinking about the authors intention but also their own intention. If I am going to write about something, what is it that I need to structure? How might I structure this so I might create a particular effect. (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

Daily, Maggie encouraged students to understand the process of metacognition, with a total of 75 occurrences of metacognitive knowledge practice over 24 artifacts and 45 occurrences of metacognitive skill practice over 17 artifacts.

In the post-analysis summary I sent Maggie for review, I indicated that the many instances of metacognitive knowledge were largely focused on *production* of a writing product, whereas metacognitive skills were focused on reflecting on the *process* of writing. When I presented her with my findings, I simplified the language to that of "Product-based Metacognition" (instead of metacognitive knowledge) and "Process-based metacognition" (instead of metacognitive skills) to better reflect her planning and execution of these concepts.

In the Classroom: Metacognitive Knowledge (Product-based)

The majority of the metacognitive instructional practices that Maggie employs stem from a desire for the students to think about and internalize the topics, tasks, and genres that they are asked to write about. Metacognitive knowledge is laced throughout

all stages of Maggie's writing instruction. From initial brainstorming and discussion, encouraging students to pause and reflect on what they've done, and at the end through student-teacher writing conferences, she works to solidify how students should think about their writing. In the early stages of writing, the brainstorming piece, she attempts to engage them in some reflective thinking about the task by connecting it to some personal knowledge or experiences. She explains "it's easiest to step into thinking about the topic when I ask them to respond personally, like "what do you think about this?" They don't have to connect to anything outside, but they are already defining the terms for themselves. In their own ways they are thinking about it and I find that it extends better to the next more critical thinking question" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). This process, that of asking students to jump into a task by personally connecting to aspects of the text or text prompt is Maggie's first step toward encouraging metacognitive thinking. She is essentially asking students to explain what they know the topic to mean or what they know it should look like. This is an important step in executing the task and working towards a completed product. During a lesson on writing literary essays, Maggie moved from the initial brainstorming piece around the central question "what makes a strong main idea" into how a writer now takes that idea and turns it into a longer piece (English 30-2 Lesson 5, March 6, 2019). Throughout this lesson, she encouraged students to discuss as whole group and with their desk partners about structural elements of an essay prompting them by saying, "You'll be tempted to discuss three characters, but it's better to discuss a more complex idea. Why might that be?" and "What are the things you need to do as a writer to take an idea and stretch it into an essay?" (English 30-2 Lesson 5, March 6, 2019). Through these discussions, students employed what they knew about the structure they were writing about, filling in the gaps regarding effective introductions,

choices for body paragraphs, and conclusions, engaging students in active metacognitive knowledge. Occasionally, students took the brainstorming to places she did not intend, thinking too literally about a topic, where she would remind students to refocus on bigger ideas that would serve the purpose of the piece, instead of a character that could be discussed. Though gentle reminders of alternate ways of thinking about a task, Maggie encouraged students to go beyond the forms they have written again and again and add their own voice and intention.

Once the writing was completed, Maggie offered comments on student work meant to deepen their thinking about what they have produced. This is done either traditionally through written comments in the margins or at the end of a piece or through one-on-one conferences with students. This process is important to her as, and she makes note of the fact that when providing feedback on completed work she rarely comments at length on the grammatical or structural errors present in the writing, because that's not where the real teaching needs are for most of her students. She notes that when too many written comments are made about repeated errors, it "gets overwhelming" (personal communication, April 17, 2019), and that if she has only got a few minutes of attention from each student it is not worth spending that time on errors they can look at themselves. Instead, she finds it more valuable to probe deeper into the writing and help them assess "where they're coming from and then trying to reveal whether or not they did that. So, what was their intention, what was their purpose, and how did they do on that?" (personal communication, April 30, 2019). It is this reflecting on purpose as it relates to form and task that is at the heart of Maggie's metacognitive knowledge instruction. To confirm what she was telling me, I asked Maggie for copies of student work that had typical comments on it. Many of the margin and end-comments were as she had explained, not

corrections as much as questions about the work that needed to be answered or connected more deeply to the purpose. For example, prompting kids to "Tell me more about…" (30-2 LE Artifact 1) or "this is a good start, but it doesn't develop the situation effectively" (LA9 Artifact 3). The goal, ultimately, being to encourage kids to look back at their piece and identify gaps in their thinking or execution of the thinking, and not only about the correctness of the writing.

In the Classroom: Metacognitive Skills (Process-based)

During the writing process, as students have independent time to write, Maggie shifts her approach from metacognitive knowledge to skills. She is never caught sitting down. She circulates around to students, asking them questions about their writing such as "how does this idea connect to your main idea?" (English 30-2 Lesson 6, March 11, 2019) and answering questions. The most common question she is asked, she admits, is one that is common to many writing instructors: "how long does this piece have to be?" She says her response to that question varies depending on the student, but when she can she leans into the metacognitive reflection and monitoring we see in metacognitive skills. Part of her observations include assessing the depth and complexity of the ideas that students are tackling and helping them readjust their thinking as they are working. This is a difficult task, as metacognitive knowledge and skills can be incorrectly held which makes them difficult to change (Veenman et al., 2006, p. 4). One of the strategies she employed this semester to combat the metacognitive skill rut was through double-entry journals. As students read their novels, they were asked to make observations about their reading and write down questions they still had. She says that "as I was walking around [I noticed] they had plot summary. They know how to write down what happened, but they're not good at figuring out if stuff is important" (personal communication, April 2,

2019). This is an important piece not only of the reading process but of the writing process. If, for instance, a student does not have a comprehensive understanding of the role that details play in developing narrative, how would they be able to reproduce it in their own writing? Maggie notes that "a good reader knows that a good character is unfolded…and so I am hoping that their journals help reveal that a little bit" (personal communication, April 2, 2019). The journals served as what she called a "collection plate" (personal communication, April 2, 2019) for the ideas, so that when it came to the end of unit writing task, they had really great structural notes, ideas, and quotes to use in their own writing. It is the thinking through of the process and skills needed to write that Maggie hones in her students.

Aside from her instructional techniques during writing, Maggie weaves in some skill-based thinking in the form of reflective checklists at the beginning stages, middles stages, and end stages of writing. For instance, Figure 11 is a copy of one of the checklists she gave for students to pause and think on before turning in a "one-pager" project for her English 30-2s independent novel study.

Figure 11

Night One-Pager Checklist

REQUIRED ELEMENTS:

- ❑ The entire page is filled with color, images, or text
- ❑ Every element is clearly and neatly labeled
- ❑ My one-pager includes the title, author, and genre
- ❑ All of my quotes are properly cited in MLA Format. "quote" (Author last name pg. no).
- ❑ I included, cited, and thoroughly explained 3 quotes
- ❑ I included 3 big-picture questions that ask *how* or *why* questions. I thoroughly answered each question with a detailed answer that includes a quote (introduce, cite, explain).
- ❑ I included and labeled three illustrations that connect to the book.
- ❑ I included my figurative language, setting, timeline, song element.
- ❑ My handwriting is neat and legible

While this looks like a simple checklist for completion, Maggie's hope is that this pause-and-appraise skill will become more automatic for students during. Eventually, they will stop and ask themselves as they write "have I completed what I need to in this section?" and "have I met the expectation that my explanations are thorough?" These are the metacognitive skills central to Maggie's instruction.

Evidence of Collaborative Process Knowledge

April 17, 2019.

I walk into the room and notice that the room has been rearranged from its previous organization of rows of desk pairs. The room is now comprised of pods of four desks with the odd pair remaining scattered throughout the space. The use of space now invites students to face one another and to share their experiences in reading and writing, and I am called back to the first long interview when Maggie recalled words from a former professor: "Writing flows on a river of talk" she said, and this room now reflects that creed.

It did not take many hours of observations for it to become clear that Maggie values the role of discussion in the formulation of ideas. These discussions happen at all levels of the writing process, but most often in the beginning during times of brainstorming and initial idea generation. These discussions range from think-pair-share strategies to whole class brainstorming and even classroom carousels. Her view is that "immediate feedback is important, whether from me or from their peers" (personal communication, April 17, 2019), and allowing for opportunities to talk about their work is a vital step in the process. As the tasks progress through completion, students are given opportunities to share and compare their work, however, they often decline this opportunity. Finally, after their drafts have been submitted, Maggie invites students to participate in writing conferences with her, to discuss one-on-one the strengths and the needs of the writing, and she asks students to think about how well they accomplished the intention of the task. She admits that in recent years, the collaborative process "is something that I've really been working hard on, not only between students in the classroom but also collaboration between the author of a text and the students

themselves” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). In the past, she explains that collaboration has not always been front and centre of her instruction, but that as she learns more about writing and the detailed process that it requires, the more she focuses on collaboration in all her classes. She wants her students to learn that “everything you see is a choice, so what does that say about the author? What does that say about what they’re trying to get across in the piece?” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). This is important because understanding that writing is a collaboration between author and reader (Moore Howard, 2001, p.55) is as important as conversing with others to forge ideas.

Maggie has a firm handle on the strategies that make for an effective collaborative environment. She believes that to be of most use to her students, her role in collaboration is not to instruct but to guide, facilitate, and coach. When overseeing peer collaboration, she states her hope is that students see that “their skills are important to someone else” and “also that the voice of one of your peers is really important in your writing. If someone who’s your age doesn’t understand what you’re saying, that’s something you need to know” (personal communication, April 17, 2019). She encourages students to participate in collaboration as an audience member, responding to the experience of being a viewer, not an editor. “Minimally, there needs to be some encouragement,” she states, instructing her students that “You need to encourage your partner. They’re doing a good job, so find something they did well. Some other valuable things are the ability to point out when things are confusing” (personal communication, April 17, 2019). It is her view that collaboration partners fulfill an audience-only role, but “if they can offer suggestions: amazing, but that would be like third tier revision and editing. Really, its about “read this and tell that person why they’re doing a good job” (personal communication, April 17, 2019). It is with this frame that Maggie arranges her classroom to be the best

collaborative space as possible.

