

# Beyond Strategies: Teacher Practice, Writing Process, and the Influence of Inquiry

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**I**n 1982, Maxine Hairston claimed that a dozen years of research and development in the fields of composition and rhetoric—most notably the development of a process-centered theory of teaching writing—were sufficiently revolutionary to mark the beginnings of what amounted to (citing Kuhn, 1962) “the first stages of a paradigm shift” (77) in which a current-traditional paradigm emphasizing style, organization, and correctness with respect to conventions was giving way to a process-oriented one emphasizing invention and revision. She cited factors propelling this shift, which included such events as the onset of open admission policies and their attendant sense of a “writing crisis,” the success of the Bay Area Writing Project, and most particularly the emergence of research investigating writing processes as initiated by Emig (1971), Britton (1975), and Shaughnessy (1977) and, by 1982, carried on by the work of scholars like Perl (1979), Flower and Hayes (1980), Sommers (1980), Faigley and Witte (1981), and Pianko (1979). Hairston also noted the continuing development of research in composition, the emergence of graduate programs in rhetoric, and the increasing interest of textbook publishers in what this new scholarship had to offer as further evidence of a seismic change in the field of composition studies. She predicted too that “the change will even reach into some high schools because one large company has hired one of the country’s leading rhetoricians” (87) to shape its high school texts, and she issued a challenge to the field to further this development so that a feasible and coherent approach to teaching writing would be available to the non-specialists who do the writing instruction in schools and colleges around the country.

Now, twenty-five years later, it is apparent that Hairston's vision of a dramatically changing academic field was entirely accurate. Composition has continued to develop as a distinct field of inquiry. It has developed graduate programs, writing departments, and a rich fabric of approaches to theorizing and researching writing and to practicing its teaching, all of which represent a departure from earlier knowledge and practices amounting to a virtual paradigm shift in the field. With respect to the writing process in particular, a now well-established body of research demonstrates that process-oriented writing instruction benefits student achievement in writing (for a recent review, see Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). Process-oriented terms and concepts have entered the material environment of America's schools, in textbooks and curricula even where the theoretical bases underlying those

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materials might appear to conflict with it, such as materials in which priority is placed on rhetorical modes, form, or grammatical correctness. Even in settings where no one would explicitly claim to embrace a "process pedagogy," classrooms exhibit some of its markers: students and teachers use words like "drafts," "prewriting," and "revision" in commonplace speech.

Yet, though it is now difficult to imagine any language arts teacher at any grade level not knowing about "the writing process," many of the teaching practices employed in classrooms in the name of "the writing process" suggest that teachers may have different understandings about what the writing process entails as a model of writing and learning to write, conceptually or epistemologically. What "prewriting" means in classrooms, for example, may differ. Most teachers know about different strategies for pre-writing, but differences appear in how teachers and school programs construct their own understanding of what pre-writing means. Thus in some classrooms prewriting represents a seemingly loose, exploratory period of ruminating and listing ideas, while in others it is the preparation of a formal outline for a grade. In one setting, the term "writing process" suggests a writer's workshop in which students choose topics and self-select writing tasks freely (e.g., Atwell, 1987); in other classrooms, it denotes a lockstep set of tasks to be completed on the way to an essay on a teacher-assigned topic. Thus "process" terminology and classroom practices can saturate many school settings, yet what these terms mean and the ac-

tual content and tenor of writing instruction in those settings vary widely, particularly in regard to the recursive nature of the writing process and the ways writing tasks are framed for students. “The writing process” is framed in some classrooms as a series of assignments or, in others, as a recursive, fluid activity in which writers engage differently as rhetorical situations vary.

The Bay Area Writing Project, though formally eschewing any endorsement of any particular approach to teaching or any theory of instruction, throughout the 1970s shaped the practices that came to represent the NWP model for professional development, strongly influenced both by the notion of “writing process” as articulated by Elbow and others and by a sociocultural view of writing: thinking of texts as co-constructed and of writers as the members of discourse communities or communities of practice. Vygotsky, Bruner, and Moffett’s approaches (discussed in Blau, 2003) are often blended in “standard” Writing Project practice, but it is important to note that what is “standard” in Writing Project practice stems not from any official endorsement of an approach or theoretical stance but instead from a set of traditions and influences that are subtly changed from year to year by the teachers who may bring into the project ideas from their own classroom settings.