In order to understand the structure and the context of collaboration in Maggie's classroom, it is important that this one, unlike the other pedagogical understandings, is looked at through its challenges. Given Maggie's context, teaching in a medium-sized high school where students often may not know the students in their classes, Maggie finds it to be a challenge to get students to open up and share their ideas. Creation of a safe space for students to share their work is essential in effective collaboration, but as Maggie notes this group of 30-2s are especially challenging because they are quite hesitant to work together. This is partly because of a history within the class, where some kids have been perceived as judgmental about ideas, and partly because "in 30-2, I don't have kids who have the confidence to feel like that actually have talents to share. I have kids who have always felt they cannot write so they will actually do less when the know that someone else is going to read it because they are afraid" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). Creating a space that works to instill a sense of safety and reward the vulnerability it takes to share one's work is by far the most difficult challenge of a collaborative learning space. But as she learns more about her students each year, there are a few methods she implements to make that a little easier. First, it has to do with seating choice.

When you walk into Maggie's room and look at the desk arrangement, you notice an interesting set up. Whether it was the beginning of the year and most of the desks were in pairs, or near the end of the year when it was mostly pods, there was always the option for students to sit alone or with a group. This is a deliberate choice she makes in order to build a sense of safety with the kids, stating "when we do collaboration at the beginning of the year, which is really one the very first things that I do, they choose their own

partners" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). This is a way for students to feel more comfortable with the person who will be reading their work. Figure 12 is a photograph from the first day of classes. The desks are almost all arranged in pairings which easily allow student talk and collaboration.

Figure 12

Maggie's classroom

In cases where students are shy or are sitting alone, she offers them the 'out' of choosing her as their "peer" as a starting place. This is a method for opening the door for trust—trusting that you can share your work and not feel ashamed of it. Her hope is that over the course of the term, those students will find another student with whom they can share their work, free from fear of ridicule and judgment.

When introducing collaborative work, Maggie points out that she encourages students to think with a growth mindset, one where we acknowledge that everyone is in a different place and "everyone is doing the best they can with what they have" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). She wants to create an environment of support, not

competition, among writers, which she views as keystone of collaboration.

For these reasons, the majority of the collaboration seen in Maggie's classroom is peer to peer. It most often begins at the pre-planning or planning stages of writing, usually with generating ideas on a given topic. Students will discuss with one another ways to interpret a question, or what they notice about a given mentor text. For example, when analyzing the poem "I'm From" by Linda Rief as a mentor text to create their own poem, students spent about 5 minutes brainstorming what they noticed in the poem. Her goal getting them to talk about what they noticed was to get them thinking about the poem's structural elements and how the author used techniques like repetition and imagery (personal communication, March 25, 2019). Once students had discussed what the poem offers to each of them, they were able to work together to brainstorm elements of the story that is told through the poem. Through this analysis, students built their confidence in not only understanding the structure of the poem, but the meaning behind it. Aside from the peer to peer collaboration of constructing meaning from a text, Maggie also opened herself up to the collaborative process. While asking students to brainstorm a list of elements from their own lives that could be used in their own writing, she created and shared a list of her own on the board in front of them. She demonstrated how she might organize the lines, the details she would include to make the writing more vivid and constructed a poem which she then shared with her class. This was, no doubt, a scary experience, but it was a valuable one in that it created a tone in her class that it is okay to share your work, even if it is a rough draft. Finally, she opened the discussion up to the class for students to share their own lists and ideas, an exercise that garnered a lot of partner discussion and one brave student to share in front of the entire class. Through peer to peer collaboration and modeling of her own process, Maggie exemplified strategies of

collaboration being used in her room.

When she finally assigned them the task of writing their own poem to write using Rief's as a model, students were so well prepared to complete the task that their final products were outstanding. So much so that she later admitted she was originally going to use it as a formative assessment, but due to the care the students put into the work, she designed marking criteria to tangibly reward students for their efforts (personal communication, June 3, 2019).

Another important facet of Maggie's classroom is in her student-teacher collaborative processes. Aside from offering continual feedback from observing student work as it is being written, Maggie sets aside time for individualized conferencing. In her view, "the more I teach writing the more I realize that it doesn't matter what I think about something. The goal of the writing conference is understanding where they're coming from and then trying to reveal whether or not they did that" (personal communication, April 30, 2019). In the past, these conferences have been an "add-on" to her typical practices: students would complete an essay, get it marked, and then have the option to conference with her about it. This year, however, she says she approached it a bit differently. "This year," she says, "is the first year where I haven't given them their mark until they've conferenced with me" (personal communication, April 30, 2019). This is done in an attempt to get students to see their writing differently. She explains that it is as if students see their mark and assume that a piece of writing is done. Instead, she notes the importance of viewing writing as "an evolving piece that we're always improving" (personal communication April 30, 2019) and conferencing helps her achieve that. Once students have conferenced with her, they have a better direction of what they can do to polish their work for resubmission.

I observed two student conferences this semester, both regarding a literary essay assignment. While Maggie was quick to clarify that conferences “will look different every time” based on the student’s individual needs (personal communication, April 30, 2019), generally what can be seen is, before anything else, asking the student to identify what they felt was good about the piece. She says this is important because “if we can start with something good and true then there is always something we can build on” (personal communication, April 30, 2019). Both conferences began this way, by asking students what they felt a strength of their writing was. From there, Maggie was able to guide the conversation through questioning toward areas for improvement. This is a part of her strategy to “think about what I know about them as a writer and the place they’re at and move them to a slightly better place” (personal communication, April 30, 2019). If a student was hesitant to engage in a conversation, as was the case for the second conference I observed, Maggie will take a more assertive role. She may begin by asking questions, but if the student does not give detailed reflections or seems confused, she noted that she will be direct by “pointing out the things that I’ve liked, and then say “here’s a place where I see some opportunity for growth” (personal communication, April 17, 2019). In that particular conference, the student did not appear to be engaged in discussing his work, so Maggie focused her commentary on only one area for improvement: being more specific. In this, she showed the student an example of how his main idea and evidence could be made to be more specific than the generality of what he presented. She offered advice coupled with questions such as, “Your main idea: “this relationship is a positive one but also a negative one as well” is 100% true, but could you not say that about almost anything?” and “if you’re going to talk about that character, talk about the actions he does that affect his daughter now and in the rest of her life. Right?”

(Student Conference, May 6, 2019). The student responded with short answers, but as the conference continued, he began to see the examples of what she was referring to, even once pointing them out to her. While this conference was subdued, Maggie felt it was effective because at the very least the student got time to listen to what a reader had to say about the piece. Even when Maggie isn't formally conferencing with a student, she sees herself at first as an instructor but by the end of the term as a coach for their writing. Her hope is that eventually, "students won't need me as much" (personal communication, May 27, 2019), and whether she is serving as an outlet for a brain dump or something more guided, she can gradually release her role into the hands of the students. At its heart, that is what collaboration is about—providing opportunities to talk about their writing and ideas to grow them into something bigger than they are.

Evidence of Contextual Factors of Writing Knowledge

May 6, 2019

Maggie finishes explaining the assignment, "Visual Response to a Text" to the students. They seem to have clarity but are generally lacking in enthusiasm to pick up their pens and begin writing. Maggie keeps scrolling on screen and a marking rubric appears on screen. The students, now understanding they need to listen to their teacher go over the marking guide, shift their energy from unenthused to apathetic. Then it dawns on me—this writing task has now been both contextualized and acontextualized. I am left with the question: how <u>*can*</u> *teachers truly contextualize assigned writing tasks?*

Writing does not exist in a vacuum—it reflects the context for which it is written. Whether that be a speech for a public speaking event, a cover letter to accompany one's resume, or an essay to be written on a standardized exam, all writing is coloured with a

varying shade of context. How we present ourselves as authors and the ideas upon which we build our writing should be fluid and responsive to the context in which we write. However, without practice in varied contexts, the adoption of differing rhetorical strategies for different situations (social, cultural, or rhetorical) is difficult to perform. Salibrici (1999) argues that instead of emphasizing fixed forms of writing, “students need to learn formal characteristics of genres within the context of specific social situations ”(p. 630), and that genre and rhetoric are connected through social necessities. However, the question remains that if writing serves a greater social purpose and is reflective of a greater social reality, how can that be recreated in a classroom setting with any ounce of effectiveness?

Maggie struggles with this idea. She acknowledges that “I don’t think I do a very good job or authentic writing where we write for a particular purpose that is useful in some way. Often the writing is for the writing’s sake” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). When it comes to creating authentic tasks, she recognizes there are certain constraints, or as she views them, realities, of teaching writing. She continues, highlighting “we’re trying to build skills, in some cases we’re just writing a paragraph” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). This is an interesting dichotomy, a recognition of the importance of authenticity in writing and yet an inability to produce opportunities for students to perform them. As a result, when Maggie sets her writing in a context, that context is one of three: assessment, form, or adopting a role.

Assessment

The dominant contextual factor Maggie addressed in class is the assessment of each piece. With almost every writing assignment given, she made it a priority to go over the rubric with students so they know how they will be marked and can understand the

context in which they will receive their grade. Unless the assignment was a repeater, meaning they had written in that style previously and been tutored on the assessment, she would follow a few steps when outlining this context.

First, she would bring up the entire rubric for students to view. Second, she would explain the marking categories, for example, “Thought and Support”, “Voice”, and “Mechanics”. For each category she would expand on what she meant by it so no student would be confused about what “voice” meant. Finally, she would then explain the criteria in each category, highlighting the key words she would use to assess. Words like “insightful” or “vivid” would sometimes be defined, and other times not. Student engagement was never high during these moments, despite its perceived importance in understanding the requirements of the task. Interestingly, the writing situation itself was usually irrelevant to the instruction, unless they need to assume a certain voice (that of a character, for example). If students needed to assume a new role, more work would be done upfront to brainstorm possible responses and attitudes that a character might hold before setting up the rest of the assignment.