Our aim in this article is to present and discuss case studies of two teachers, drawn from a larger study, who represent different ways of envisioning and enacting a process-influenced pedagogy, one who worked with the South Coast Writing Project in an inquiry-oriented inservice program and one who did not. These two teachers work in similar school settings with similar kinds of students and similar (in some instances identical) district-provided writing curricula, yet their differing approaches to the “same” classroom strategies suggest how NWP-influenced professional development might continue to influence even basic practice in the teaching of writing.

## **Background**

The South Coast Writing Project (SCWriP) has been active in working with teachers in a three-county area in Southern California since 1979, serving over 500 area teachers in its Summer Institute and thousands more in its open institutes, classes, and school-based professional development programs. In addition to this direct influence on the professional development of teachers in the region, SCWriP also influences the credential program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. That program involves teacher candidates in workshops on the teaching of writing led by “SCWriP fellows” (teachers who have participated in a SCWriP-sponsored summer institute

and have since conducted professional development activities in local schools). Thus most teachers in this region have at least heard of the writing project, and many have participated directly in its programs either as preservice or inservice teachers.

While SCWriP and writing projects generally are not explicitly committed to any one approach to teaching writing, at least in their early years they were influential in accelerating the spread of process ideas such as drafting and revising among K–12 teachers in the area. Site leaders recall that when theories about the writing process were introduced at SCWriP's first summer institute in 1979, those ideas seemed revolutionary, and many teachers went on to communicate those ideas to their colleagues with almost evangelical zeal. Yet SCWriP, like other writing project sites, embraces a variety of teaching approaches promoted by the expert teachers who are its fellows. Further, teachers in this area encounter process approaches to the teaching of writing in a variety of venues other than SCWriP. The writing process is addressed, for example, in the major texts used in language arts credential programs (e.g., Burke, 2003; Christenbury, 2000) at area universities. It is addressed, with varying degrees of emphasis and integration, in all of the major language arts textbook series (e.g., Holt, Rinehart, and Winston's *Elements of Language*; MacDougal Littell's *Language Network*). Moreover, members of a professional association like the National Council of Teachers of English or its California affiliate have the opportunity to read about process approaches in the journals of those organizations and see examples of writing process-influenced instruction at conferences.

Under the auspices of the National Writing Project's Local Sites Research Initiative, we undertook an evaluation of one of SCWriP's inservice programs using a comparative reference. In doing so, we experienced a tension between our work with teachers and our charge, specified by NWP in funding the study, to evaluate that work using a quasi-experimental design. Our goal for the study was to assess the effects of participation in a sustained, site-based inservice program, focusing on the influence of inquiry groups and work with classroom coaches on teachers and their classroom practices in the teaching of writing. The study was conceived as a program evaluation, in which we would first detect any differences in classroom practice between program and comparison classrooms and then, ultimately, examine whether those differences were reflected in differential outcomes in student performance (results of the larger study are reported in National Writing Project, 2006a). However, the central aims of the inservice program (explained in more detail in the program description below) were to influence the ways teachers thought about the teaching of writing in two ways:

first, to help them see writing as a process of discovering and constructing meaning, to discover, refine, and articulate one's thinking, and second, to have teachers understand that writing is learned through participation in a community of writers with genuine uses for a real audience as part of an activity system. Thus implicit in the task of evaluating the program was not only an aim to identify the use of specific classroom practices by teachers but also to explore an interest in how teachers thought about those practices.

The research revealed that, in fact, teachers in both groups tended to use very similar classroom strategies, particularly those having to do with writing as a process. However, teachers differed in how they used those strategies, talked about them, and built opportunities for students to gain independence in navigating the writing process on their own. Teachers took from SCWriP's inservice program not simply a set of process strategies, but also a set of attitudes and stances with respect to writing that could be seen in the varying ways these "same" strategies were enacted. To understand the results, it helps to consider the program's goals of not only improving lesson design and classroom strategies but also supporting teachers in their own intellectual growth and professionalism; the program aims to develop teacher-leadership and to change the culture of the school, so that teachers can become more reflective, take an inquiry stance in their teaching, and claim professional authority. Our study is thus contextualized within research on developing an inquiry stance, the history of such work within NWP, and prevailing approaches to evaluating professional development programs.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999, 2001) offer a vision of professional development as developing an inquiry stance. Understanding professional development as inquiry entails breaking the traditional distinction between formal knowledge and practical knowledge as separate; instead, "the knowledge teachers need to teach well is generated when teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat the knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, 48). Engaging in inquiry means not only learning practices recommended by others or perfecting the practical execution of a set of teaching strategies but, rather, theorizing about teaching and learning in a way that then frames future interpretation and decision-making. In

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an inquiry stance, teachers “make problematic their own knowledge and practice as well as the knowledge and practice of others and thus stand in a different relationship to knowledge” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001, 49). Professional development then positions teachers’ learning as “challenging their own assumptions; identifying salient issues of practice; posing problems; studying their own students, classrooms, and schools; constructing and reconstructing curriculum; and taking on roles of leadership and activism in efforts to transform classrooms, schools, and societies” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, 278).

As Cochran-Smith and Lytle point out, the kind of professional development programs that National Writing Project sites have offered over the past thirty years have invited teachers to adopt such a stance, both in Summer Invitational Institutes and in a variety of staff development programs conducted in schools during the academic year. NWP encourages teachers to interrogate their own and others’ practices, to consider the implications of research and theory on their changing understandings of teaching and learning, and to articulate (either in their own writing, in discussion, or in presentations to colleagues) principles that underlie and unite a teacher’s set of practices in a particular context (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Gomez, 1990; Lieberman & Wood, 2002, 2005; Pritchard & Marshall, 1994; Wood & Lieberman, 2000). Thus NWP has often been misunderstood as primarily a disseminator of “expressivist” practices; instead, NWP does not adhere to any one official curriculum but more generally embraces a process-oriented pedagogy that encourages teachers to work with their students on aspects of writing such as invention and revision. NWP’s “core principles” are statements about the nature of teaching, writing, and learning: “The NWP model is based on the belief that teachers are the key to education reform, teachers make the best teachers of other teachers, and teachers benefit from studying and conducting research” (National Writing Project, 2006b). Thus, while teachers indeed are likely to come into contact with many process-oriented strategies in NWP professional development programs, simply transmitting a body of strategies for teachers to implement is not the goal of such programs.

### **The Study in Context**

As part of the National Writing Project’s effort to gather research data in support of its mission and activities, the NWP, beginning in 2003, sponsored the “Local Sites Research Initiative” (LSRI). The intent of the LSRI was to document the impact and effectiveness of the writing project model of pro-

fessional development on students and teachers, in unique local contexts. LSRI research studies were designed by individual NWP sites in order to match their local professional development activities and needs, as well as to add definition to the national picture of NWP activities. In acknowledgment of the wide variety of contexts in which Writing Project sites operate, the requirements of LSRI were highly flexible; however, each site was required to include some form of comparative reference as well as a direct assessment of student writing performance.

As indicated previously, the South Coast Writing Project, located at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has conducted staff development programs for K–12 schools for 27 years in a three-county service area with a population of roughly one million people. This region, stretching 200 miles from the northern border of Santa Barbara County to the southern border of Ventura County at the Los Angeles County line, includes agricultural and ranching communities with large numbers of migrant laborers and farm workers, a number of wealthy suburban communities, and several smaller cities, including Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Ventura, and Oxnard. Approximately 50% of all children in schools within the two-county region are eligible for the federal free-lunch program, and approximately 50% of the children in public schools in the cities and in the rural communities are Mexican-American.

In recent years, in response to increasingly intense demands for the improvement of student achievement on district and state assessments and other forms of high-stakes testing, schools in this two county region have been particularly receptive to proposals for staff-development programs that hold some promise of improving instruction and student performance in the crucial testing areas of reading and writing. SCWriP's IIMPaC program responds to those needs by making long-term learning commitments at a single school site or within a consortium of schools, where groups of teachers volunteer to reflect on teaching practices and experiment with alternative practices supported by expert practitioners and informed by current theory and research.

The inservice program is carried out through five interrelated and mutually reinforcing activities:

- › **Inquiry Groups:** Teachers gather at least four times per academic year in groups consisting of 5 to 7 teachers from the same school. These groups examine student work together and discuss what they see, experiment with classroom strategies and meet to examine the results, wrestle with common challenges, and identify common goals.