In the Context of a Specific Form

Throughout the varied forms that Maggie assigned, she would explore the nuances of those forms, simple or complex, to contextualize the writing. While sometimes this would look like an analysis of paragraph structure using the PEEL acronym, the intention was the “build certain skills” and get through the “curricular material” (personal communication, February 14, 2019). One of the strongest examples of writing for a certain form came from her Language Arts 9 class during their preparation for their Provincial Achievement Exam. Part A of that exam is a written portion containing two writing tasks. The first is a business letter assignment where students must compose a

persuasive business letter on a given topic, in a given persona, using given personal details such as addresses and some biographical information. Despite being completely manufactured for the sake of the exam, the task creates a façade of authenticity by wearing so many "real-world trappings" as listed above. What is interesting is Maggie's instructional take on this task. The task itself is highly structured, requiring students to correctly address and envelope and all parts of a formal business letter from memory. After those pieces are completed students then must write a formal persuasive piece advocating their stance on the issue given to them. There are many working pieces to the assignment, and all of which are specific to the social context of the form and location (representing values of a place). However, Maggie chooses to instruct on the form directly, having students take notes on the form, practicing writing addresses properly, and quizzing them on correct structure. Considering her aptitude and proclivity for mentor texts, this is a sharp contrast in approach, but it is one she believes in. When it came to executing this highly rigid form on this high-stakes exam, she noted that "most kids had never written a letter or addressed an envelope before, and they did. They nailed it. They memorized how to address a business letter and why we do what we do. They totally got it" (personal communication, June 3, 2019). While the performance of a form was successful, the irony is in how the students "struggled a little bit with the fictionalizing and creating a character and how they explain the situation through the eyes of that character so that's something I'll need to look back on my teaching and see how we can do a better job" (personal communication, June 3, 2019). The kids were so prepared for the "test" part but could not perform the "contextual responsiveness" part; the lack of social contextualization for the persuasive letter lacked effectiveness. When it comes to teaching rigid form, Maggie prefers to practice with writing drills than with

critical contextual awareness, but there acknowledges the need for students to gain experience responding to the social world through a different pair of eyes. This is where contextual situation could lead to powerful teaching.

Students Respond to Role Changes

Another form of contextualization Maggie utilized was to assign tasks where the student needed to respond to the specific demands of the task. This ranged from discussing what kind of voice and stylistic choices need to be made in a formal piece of writing or a first-person narrative, to assuming the voice of a character they have studied. This required more active context work for students as they needed to analyze aspects of a character in order to respond as that person likely would. She notes that in her course plans “there are moments where I choose really specific strategies for this, and there are moments that I am just like, “you’re writing for me today, go!” (personal communication, February 14, 2019), and so the majority of these kind of creative responses were limited to the student’s novel study unit where they could deep dive a character.

In addition to altering their own role for a task, Maggie tried to assign tasks that allowed students to think of themselves as author and creator. Most often, this would be done through questioning students prior to and during the writing process. Many of these questions were similar to “what effect are you getting at here?” (personal communication, May 6, 2019), or “why did you make the choice to say it like that?” (personal communication, April 30, 2019). The purpose of this kind of metacognitive reflection, to think of oneself as an author who makes choices is to address a concern that Maggie has about her students’ perceptions of themselves. She explains, “I would say that a lot of kids would not consider themselves a writer because they feel like there’s a specific stereotype to writing. I think if they realized how much is just done by normal people, I

think they'd be surprised" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). To see oneself as a creator changes the tone in which a writer approaches their work; it allows for more agency and responsiveness to the needs of that task to take place, which is essential in effective writing.

Authentic and Inauthentic Writing Situations

The presence of specific social or cultural contextual factors are not common to Maggie's writing tasks. This is likely because the writing tasks are manufactured for classroom purposes. There is little in the way of having students write in their own voice for specific social purposes outside of the "English class assignment" context. However, as much as the writing tasks are manufactured and *inauthentic*, she also attempts to *mimic authenticity*. One assignment in the English 30-2 class stands out as an example of this. The summative project for their novel study was to create a plan a formal dinner party for the characters of the book (Appendices E and F). This included many pieces such as creating the invitation, guest list, seating chart, and dinner music playlist while rationalizing their choices rooted in the novel. Each piece of this assignment was unique not only to the conventions of the forms, but to the social situation presented in the novel. So, while the audience for their writing is really the teacher, the tasks masquerade as some other form or genre that is real-world. Despite not having a plethora of socially contextualized assignments like the dinner party invitations, Maggie did occasionally remind students of alternate forms that could be attempted, even on the creative part of the diploma exam. She encouraged students to write speeches, letters, BuzzFeed articles, and Instagram posts to offset the mundanity of the typical forms of journal entries and short stories. She notes this choice as a push toward the modern, stating "I tried to push them towards a more modern genre, so like a blog or like a BuzzFeed article-- and we

looked at some of those examples…I feel like they choose these old standby genres that nobody reads anymore" (personal communication, June 3, 2019). In spite of lacking in opportunities for genuine authenticity, Maggie works to create a sense of *false authenticity* where "if it can't be real, then it should feel that way" (personal communication, March 5, 2019).

Other Themes

As I completed my data coding and analysis, it was important to keep an open mind to the findings as I came across them. Sticking as true to form as I could to a thematic analysis, I identified several other themes in Maggie's practice that warrant mention. First is instruction rooted in content development. Practices that fell in this theme seemed to be for the purpose of generating "stuff" for students to write about. This work was not done collaboratively or metacognitively, it had no clear rhetorical purpose or contextual situation considerations at play, they were most often teacher led content exercises such as reviewing conventions like comma usage and having students construct a sentence that accurately used those conventions, or requiring students to write a certain word count in a chosen genre.

Secondly, I noted the occurrences of when Maggie referenced a writing task in relation to a standardized exam, either the LA9 PAT or the English 30-2 diploma exam. My purpose in highlighting these comments was to greater understand the infiltration of test preparation into writing instruction. Over the course of my observations, I noted 48 separate references to either exam, where understanding how to write in a specific way was essential for completing the standardized government examination. This observation connects, I believe, to the contextual setting and considerations for many of the writing assignments given. During our first long interview I asked Maggie about how the

provincial exams affect her writing instruction, and how central she felt those exams were to how she approached writing. Her response, unsurprisingly given the frequency of exam mentions, stated: "they are 100% central in both courses. The PAT is not as central, but for the diploma, it is almost the only type of writing that we do is the types that they're going to be expected to do. For grade 9 I try to do more creative pieces but then I teach the 5 paragraph essay and tell them "you have to be able to do this on the exam" so "you have to be able to identify what the problem is and write a letter about it" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). While she does acknowledge that her approach changes in grade 10 and 11 where there is not a government assessment at the end, the two courses I observed are not nearly as "free". This response is deeply resonant of existing literature on standardized exams and teaching practice. In "The Testing Trap", Hillocks (2002) compares the pedagogical stances and the affect of standardized exams on teaching practice in five states. In it, he concludes that due to lack of specific teacher training in writing instruction (p. 135), many teachers do not think about writing beyond the confines of the testing program (p.136). While I do not believe this is 100% representative of Maggie's current practice, I do believe that her consideration of the government exams as central to her courses stems from a learned behaviour that many teachers fall into. Over the years, Maggie acknowledges how much her practice has changed, and while she works much more with mentorship models and collaborative writing practices, she, like many teachers, still holds the traditional goal of preparing students for their standardized exam as important to her instruction. The potential danger of holding exams so close to course content and teaching practice is, as Hillocks (2002) states, it "imposes not only a format but a way of thinking that eliminates need for critical thought" (p. 136). This reality is stark evidence that what should be central in teacher

education is not the importance of standardized exams that do not reflect realistic writing situations or processes (Slomp, 2008) but on the pedagogies and pedagogical understandings that lead to successful instruction.

The final theme I noticed emerging came in the form of my "other" category. These practices were the ones I could not quite label or assign to one facet of pedagogical understanding over another. When I looked further, I realized that there were a few miscellaneous themes present among them, including how she uses assessment as a tool for improving writing. An example of this is taking in the "I'm From" poem assignment because students invested in the task or reminding students to polish their work because it was going to be marked (personal communication, May 6, 2019). Secondly, I placed strategies that were not applicable to writing instruction but were present in her lesson into a 'general strategies' sub-category. This included a reference to using character sketches as a tool for critical essay writing in English 10, and keeping vocabulary between the author and her instruction consistent to help teach and elevate student diction. Lastly, and most compellingly, there were two instances of what I categorized as using "writing as a reading strategy". In this I noted instances where Maggie built the connection between being a strong writer and being a strong reader. For example, when outlining the double entry journal assignment her 30-2s would undertake, she referenced the fact that "strong readers will write about their characters differently" (personal communication, April 2, 2019). This offhanded comment did not quite find a place of its own as it pertained to both reading and writing, and therefore it made its way to this miscellaneous category.

Chapter Six: Discussion

June 3, 2019

I push the stop recording button on my iPad, the final interview now complete. My mind is working through all that has been, and all there still is to accomplish. I think about my research questions surrounding the knowledge and utilization of foundational pedagogical understandings of writing instruction and think to myself how much Maggie does in her classroom from the beginning of a semester to the end. I think about she varies her instruction between the conventional and the conceptual, and yet I am struck thinking about the knowledge that can yet be learned and implemented; opportunities to further refine her practice. I reflect on this and I know that there is value in what's been observed.

In my theoretical framework, I referred to the definition of writing ability as a complex cognitive process including attention to audience, discourse, and social context. It requires skills of transfer and metacognitive reflection all while executing acceptable standards of language convention. On the surface, Maggie's attention seems focused on writing ability as "effective communication", a broad term that encompasses many things. What could be defined as "effective communication" may include understanding one's audience, the discourse and purpose, as well as the context in which it lies, all the while attending to acceptable language conventions in order to be clearly understood. While her definition of writing ability may sound simplistic, it is not out of the realm of what is commonly accepted. In his 2011 work, "*Write Like This*", Kelly Gallagher refers to writing as "foundational to finding meaningful employment" (p. 3) and "a gatekeeping skill across the workforce" (p. 3). It is a professional imperative that students are prepared to meet the changing demands of writing in the "real world" once they leave the halls of

high school, and the concept of “effective communication” entails a lot of dynamic pieces that Maggie helps her students put together.

Teachers, over time and experience, experiment with and hone multiple strategies to utilize in their classrooms. What I noticed as I observed Maggie’s practices, is that to refer to these strategies and practices as tools does not reflect the artfulness that reflects the writing practice. Each teacher, their style, their beliefs, and their knowledge about pedagogical theories and applications varies widely, and how they make choices to instruct students on creating writing that is both beautiful and purposeful is more than a construction site—it is an art class.

What Pedagogical Understandings are Embedded in Instruction?

The pieces of instruction are like tiles of a mosaic, complementary of one another but made up of stand-alone images, shapes, and colours—much like the stand alone and nuanced pedagogical understandings. In isolation, they are limiting, but when put together in different ways: artistic. Maggie’s tiles are composed of knowledge and strategies that are rooted in rhetorical understandings of writing, group-based collaborative planning, using exemplar texts as mentors, and relying on traditionalist models of the writing process which includes the use of outlines, graphic organizers, and pneumonic devices. When put together, these tiles portray an image of writing instruction in Maggie’s classroom that blends the contemporary with the conventional— a dichotomy of theory and practices. This, as I explore below, I believe represents a shift in thought that is ongoing in her practice, from one place to another.

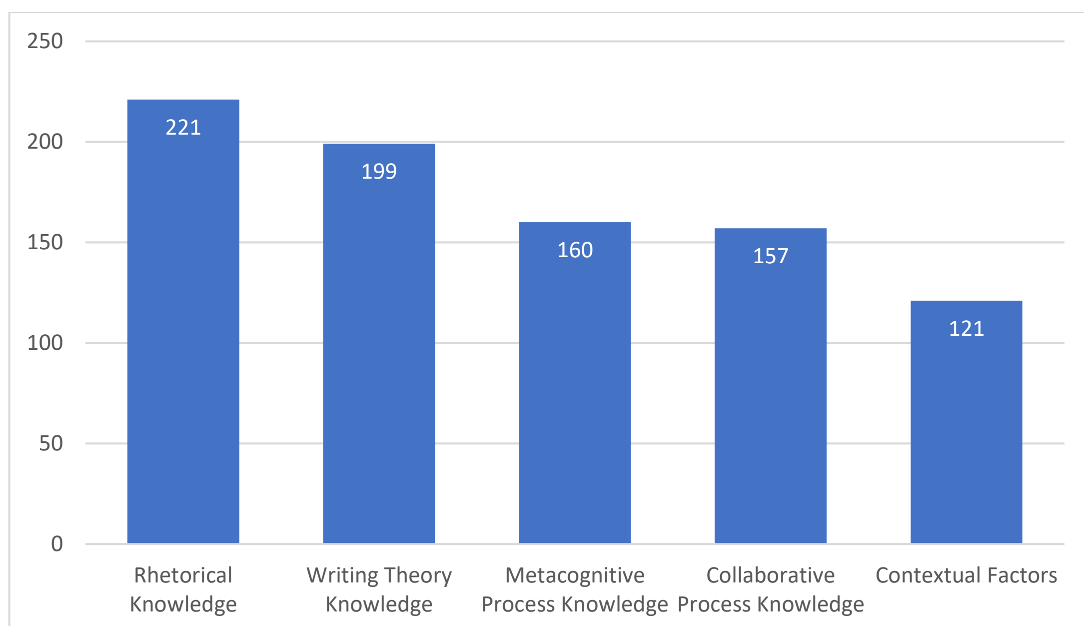
High Frequency Pedagogy

When the emergent themes of Maggie’s practice are compared to the pedagogical understandings of metacognitive, rhetorical, collaborative process, writing theory, and

contextual factor knowledge, what is firstly evident is, as Figure 13 demonstrates, they all appear but not in an even distribution of frequency. While here I offer the numerical breakdown of references to particularly pedagogical understandings, it is important to note that this merely gives us a sense of Maggie's emphasis and her degree of knowledge and emphasis cannot be reduced to a percentage. These figures are meant to demonstrate a comparison of the observable occurrences, not depth. Over the 18 weeks I observed Maggie's practices, the pedagogical understandings that are most evident occur up to 100 times more frequently than the lowest. Of the five understandings, the two that were most frequently observed or directly referred to in terms of planning were rhetorical knowledge with 221 reference over 41 documents and writing theory knowledge with 199 references over 25 documents. This, reasonably, could be deliberate and connected to her personal teaching style and beliefs, or if could be representative of her areas of strength and knowledge gaps.

Figure 13

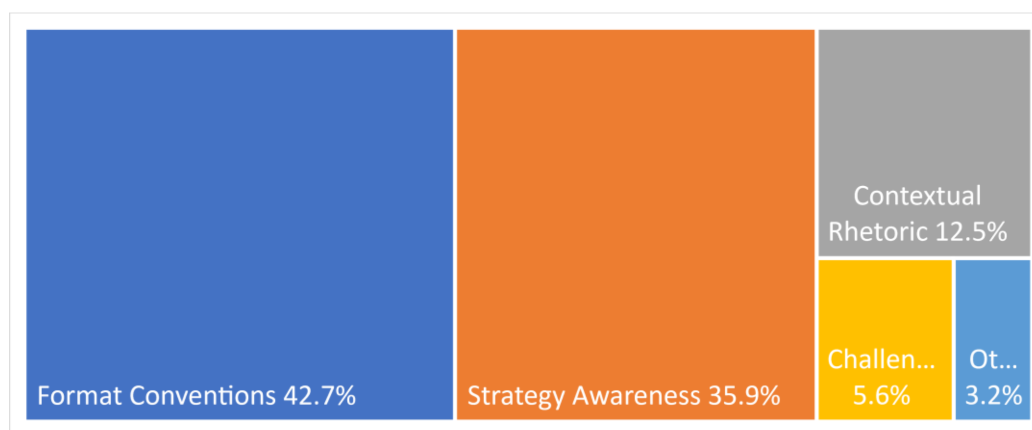
Frequency of Demonstrated Pedagogical Understandings



Frequency of Rhetorical Knowledge. As explored previously, this category is largely split between teaching the rhetorical needs of various forms and genres (example: "what does a short story look like?") and secondly, specific strategies students or "moves" students can make in their writing (example: dialect). Figure 14 graphs the breakdown of rhetorical knowledge references from the coding process.

Figure 14

Breakdown of Rhetorical Knowledge



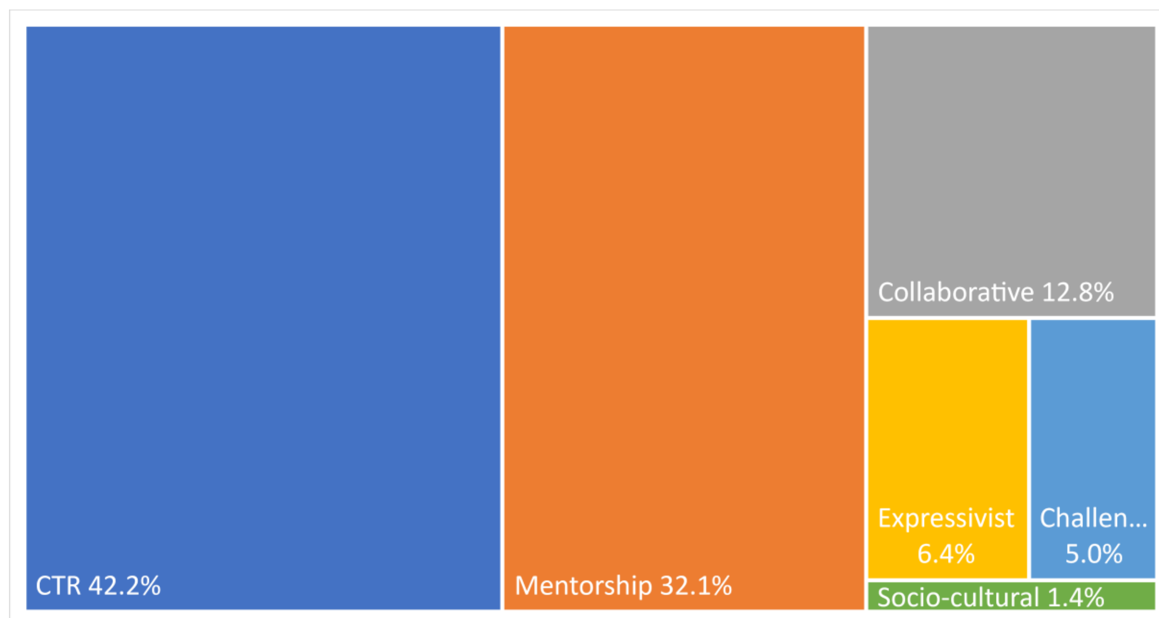
In Maggie's classroom, there is more of a focus on how to tackle the rhetorical "forms" and "formats". This means that a lot of time is spent on how to identify the parts of a form of writing and mimicking those parts in their own writing. This does not mean she does not spend time going over strategies or "moves", it just occurs less often. How rhetorical moves interact with contextual factors of the writing situation appear to be largely unimportant in the instruction of writing as well. This seems to be due to the nature of the writing tasks themselves as they are set primarily in the "schoolwork" context, and not in authentic settings. What seems to matter more in the successful completion of writing assignments is the correct use of form and genre conventions to execute a true-to-form essay, letter, party invitation etc. The social world that the text is

set in is largely irrelevant, so students are not needing to attend to how the broader social context may alter the presentation of form. Additionally, the focus for rhetorical strategies is often based in pneumonic devices or structures that are easily remembered (for example, PEEL). This appears to be so that students can memorize it and apply it broadly to many writing situations they come across—she is looking for transfer of skills and knowledge. What is interesting is Maggie's comments on these results revealed what could be simple modesty by perceiving her choices as a "happy accident" in connection to these foundational understandings. I asked her whether she had any thoughts or questions as to how I interpreted her rhetorical instruction and she responded, "I feel like it was my perception that I was teaching strategies *by* teaching purpose, but that isn't the case. I appreciate this specific information because I think I'm requiring students to come up with their own strategies (which usually results in them emulating the examples I've given) but I could be more specific in my teaching there" (personal communication, November 18, 2019). Even when instructing for rhetorical purpose, which is her most common knowledge strategy, there is room for further understanding of *how* to teach to rhetorical situations.