- › **Inservice Workshops:** Teachers attend three full-day workshops conducted by teams of veteran teachers, expert practitioners, and teacher-consultants of the South Coast Writing Project who come from similar schools and grade levels as the participants.
- › **Modeling:** Participating teachers visit colleagues' classrooms to observe experienced, exemplary teachers of reading and writing who employ strategies introduced in IIMPaC. Modeling is also emphasized through an intensive program of coaching (see below) and through presentations at inservice workshops.
- › **Practice:** Participating teachers employ the teaching approaches and strategies introduced in the program in their own classrooms, then reflect on their teaching in teacher-research logs and discussions at inquiry-group and workshop meetings.
- › **Coaching and Classroom Demonstrations:** Teacher-consultants present demonstration lessons in the classroom of each participating teacher. This gives classroom teachers the opportunity to observe their own students engaged in the strategies presented in the three all-day workshops; consultants and teachers then meet to discuss what happened and consider implications.

## Methods

The overall study from which these two cases are drawn involved 15 teachers of grades 4–8 in 2004–2005 and 17 teachers of grades 3–8 in 2005–2006. Teachers volunteered to participate in the study and received modest stipends to compensate them for their time and effort. Half of these teachers were drawn from schools that had participated in the IIMPaC program (hereafter referred to as program schools), and the other half from schools that were similar based on student achievement, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and English language status of students, but which had not participated in IIMPaC (hereafter referred to as comparison schools).

Data collection for both program and comparison groups included (a) classroom observations of writing-oriented instructional activities, conducted twice during the academic year, (b) interviews with teachers, and (c) a self-selected collection of documents from one week of classroom activity. The interviews and classroom observations were conducted by doctoral students in education who engaged in a six-hour training session focused on eliciting low-inference descriptions, writing fieldnotes, and learning interview strategies; they practiced observing classrooms using videotape, in-



interviewing teachers using peer role-playing, and writing consistent reports across researchers and across the two time periods.

Teachers were observed in their classrooms twice during the academic year. The observations focused on the resources available to students in the classroom and on teachers' classroom practices in the teaching of writing. Observations were designed to explore not only the extent to which teachers in the IIMPac program engaged the specific strategies they had experienced in the program, but also the ways they contextualized and framed writing. Researchers observed classrooms on a teacher selected date, the only stipulation being that the observer have the opportunity to witness a writing-related lesson. Fieldworkers first recorded a running record, then prepared an analytic report addressing each of the concerns in more depth.

Direct observations of classroom practice were supplemented with the collection of classroom documents designed to reflect teachers' instructional support for and students' implementation of skills such as planning and revision. These collections included any one writing assignment or activity, along with any and all supporting documents (such as teacher lesson plans, handouts, or rubrics). They also included all the written work in response to that assignment produced by at least three students chosen by the teacher, using the criteria of one high-achieving, one average-achieving, and one lower-achieving student. Student samples included answers to classroom exercises, final copies of writing assignments, and rough drafts if such drafts had been assigned.

Interviews were conducted in the teacher's classroom using a protocol with questions focused on professional development activities and classroom strategies. Teachers were interviewed in fall and again in spring of the academic year. The protocol used in initial interviews focused on professional development experiences, the extent to which those experiences affected teaching (if at all), and classroom strategies related to writing instruction. Follow-up interviews focused on teachers' thinking behind classroom practices and assignments.

A research team of doctoral students in education and university researchers, along with two SCWriP co-directors, analyzed the body of qualitative data. In a series of analysis meetings as data was being collected, teams of three to four researchers analyzed interview and observation reports from which identifying information had been removed. Eventually, the team identified a list of salient areas for further analysis, areas in which practices discussed or observed were notable for their quality, frequency, or similarity or difference across programs and comparison groups. Relevant passages from each teacher's interviews and observation notes and collections of

documents were coded and compiled using NVivo software, a tool for coding and retrieving qualitative data; the data were then partitioned into program and comparison groups and reanalyzed in depth to explore the nuanced ways in which the teachers' classroom practices might differ across groups and the potential implications of these differences.

## **Results**

Striking differences were found in the classroom practices of program and comparison teachers in the way they prepare students to write, develop a piece of writing, and promote student investment in writing. However, the

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differences were not simply that particular terms and strategies discussed in the professional development program appeared in one set of classrooms and not in another. Instead, while at times program teachers used strategies that comparison teachers did not use, more typically teachers in both groups used the same basic terms and strategies but used them in different ways or for different purposes. These differences in practice

centered on three aspects of teaching writing: helping students as they prepared to write, helping students as they developed a piece of writing, and encouraging student investment in the writing process. Here we present examples drawn from two teachers in the study, which serve as illustrations of the trends in data as a whole<sup>1</sup>; these vividly illustrate the differences in ways teachers employed these "same" strategies.