Frequency of Writing Theory Knowledge. When it comes to her second most frequent understanding, writing theory, she poses a fascinating dichotomy. Figure 15 shows the breakdown of Maggie's writing theory practices based on the coded data.

Figure 15

Breakdown of Writing Theory Knowledge



On one hand, Maggie considers herself a forward-thinking teacher, embracing as much as she can of new-age models of writing instruction such as mentorship models posed by Kittle (2008), Gallagher (2011), and Atwell (2015). She uses texts from published authors and poets to model forms, she uses student exemplars to showcase competencies in essay writing, and she occasionally demonstrates her own thinking and writing processes for her students by using her own writing as the example. Of the 199 identifiable reference to writing theory, 35% of them are practices relating to mentorship models. In our first long interview, Maggie enthusiastically states how learning more about the practices of the aforementioned mentorship "gurus" has changed her teaching practice and her life as a teacher (personal communication, February 14, 2019). Conversely though, when looking at the data points, what weighs more heavily in her practice are current traditional rhetoric, or CTR, models of writing. This includes a focus on product completion and following a linear path to get there. It includes her use of

specific graphic organizers and mnemonics to help students "memorize" the content of a form, for example the "PEEL" paragraph particularly for struggling writers. On one hand, these practices seem oppositional. On the other hand, they cover similar ground. What is important to consider is that without a detailed understanding of genre, context, and rhetoric, mentorship models begin to look a lot like current traditional rhetoric. It is easy for analysis of a mentor text to become an analysis of "what to do when I mimic this text" and not "why do I write like this when I mirror this text"? This is a risk Maggie takes when using mentor texts in her classes without fully exploring, or knowing, the other features of a text before asking students to try it. Sometimes, Maggie is effective in her execution of mentor texts, and other times it fades into a linear, CTR approach. What Maggie does is blends the "old" and the "new" creating a space where students who need, or who seem to need, firm structures in place can fall into them as a safety net, while trying to push students out of their comfort zones by being critical consumers of content and analyzing what makes a piece of writing "work". Among her two highest frequency pedagogical understandings, a gap is evident. The gap appears to be in missed opportunities to capitalize on effective structures and strategies in these pedagogical understandings. Even as thoughtful and deliberate as Maggie is, there are more opportunities for growth and understanding, something she is fully aware of. When, during our first long interview, we discussed the Model of Writing Pedagogies, she admitted about writing theory knowledge, "I would probably say I have the least knowledge about this. I would say I don't do any, except a little bit of theory like "what is the purpose of a piece of text" and how does that then change our environment?" (February 14, 2019). Luckily, Maggie was wrong about her assessment of her writing

theory practice. Most of her strategies are linked to writing theories, however she demonstrates an inability to recognize or name what, specifically, is she is doing.

Low Frequency Pedagogies

The other three areas, while not necessarily infrequent, do not play as central a role in Maggie's writing instruction. Metacognition is referenced 160 times over 39 documents, and in the end, she commented that she was "surprised to see how high the number is for metacognition… I am happy to see that reflection is an important part of my practice" (personal communication, November 18, 2019). This response reveals, again, this sense of her knowledge of her practice being quite modest or perhaps a "happy accident". She spends a fair amount of time with students asking them to reflect either on the task itself or their process, but her own awareness of it appears tenuous.

Metacognition is followed by collaborative process knowledge with 121 references across 29 documents. Within this theme what is noted is a high volume of student-teacher collaboration through one-to-one conversations as well as peer to peer work, but this occurs primarily at the pre-writing stages. In my observations I noted that this is likely due to the risk involved in asking students to be so vulnerable and share their work with one another, to which Maggie agreed, stating "that's a major hurdle in -2 and I know I don't push it because most often the students are so fearful of being vulnerable they would rather not submit anything than have it viewed by peers, and I'd rather have something to look at than have them collaborate" (personal communication, November 18, 2019). What I did not observe in Maggie's collaborative pedagogy instruction is allowing students the opportunity to shape and create text together. This, according to Gallagher and Kittle (2018), is a powerful learning tool as that collaboration "deepens thinking and learning" (p. 16). By limiting student collaboration to the planning and

revising stages, there may be a missed opportunity to engage in deeper, more meaningful collaboration.

Finally, the pedagogical understanding whose frequency is nearly half as common as the most frequent is contextual factors of writing. This contrast is stark, given that the two are so closely correlated. After all, do rhetorical needs exist outside of a context? What is important to remember is that much of the contextual setting that Maggie provides her students is in the "schoolwork" or "assessment" sense. Creation of true and authentic settings for writing is difficult as it demands time, resources, and opportunity. Each text may be set in a stringent context such as "diploma practice", and students in her room are taught to rhetorically respond to that situation. This allows for her students to perform typically competitively with the rest of the province on provincial exams, with this class of English 30-2s achieving 4.8% above provincial average in the accelerated course group, and 0.4% above provincial average for the regular course group who wrote in June (English Language Arts 30-2 Diploma Results, Alberta Education, 2019). However, the question must be asked, even with successful achievement in the course, are students prepared to write outside of the school context?

Maggie's answer is yes. She notes that from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester, both her classes, showed improvement in their writing abilities, particularly in how they "use evidence in more effective ways" (personal communication, June 3, 2019), and have honed their creative writing skills because she "hit them hard with a lot of creative writing" (personal communication, June 3, 2019). When asked further about whether she feels the purpose of writing in the real world aligns with how it is taught in high school or not, she responds in the affirmative stating "I think so. And I think, again only of my context of 30-2 kids, I do. I think that when they leave here they

are equipped, and that they think that being understood is really important" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). She continues arguing that it might be different for kids in the academic stream but overall:

> I think -1 often values more of like a writing yourself into an idea, like writing as thinking, as opposed to writing as explaining. And I also think that there's an element of creative writing that is more valued at the -1 level just because it's just way more applicable to the things they're going to do in their lives. And I dunno, I feel it's crappy to say like I'm preparing them for this mundane world where nobody writes creatively anymore but I think about my students and I think about the things that they're interested in and I think about the things that they like and very few of them really enjoy creative writing applications. They may be creative in other ways, but I wouldn't say that writing is one of them…but for what I think is important for them, but I do do that. (personal communication, April 17, 2019).

When it comes to preparing students for the end of high school and the demands of the working world, Maggie feels her practice is successful. She uses multiple pedagogies, her students achieve well, and by the end of their high school career most can complete the writing tasks the curriculum requires with little assistance. Yet, I cannot help but wonder how many more opportunities are possible if her knowledge was more refined.

Value Alignment

May 27, 2019

It is the end of the lesson and students are packing up and clearing out for their lunch breaks. Slowly, one student lingers behind, obviously waiting for something specific. Maggie asks the student, who is standing near the door but not ready to leave if he has plans for his weekend. He casually replies, "No not really. Just going to hang out with my family and go to work." He continues to linger, making easy conversation with her, and it is clear through his body language that he enjoys this little chat he gets to have with his teacher.

Of the vast factors that play into how Maggie teaches the writing requirements of her courses, a few central values emerge that seem to guide her instruction more than anything. First, she wants her students to feel confident in their abilities to write in multiple forms. She demonstrates this through not only the variety of assignments she assigns, from essays to poems to dinner party invitations, and through the way she makes time to touch base with each student and address their individual needs as writers. Secondly, she wants her student to learn *how to think* about a writing form. Sometimes, this might mean reciting an standby acronym to get their feet under them, but more often she demonstrates the desire for her students to dissect a writing problem the way they would a riddle—looking for clues embedded in the task and in any mentor texts that can be found. Finally, in Maggie's classroom, writing is not writing unless there are risks taken. I realize this sounds counter-intuitive given her tendency to favor CTR strategies but based on her passion for subject and responses to her ideal visions of a writing classroom, I believe it to be true. This is especially true when it comes to tasks that give students some creative license. She spends time dissecting new, unexpected forms and techniques that are options to use in their own writing. This includes dissecting descriptive language techniques, enhancing voice, and instead of writing in traditional (yet unfamiliar to the students) forms such as newspaper articles (she notes that every year she asks students when the last time they read a newspaper article was and resoundingly the answer is "never" (March 5, 2019). Instead, she challenges them to write in a form they are more familiar with but perhaps have never tried. This allows students to appeal to a new context such as BuzzFeed articles, Instagram feed posts, or other sub-genres of the outdated ones, such as a "Humans of New York" article instead of a newspaper article. She pushes them to use better description, a richer voice, and try new

forms and sub-genres to captivate the audience instead of, as she so eloquently puts it, "bore them with classic forms that nobody writes anymore" (personal communication, June 3, 2019).

To achieve these goals, Maggie relies on three primary strategies to find success. First, she uses a mentor text to demonstrate a form. Second, she encourages her students to outline the form and fully plan their own writing before they begin. Third, she utilizes memorization of static forms, like a business letter, when they must be performed quickly and accurately. This is a balancing act of many pedagogical understandings, contradictory as some of the approaches may sound. Through observing her, it became clear to me that her role in the classroom is two sides of the same coin. First as an instructor, direct and linear, and secondly as a coach, who guides and facilitates development as students work and write; a person who leads students to see what they need to see in their writing, but you make it individualized based on what each student needs and encourage a dialogue with them. Her response, ever so succinctly, agreed with this perception. "That is exactly what I am going for" (personal communication, November 18, 2019).

Challenges of Embracing Pedagogical Understandings

These practices do not come without their challenges and their own questions. As Maggie articulated, each of these pedagogical understandings are difficult to practice on a daily basis. To do each of these things well may require an ideal teaching situation in many respects. For example, it can be difficult to move away from static formats to prepare students for exams if the administration of your school or school board puts pressure on you for high results. Additionally, these pedagogical understandings do not exist in isolation. As we have seen with Maggie's practice, effective rhetorical instruction relies on some form of contextual norms for students to follow. If your context is static,

for example, the teacher is always the audience, students only practice one form of rhetorical situation.

Metacognition is not a simple thing to teach students, let alone to groups of reluctant readers and writers as she has in her courses this term. Metacognition is hard work, and it requires for students to problem-solve their way through a writing task and not rely on the teacher for “fix it” advice. When thinking about the challenges of metacognitive instruction in her classes, despite its central importance in writing, Maggie notes that it is something that kids struggle with again and again. She says:

> I would say that kids struggle with this one a lot, so it’s just reminding them, “okay, hey, think about what it is you’re about to do, do some planning, have a look at that planning, how effective do you think that’s going to be?” and constantly evaluating what they’re doing… because I think most of them will not do this on their own” (personal communication, February 14, 2019).

The more practice a writer has with metacognition the more automatic it becomes, but it does require a lot of practice before it happens. In her classroom, that presents itself in many ways, from lack of understanding how to think through a task to a lack of understanding how to execute it in a style that is appropriate to the task. During a lesson set about writing from a visual prompt, Maggie noticed that “The prompt that I gave them was an old man looking out the window sitting on a bus and so many of those were clearly modern, like the tone of it was clearly modern, even the vocabulary was all like super modern, super teenagery like, and that doesn’t fit with the character that they’re trying to develop” (personal communication, March 25, 2019). What is noticed here is not only a lack in her students’ rhetorical skills, but in their metacognitive awareness. Very little, or ineffective, thought went into the crafting of that voice— a skill that Maggie aims to improve. She believes that through more exposure to metacognition and rhetorical strategies, over time, her students will learn to tune into these aspects of writing.

Maintaining student motivation can be difficult as well, as she will sometimes get student responses to her metacognitive questioning techniques such as "well that's dumb" (personal communication, student, April 2, 2019), or students feelings "a bit defeated by the writing process and by being examined so closely" (personal communication, Maggie, April 30, 2019). Some students, she notes, also have a perceived lack of "student concern about their own learning" (personal communication, November 18, 2019), which can make it challenging to engage them in deep thinking about their task and the process of completing that task. With more practice with both metacognitive knowledge and skills, the goal is for students to recognize those errors in their own writing without prompting by the teacher.

On top of these challenges, it is imperative we understand that metacognition in writing relates to students' critical reading ability. At one professional development conference, she learned about the need for reading and writing to be taught together, not in silos (personal communication, April 17, 2019). She notes that in her classes, especially her English 30-2 classes, where students are weaker readers and writers, using mentor texts for metacognitive reflection is difficult. She says, "a good reader knows a good character is unfolded, but readers who struggle, which is most of my kids, think it's just stupid that you can't figure everything out immediately" (personal communication, April 2, 2019). She goes on to note that identifying important elements within a text and the purpose those elements serve is also difficult when students are still at the stage of figuring out that reading requires you to make meaning out of those small details (personal communication, April 2, 2019). Maggie notes that metacognition is difficult for students who do not have prolonged exposure to reading and have difficulty making meaning from text. Without critical reading skills, metacognitive practices about writing

are incredibly difficult to achieve. A student must be able to analyse a piece of writing for more than its plot and characters if they are to identify strategies authors use and then employ that in their own writing for effect.

If creating opportunities for students to respond to authentic social and historical contexts is important, and Maggie knows it is important, I had to know: Why does it happen infrequently in her classroom? Her response broke down four different challenges when it came to adopting authentic writing tasks into the everyday.

- Time
- Willingness to commit to the work it would take to make everything authentic
- The novelty is fleeting
- Limited options available

At the end of the day, Maggie noted that there just isn't the time and resources to commit to a completely contextually authentic classroom. She believes that "there are moments where we have opportunity to allow kids to be creative, but there are huge constraints to teaching. And most of them are how much curricular material we have to get through… and we don't do a lot of those things because of the time we have" (personal communication, February 15, 2019). She also identified the novelty of real-world writing tasks as becoming a barrier, contemplating "how many times can you really choose something from the newspaper and write to a business owner, or write to the newspaper so that you can keep providing actually real authentic moments and still have kid writing enough, or as much as you want them to?" She has her doubts about the practicality of an approach like that, not to mention the constraints of "lack of audience and a lack of opportunity" (personal communication, April 17, 2019). In her location, a small rural town, there is not an abundance of opportunities for a large group of students to write for

real-world contexts and practice their adaptive voices. To find them requires a large commitment to imaginative thinking about new, authentic contexts. Therefore, Maggie resorts to either manufacturing authentic feeling tasks or being honest with her students about the context being for the sake of the assignment.

Finally, I am left with a question: if writing teachers are at least, in part, responsible for teaching transferrable writing skills, does a style of writing instruction that emphasizes these core tenets increase writing transfer skills? This is difficult to say. Considering the research, if we are to determine the ability of a writer, it is logical to include their ability to apply writing skills to more than one discipline, subject, or genre. Despite this assumption being reasonably accepted by scholars and practitioners, there lies a problem in understanding how transfer skills function in writing ability. We know writing is more than just content and mechanics, and per Downs and Wardle’s (2007) assertion it is also not easily transferred from one context to the next as writing is not taught independently of content. While this study does not reflect a wide range of writers (post-secondary students only), could it not be assumed that this setting is even more telling of “transfer-truth” because the students are academic, and these skill should come easy to them? Even for these students, it is noted that far transfer is difficult to attain (p. 557), and while there are some shared general features of writing, how a writer realizes these features in their own writing will vastly differ across disciplines. The difficulty presented here is not a disbelief in transfer, but in the limited amount of research on writing transfer, and educational transfer in general. Is it possible improving teacher knowledge of metacognition, writing theory, collaboration, contextual factors, and rhetoric will improve student learning? Yes. Is it tested? Unclear.

Chapter Seven: Implications of Research

How do Key Pedagogical Understandings Guide Instruction?

When I began this study, I went into my observations with two central questions in mind. First, "what pedagogical understandings are embedded in current practice of writing instruction at the high school English Language Arts level?" Second, "how do key pedagogical understandings guide writing instruction at the high school English Language Arts level?" After completing this study, the realizations are significant.

Maggie is an experienced, thoughtful, well-respected teacher. She makes instructional decisions based of what meets the needs to the students and the curriculum. She is deliberate in her planning and keeps the improvement of her student's skills and knowledge at the heart of her teaching. Embedded in her current practice of writing instruction are many pedagogical understandings, in fact all the pedagogical understandings my research suggested were present to some extent. There was a preferential order in which those understandings were utilized, first and foremost being that of rhetorical knowledge and writing theory. What I came to understand was the way in which those understandings are rooted in her teaching reveal more about her teacher experience and training and/or professional development than I had initially suspected. It was clear that in this case, Maggie understood the importance of teaching rhetorical strategies, but the answer as to "how" best to do that was largely left up to her own devices. Through years of teaching and reaching towards professional development she has honed her sense of what "should" be taught. This is also true in her understanding of writing theory, which she defined as "best practices" (personal communication, November 18, 2019). The suggestion is that while such pedagogies and theories are present, it would be difficult for her to name them or explain the rationale behind using

them based in solid evidence. This suggests that her pedagogical choices, while deliberate, are not refined enough to indicate they guide her practice. She makes choices based on what she accepts as "best practices" but may not articulate clearly the reasons rooted in pedagogical understandings. Her instruction touches on many aspects of writing pedagogies, but there are missed opportunities to engage with powerful and meaningful instruction, largely based in a lack of knowledge about these understandings in a formal way. For example, I witnessed opportunities to engage students in meaningful rhetorical or metacognitive analysis and instead she chose a more direct style of teaching—sometimes due to time constraints, sometimes due to engagement with the text, and sometimes due to uncertainty as to *how* or *why* the approach could or should be different.

However, pedagogical understandings are not absent from Maggie's lessons and planning—they are merely unspecified. There absolutely is a pedagogical goal in mind. Is it clarity and organization? Is it voice? Is it group work? All these elements are tied to various pedagogical understandings: rhetoric, contextual factors, and collaboration, respectively. For Maggie, much of her instruction is guided through the five step writing process of planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing; she says "It always guides how I plan for instruction, and I wouldn't have it up there if was only for me" (personal communication, February 14, 2019). She uses it as guideposts along the way to form where students should be working, and then within each minilesson she uses the pedagogical understandings as strategies to complete each step of the process. Therefore, the pedagogies are supplementary—present, but not central to the lesson. What stands out here is evidence in the power of naming what we know. Because Maggie knows the procedural steps of the writing process and what each of those means, she is able to utilize it in her classroom. But what if what teachers knew was rooted more in threshold

concepts of writing pedagogy? Adler-Kassner and Wardle (2016) point out that being able to name the knowledge of a discipline is important because “If we want to actively and positively impact the lives of writers and writing teachers, we must do a better job of clearly stating what our field knows and helping others understand how to use that knowledge” (p. 7). Maggie’s instruction touches on many aspects of writing pedagogies, but where there are missed opportunities to engage with powerful and meaningful instruction, I believe stem from a lack of refined knowledge about these understandings in a formal way. Adler-Kassner and Wardle continue saying, “teachers might more productively consider which threshold concepts inform (or should inform) their classes—particularly looking at sets of classes across time – and whether their curricula and activities are productively acting out of and introducing students to those threshold concepts” (p. 9), which has potential to alter the way that professional development and teacher education is viewed across the board. If teachers had to more formal education and experience with understanding the pedagogical understandings of writing instruction, how could writing instruction be different and/or more effective?