### **Two Cases: "Ms. Gonzales" and "Ms. Barrera"<sup>1</sup>**

The two teachers discussed in this article worked in similar schools with similar populations of students. Eucalyptus Elementary, a comparison school, is located in an agricultural community (population approximately 12,000) situated on the outskirts of a larger city in California's central valley. Dolores Huerta Elementary, a program school, is located in a small city (population approximately 100,000) in southern California also known primarily as an agricultural center. Both schools serve primarily low-income families, many of whom work as farm workers. The overwhelming majority of students are English language learners from Spanish-speaking back-

<sup>1</sup>Names and other identifying features of teachers and schools have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

grounds. Tables 1 and 2 list demographic and language data, respectively, for the two schools.

Ms. Gonzales at Eucalyptus Elementary (a comparison school) and Ms. Barrera at Huerta Elementary (a program school), both taught fifth grade and are Latinas who describe themselves as having strong commitments to working with English language learners. Their bachelor's degrees and teacher preparation came from peer institutions within the same state university system. At the time of the study, Ms. Gonzales had been teaching for four years and Ms. Barrera for seven. Both cited writing as a major concern in their teaching, and both sought out professional development in the teaching of writing beyond what the school or district required.

### Case Study: Ms. Gonzales

We observed and interviewed Ms. Gonzales over the course of the 2005–2006 school year at Eucalyptus Elementary. Ms. Gonzales explained that

**Table 1.** School Matching Data: Demographic

School		Eucalyptus Elementary (comparison)	Huerta Elementary (program)
Enrollment		877	583
Free and Reduced Price Meals		799 (91.5%)	508 (87.1%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	African, not Hispanic	5 (0.6%)	1 (0.2%)
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	4 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)
	Asian	6 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)
	Filipino	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.3%)
	Hispanic or Latino	730 (83.2%)	568 (97.4%)
	Pacific Islander	5 (0.6%)	1 (0.2%)
	White, not Hispanic	118 (13.5%)	9 (1.5%)
	Multiple/No Response	8 (0.9%)	2 (0.3%)

**Table 2.** School Matching Data: Language and Achievement

School	Eucalyptus Elementary (comparison)	Huerta Elementary (program)
English Learners	396 (45.2 %)	397 (68.1 %)
Fluent English-Proficient Students	145 (16.5 %)	79 (13.6 %)
Students Redesignated FEP	25 (6.8 %)	17 (3.8 %)
Language Arts Percent Proficient and Above	19%	10%
Language Arts Percent Basic and Above	54%	43%

the main thing she was trying to teach to her fifth-grade students in writing was to complete all forms of writing required by the California State Standards: persuasive, descriptive, informative, and narrative. Ms. Gonzales hoped to “expose the kids to different types of the different forms of writing.” Additionally, she worked to teach her students to self-correct, to use and understand rubrics, and to use peer-editing techniques that “really work.” She summarized her goals for her students: “to produce more mature writing by self-correcting, and to use and know rubrics.”

When asked to share a success in her teaching of writing, Ms. Gonzales recounted lessons where her instruction and her lesson plans have been “systematic,” such as teaching her students “everything they need to know about what goes into a paragraph.” She believed that “teaching explicitly, not implicitly” led to her success in teaching writing, “being very systematic and always going back to the basics.” Asked to elaborate on what she meant by “basics,” she listed paragraphs, grammar, and vocabulary. She believed that she could not “always assume that kids know how to write.” Instead, Ms. Gonzales approached the task of teaching writing as though “kids do not know how to write.”