The implication is this: Teachers need robust education and preparation in order to have a *refined understanding* of writing instruction. I cannot pretend to be an expert in the areas of teacher education and current programs. Nor can I pretend to be an expert in the execution of professional development for practicing teachers—goodness knows there are more areas for professional growth than there are stars in the sky. But what I have observed leaves me with lingering questions about how we can better address the need for teacher education on foundational tenets of writing instruction. This question brought me to a take a look at the requirements for English majors (Bachelor of Arts) and English Language Arts Education (Bachelor of Education) students across the province. This

exploration was cursory in nature as I looked at the calendars and program requirements of only three institutions in Alberta: The University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, and the University of Lethbridge. What I did (or better yet did not find) was revealing. Table 8 outlines the basic program requirements of these three universities. Out of these three major institutions, not one of them required English or ELA Education students to take courses in writing. At the B.A. level, one program required students to take two literary theory courses and the other two had literary theory courses as options (or recommended) courses, but none of them were requirements for graduation. Additionally, literary theory is not the same as writing theory. This may be acceptable for students whose focus is on a degree in English literature, but what was more telling was the lack of writing pedagogy courses offered to ELA Education students. Out of the three institutions, only two offered courses in writing instruction. The University of Calgary offers two courses: “How children learn to write” and “Supporting children’s writing” (University of Calgary, 2020), however, both of these courses appear to be geared toward early elementary education and experiential learning—not writing theory knowledge. The University of Lethbridge offers one class that appears to be directly linked to this topic, “Teaching Writing in the Schools”, but again, this is not a requirement of ELA majors, only an elective (University of Lethbridge, 2020). Beyond content-based courses for English Literature and ELA curriculum classes, the education of preservice teachers in Alberta appears to be lacking in the area of teaching teachers to instruct in writing.

Table 8

Comparison of B.A. English and B.Ed English Language Arts program requirements across Alberta

	University of Lethbridge	**University of Alberta**	**University of Calgary**
B.A. English	**Degree requirements (major courses)**	**Degree requirements (major courses)**	**Degree requirements (major courses)**
	Introduction to Language and Literature Two Literature Survey Two Genres, Approaches, and Themes Six 3000/4000 level courses Two 4000 level courses	Three 200-level courses Three 300 level courses Two 400 level courses Six English electives	One course historical survey Two courses literary theory One course Canadian lit One course global and indigenous One course historical pre 1850
	Available Writing Courses	**Available Writing Courses**	**Available Writing Courses**
	Rhetoric Grammar Creative Writing	Writing Studies 100 (optional) Theoretical approaches • Textualities o Signs and texts o Narrative Theory and Poetics 10 Creative Writing Courses available	Embedded certificate in creative writing available
B. Ed ELA	**Degree requirements (ELA major)**	**Degree requirements (ELA major)**	**Degree requirements (ELA major)**
	Same English course requirements Recommended course in Rhetoric 3 Ed Electives PSI Courses and Placement	Contexts of Education Intro to Ed tech Aboriginal Education and Contexts for professional and personal engagement 1 course in English or French or WRS	19 courses in education (19 courses) Eight courses in teachable subject Two Courses in Secondary ELA

	PSII Courses and Placement PSIII Placement	12 courses in major teaching subject 6 courses in minor teaching subject 2 options (1 ed elective min)	Six courses in required non-education foundational courses including: English or French, creative and performing arts, psych, physical education or health, sciences, Canadian studies Five electives
	Relevant Writing Instruction Courses	**Relevant Writing Instruction Courses**	**Relevant Writing Instruction Courses**
	ELA in the secondary class (elective) Teaching Writing in the Schools (elective)	None	How children learn to write (elective) Supporting children's writing (elective)

The key insights from this study reveal more than just what a self-described "typical" teacher (personal communication, February 14, 2019) does in a writing classroom. The study, I believe, reveals a need for more information about what is known about writing pedagogy and practice.

While these results are limited and not reflective of the entire teaching population of Alberta, I believe it does reveal that there are gaps in teacher learning when it comes to something as foundational as writing. Maggie is an experienced teacher who actively seeks out professional development in her field, attending interprovincial and international conferences to learn more, and still there are areas of her practice she finds difficult to articulate and incorporate. This suggests to me that the access of professional development and the focus of professional development needs broadening. Foundational knowledge of teaching competencies, like classroom management, effective assessment, and engagement are important, however if there is potential for teachers to be missing foundational theory and building blocks of writing instruction in their undergraduate programs, professional development may better serve writing teachers by focusing on how metacognition works in a writing classroom, or how we can authentically situate a writing scenario in a context other than our classrooms. Perhaps a more concentrated education about threshold concepts in writing instruction would solidify and guide teachers in their practices with more concrete direction? Perhaps access to condensed literature on these pedagogical understandings and practical solutions for application would be of benefit to more teachers who struggle with student achievement in writing? What is clear is that we do not know what we do not know, and being able to name what we do in an accurate way in our classrooms may allow for more diverse and responsive teaching for all our students. Not unlike a game of chess, we, as teachers, respond to the

moves our students make based on their individual skills and knowledge. We move our instructional game pieces, not as a static procedure, but as a response to our students. In order to choose the best next move, we need to know the moves we can make.

In addition to professional development opportunities, teachers need ongoing support from their divisions which encourage them to be flexible in their approaches and adaptive to the conceptual writing framework. The National Council of Teachers of English (2019) suggests that there needs to be more empowerment in how teachers access professional knowledge. While professional development suggests passivity, their suggestion is that when professional learning happens in a "collaborative venture where teachers are recognized as learners, leaders, and knowledgeable professionals" (NCTE, 2019, para. 5), teachers are more likely to feel empowered and actually learn new skills. Imagine the power of a pedagogical facilitator working with teachers to workshop their pedagogical stances and strategies across departments or districts. Additionally, there is potential for roles like "literacy coaches" to become more highly specialized and branch into "writing instruction coaches" which may work with all subject areas to increase knowledge, understanding, and practices of the pedagogical understandings to effectively instruct writing. But without access to this information, teachers are likely to stick to what they know—their experiences and the PD sessions that come their way.

All that being said, Maggie's practices are not randomly assigned, they are rooted in *something*—that something being what she refers to as "best practices" (personal communication, November 18 2019), which in itself is subjective to one's teaching context and therefore does not truly exist broadly. What Maggie is rooting her writing practice has stemmed from a combination of her experiences as a student, her teaching experiences working with students (personal communication, February 14, 2019), and her

current access to professional development programs. There is a glaring gap here in her observations—she identifies virtually none of her practice as coming from her teacher training undergraduate degree. Could there be potential for some reconsideration of pre-teacher training at the undergraduate level? This study potentially reveals gaps that may exist at this level. There is a common misconception that Language Arts Education is primarily about text study, and a large pool of ELA teachers are English Literature majors—a field focused on the reading and interpreting of literature, not necessarily the creation of it. While text study is vital in ELA courses, it is not the singular focus. Could there be opportunity to require ELA undergraduates to take courses in various forms of writing? Could there be room in ELA curriculum and instruction courses to evaluate theories of writing instruction, and practices that contribute to the building of writing transfer across subjects and genres? These are all questions that I am left with. First and foremost, we must know more about what is known. Teacher voices need to be heard if we are to understand common practices in the writing classroom in a broad, generalizable way. But if we are waiting for the next generation of writing teachers to rely on their experiences as high school students to know about the recursive, metacognitive nature of writing, then we are waiting too long.

Furthering the Study and Recommendations

While it is true that a single case study is not enough to rewrite the face of teacher education or professional development practices, it is enough to lay the groundwork for further exploration in this area. Enough has been revealed through these observations to warrant a second look at what it is that teachers know about foundational concepts of pedagogy and how they apply it in their classrooms. What might a study like this look like across an entire division? What might it look like across more than two grades? How

might the results differ in an academic classroom setting? What about with teachers who have freshly graduated from their teacher education program versus teachers who have been in the field for many years? The questions are plenty and their answers could hold power to understanding more widely about teacher practice.

I believe there is a potential, pending further investigation, for a powerful realignment in educational practices to put pedagogical understanding at the centre of instruction. Even should a study like this not be recreated, the valuable information of consolidation of dominant theories of writing instruction hold power to shape the way teachers teach writing. At the university level in teacher education programs, this could include curriculum and instruction courses dedicated to writing instruction. This could mean required courses for ELA majors to study writing pedagogy—imagine the potential of a shifted educational landscape where pre-service teachers come to their first jobs armed with the skills and knowledge of studied pedagogy.

For teachers who are already practicing, dissemination of this information through provincial professional development bodies such as the English Language Arts Council and regional Teacher's Conventions could be key in reaching teachers and expanding their concepts of what writing instruction could be, and equally as important, *why* these strategies may be effective for their classrooms.

Finally, the implications of what curriculum redesign may also be vast. The possibilities of creating curriculum across disciplines with writing outcomes rooted in writing pedagogy could be empowering for both student and teacher. For students, it may give them more wide-sweeping practice and increase the likelihood of transfer of skills across disciplines, and for teachers who may not consider themselves "writing teachers", it would give them a solid foothold in the world of writing instruction.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

August 15, 2019

As I sit down to begin planning my own school year, I cannot help but be brought back to my observation of Maggie's classroom. I skim over my former long-range plans and think about the similarities between her teaching and my own. I think about where my own strengths lie, and where the gaps in my practice exist—even with the knowledge I have of core writing pedagogy. I flip through my documents filled with old templates for writing forms and I ask myself: "It can't just be us two, can it?"

Ultimately, the goal of this study is to come to further understandings about teacher practice and writing pedagogy. What is known about writing ability is vast, and the emergent pedagogical theories that address the "best" ways to enhance writing ability are seemingly endless. From understanding the cognition of the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Ronald and Volkmer, 1989; McKoski, 1995; Tobin, 2001; Behizadeh & Engelhard, 2011; Graham and Sandmel, 2011; Slomp, 2012), to current traditional rhetoric models, socio-cultural pedagogies (personal communication, New London Group, 1996; Burnham, 2001; George, 2001; George & Trimbur, 2001), rhetorical pedagogies (personal communication, Mitchell and Taylor, 1979; Covino, 2001; McLeod, 2001), collaborative pedagogies (personal communication, Hairston, 1982; Hobson, 2001; Moore Howard, 2001), and on, there is a lot for teachers of writing to know and employ in their practice.

So, what can be learned through these competing, yet complementary pedagogies? Of primary concern is the acceptance that teaching writing is messy. It is responsive to the needs to students and the requirements of individual tasks. Its turbulence is a part of

its beauty, and for students to become masters, they must tackle the tasks without fear. To do this, we must teach the whole writer. McKoski (1995) asserts that to occur "For that, we will need models of learning which are more holistic and integrative, emphasizing the process of learning as well as the content and outcomes of learning" (p. 8) We must attend to their expression, their rhetorical knowledge, their cultural and social contexts, and allow them to share it with audiences during the process of writing. He continues by stating, "An *effective* theory of writing instruction, therefore, must recognize, involve, and engage, the students' individual and cultural differences, thereby allowing *them* to muster the resources at their disposal as *they* negotiate a learning task" (p. 9) and through exploring Maggie's practice, I believe we have a glimpse into how pedagogical understandings inform decisions that shape instruction.

Teachers need information. They need to know not only what they are sculpting, but how to select the best chisels with which to sculpt. It is these foundational pedagogical understandings-- the theories, rationales, and evidence to support them—that will better shape a teacher's ability to cultivate strong writers. This is nearly impossible if we do not know what is known. The sporadic observation of a teacher during placement evaluations and the mere comparison of test scores on a standardized exam do not capture what it is to be a teacher in the writing classroom. It is more than that. Far more. It is multifaceted, an endless expanse of knowledge and strategies and if we are to reshape or reaffirm common practices, there needs to be more discovered about the knowledge that underlies these important instructional decisions. It is from there, that we can truly build effective writing instruction in the high school classroom.

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Appendix A

Observation Notes Record Sheet

Lesson Part	Description	Pedagogical Understanding
Introduction		MET WT COL CON R
Body		MET WT COL CON R
Conclusion		MET WT COL CON R

Appendix B

Coding Key

Domain	Evidence	Code
Metacognitive Process Knowledge	Teacher asks students about the nature of the writing task Teacher asks students about the features of the writing task Teacher asks students about their thoughts while writing	MET
Writing Theory Knowledge	*Evidence of practices that are connected to or reflect a product, process, or social theory. Examples include:* - *CTR linear frameworks (PEEL)* - *Assuming a voice* - *Rhetorical Analyses* - *Conferencing*	WT
Collaborative Process Knowledge	Peer to Peer revision Teacher acts as coach in writing process Writing centres Collaborative idea generation	COL
Contextual Factors	Varying contextual situations for writing task Varied audiences Attention to genre peculiarities	CON
Rhetorical Knowledge	Attention to genre specific features Attention to discourse communities' Focus on the "moves" to make as a writer	R

Appendix C

Examples of Pre-Interview Questions

- What are the kids doing today? (LA9, Pre-Observation 1, January 31, 2019)
- What is the goal of today's lesson? (English 30-2, Pre-Observation 13, May 27, 2019)
- What do you expect them to have done at the end of class today? (English 30-2, Pre-Observation 7, March 11, 2019)
- Were there any special considerations you made for planning today? (English 30-2, Pre-Observation 9, April 2, 2019)

Examples of Post-Interview Questions

- Tell me about how you thought that lesson went. Do you think the students accomplished what you set out for them to accomplish? (Post Observation 5, March 5, 2019)
- Why do you start with personal writing on the first day of class? (Post Observation 1, January 31, 2019)
- I noticed a few students told you they didn't know how to start. Can you talk about that a little? Why do you think that is and how do you respond? (Post Observation 2, February 1, 2019
- Looking at the assignment page you handed out, can you tell me about why you separate the brainstorming space from the planning and organization space? What is the goal of separating those two things? (Post Observation 1, January 31, 2019)
- I am curious about the revision checklist you gave them. What's the goal of giving it to them? What's the purpose of that particular piece of paper? (Post-Observation 3, February 1, 2019)
- I notice that you have the students do a lot of drill practice when writing information on an envelope. Tell me about that choice. Why do you do that? (Post-Observation 11, April 30, 2019)
- At the end of the lesson you took the time to go through the assignments instead of having students read through them themselves. Can you explain why? (Post-Observation 14, May 28, 2019)

Examples of Long Interview Questions

Could you talk a little about how many years of teaching experience you have, where you have taught, and what grades? (First Long Interview, February 14, 2019)

Could you describe the expectations that are placed on you either personally, from the English department in this school, or administration that impact how you instruct writing? (First Long Interview, February 14, 2019)

When you were first learning how to teach students how to write, how did you learn how to do that? (First Long Interview, February 14, 2019)

For the most part, would you say that you expect the writing assignments you give in your classroom to be relatively average (for the average classroom)? (First Long Interview, February 14, 2019)

What do you feel is the purpose of writing in the world? The purpose, the function—why is it important that we teach kids how to write? (Second Long Interview, April 17, 2019)

Based on what you just said, would I be correct in saying that in general, you believe that the Alberta curriculum does a service for students in preparing them for what they need to know outside of high school? (Second Long Interview, April 17, 2019)

I have heard a lot in my academic studies the idea that "content informs structure" and not the other way around. What you do think about that idea? (Second Long Interview, April 17, 2019)

What kind of thinking do you want your students to do as they write? If you could listen to their brains as they're writing, what would you ideally want to hear them thinking about as they're writing? (Second Long Interview, April 17, 2019)

Can you describe how your teaching of the kids evolved over the term? What are things you're focusing on now that you weren't or couldn't in the beginning? (Third Long Interview, June 3, 2019)

How well prepared do you think the class of grade 9s is for their respective grade 10 level? (Third Long Interview, June 3, 2019)

What strategies do you feel are most important in preparing students to write a high stakes exam like the diploma? (Third Long Interview, June 3, 2019)

Overall, do you feel like your students are better writers now than they were in January? How so or how not? (Third Long Interview, June 3, 2019)

Appendix D

Revising vs. Editing Lesson Handout

Revising Our Personal Writing

Exemplar:

This is a section of a personal response about the experience one student had learning to overcome her fear of heights, leaning on her friends (both physically and metaphorically) for support.

The climb ascended steeply above us. Along the right edge, the jungle hugged the rocks; passage through its trees did not look feasible. The majority of my view was filled with rocks. Looming high to the sky, the boulders rose in a tiered manner. Peering back down toward the river, I saw a steep slope of rocks all the way to the water. All I could think about was how far it would be to fall.

My tense thoughts were interrupted by the realization that my friends were already beginning to climb! My anxiety increased as I watched them.

Do I turn back? My whole being shouted, "Yes!" *Will I regret it later? I really want to get to the top, but...*

I voiced my uncertainties to my friends. They dismissed my fears and encouraged me to stick it out. Questioning my own sanity, I decided at least to attempt the climb.

I chose a path that seemed easiest. My friend Tom was ahead of me. Then, suddenly, he slipped and slid backward about 10 feet! I watched, paralyzed, until he stopped himself and assured us he was all right. My heart was hammering.

Now those who had tried the other way came back; it had not worked. Consoling myself that my friend Seth would be right behind me, I shakily began the ascent. The "path" led up a narrow area between boulders. In it, we reached a place where there just were no good handholds. Seth braced my foot, and those above sent down words of encouragement. I was soon past the first challenge safely, but not feeling much better about the rest of the climb.

Appendix E

Dinner Party Assignment

The difficulties only increased from that point on, with scary spot after scary spot. Though I knew I should not look down, I could not always ignore the long drop to the boulders below. My breathing sped up, but my heart pounded even faster, growing loud in my ears.

What do you notice? — These notes are what the students discussed or DL offered

- Too much punctuation, particularly commas and periods.
  - to what effect do too many commas have? → distracting
  - " periods " ? → choppy
- Began sentence with "my" a lot

"What is this piece of writing made up of?"

- words
- narration and dialogue
  - ↓ D.L. stresses the importance of dialogue in narrative as it shows instead of telling

Goals for improving your own writing:

1. ____________________

2. ____________________

You can do this in any format you like. Feel free to use digital means and be creative!

Appendix F

Dinner Party Assignment Rubric

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Problematic
Choices: Theme	Well explained	Clear	General or lacking
Rationale: Theme	infers information about the character, time period, setting and/or conflicts. Is cleverly created and shows understandings of intricate details from the story.	clearly connects to the character's personality or event from the book	choices are too general or incomplete in some way
Choices: Guest list	Well explained	Clear	General or lacking
Rationale: Guest List	infers information about the character, time period, setting and/or conflicts. Is cleverly created and shows understandings of intricate details from the story.	clearly connects to the character's personality or event from the book	choices are too general or incomplete in some way
Choices: Invitations	Well explained	Clear	General or lacking
Rationale: Invitations	infers information about the character, time period, setting and/or conflicts. Is cleverly created and shows understandings of intricate details from the story.	clearly connects to the character's personality or event from the book	choices are too general or incomplete in some way
Choices: Party Flow	Well explained	Clear	General or lacking
Rationale: Party Flow	infers information about the character, time period, setting and/or conflicts. Is cleverly created and shows understandings of intricate details from the story.	clearly connects to the character's personality or event from the book	choices are too general or incomplete in some way
Choices: Playlist	Well explained	Clear	General or lacking
Rational: Play List	infers information about the character, time period, setting and/or conflicts. Is cleverly created and shows understandings of intricate details from the story.	clearly connects to the character's personality or event from the book	choices are too general or incomplete in some way
Choices: Decorations	Well explained	Clear	General or lacking
Rational: Decorations	infers information about the character, time period, setting and/or conflicts. Is cleverly created and shows understandings of intricate details from the story.	clearly connects to the character's personality or event from the book	choices are too general or incomplete in some way
Choices: Seating plan	Well explained	Clear	General or lacking
Rational: Seating Plan	infers information about the character, time period, setting and/or conflicts. Is cleverly created and shows understandings of intricate details from the story.	clearly connects to the character's personality or event from the book	choices are too general or incomplete in some way