Ms. Gonzales focused her instruction around the state standards, stating that “My students have to list the standard they’re meeting for each assignment, but I also try to get them to apply it to real life to make it interesting.” During one classroom observation, she began the lesson by writing the California standard on the board, Responding to Literature 5.0, and by telling students that the focus of this lesson was “retelling” a story with transition words. After defining transition words as words that “move from one sentence or idea to the next,” Ms. Gonzales turned off the lights in the classroom and began to read the story of Amelia Earhart out loud to the students. After the reading, students were asked to “retell” the story, using a template provided on the overhead projector. Ms. Gonzales again noted afterward that their primary focus in “retelling” the story was for the children to understand transitions and use them correctly. Their overhead template looked like this:

<p>Retelling</p> <p>Once there was a _____ who _____ in the _____ . _____ had a problem. To solve the problem _____. First, _____. Second, _____. Third, _____. Finally, the problem was solved by _____ and then _____.</p>
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Figure 1. Retelling Overhead

Ms. Gonzales modeled how students were to do the assignment by completing her own on the overhead with their help. The students were asked to listen carefully to Ms. Gonzales and participate by raising their hands when she asked them for more specific details about the story. Once Ms. Gonzales had completed her version on the overhead, which she referred to as an outline of the “details” of the story, the students were then asked to work with the student sitting next to them to complete a similar outline independently.

While the students worked, Ms. Gonzales circulated around the room to take questions from students, get off-task students back to work, and guide students toward the most important details in the story. Additionally, she frequently reminded students that since paying attention to detail was crucial when taking notes in junior high, the details they were finding in the text would be good practice for taking notes next year. Once students had completed filling in the outline, they turned in their papers to Ms. Gonzales.

In general, Ms. Gonzales described her teaching of writing as taking students through a distinct, explicit process with “a lot of steps.” First, she liked to provide her students with a lot of “exposure” to the topic on which the student would be writing, so that they could approach the assignment “systematically.” She noted, “I tell the students ‘This is what we are going to be writing about’ so that we can all organize our papers together.” For instance, at the beginning of the year, Ms. Gonzales assigned a “descriptive experience.” Topics for descriptive experiences included “a day at the beach,” “a frightening experience,” and “getting lost.” When assigning these topics, Ms. Gonzales liked to share her own experiences as models, “because you can not assume that students can relate to an experience, especially if they have never been to the beach . . . Students have to relate to what they write about and participate in the process. Kids have to write about an experience they know about.” She reported being particularly aware of that necessity that academic year, when she asked them to write about a day at the beach, a place many of her students had never been to and could not write about. The result of this newfound understanding was that she altered the topics of her assignments so that her students would feel like they had something to say.

“All students have to do all prewriting,” Ms. Gonzales explained. “Because I have a background in high school and in special education, I know that students have to see everything,” so she teaches organization methods “over and over again.” To support students in prewriting, she used a graphic organizer to generate ideas in class “together . . . We start with an idea someone has, and then I ask the kids, ‘Would this go in the intro, is it a detail or a

reason, does it go in the beginning, middle, or the end?" Students must "stick to an order, don't jump around, and stick to the topic." The graphic organizers she used in such situations tended to be either "web diagrams," "clustering" of the parts of the essay, or "stoplight paragraph maps" that assist students in building paragraphs with a prescribed number of sentences, details, etc.

One observed lesson demonstrated how Ms. Gonzales' students engaged in prewriting together using a paragraph map. According to Ms. Gonzales, that lesson was designed to prepare students for the written test of "Standard 1.2" which focuses on transition words. Ms. Gonzales began this lesson by distributing a paragraph template to her students and displayed the same on the overhead projector at the front of the class. She reminded the students that the handout was their "plan" for the paragraph they would later write and then used the overhead to model their task for the morning, which was to use transition words in the creation of a set of instructions for a recipe. She cued her students to offer their responses to the handout verbally, one step at a time, and then she would reveal the complementary step on her own model template. The topic of Ms. Gonzales' template, which she had prepared ahead of time, was "How to Make Pancakes," featuring different steps in pancake-making filled into a series of boxes on the handout. Next, different students were called upon to read aloud Ms. Gonzales' finished recipe paragraph, also titled "How to Make Pancakes," one sentence at a time. Ms. Gonzales then reminded her students of the steps they needed to include, the importance of using transition words, and the standard the assignment was meeting. At the end of whole-class modeling, the students were each given a recipe card and were instructed to use the next 25 minutes to first produce their own "plan" using the template to create a finished-product recipe (with a paragraph of instructions) complete with highlighted transition words, highlighted verbs, and the standard that the assignment addressed (written out on the bottom of the page).

Ms. Gonzales wanted her students to become more independent, and toward that end, she taught them how to peer edit. She emphasized constructive criticism in peer editing, because "writing is so personal." She also reminded students that their peers are "allowing you to read" their paper, and she did not want to hear negative peer comments such as "That is so dumb." Peer editing occurred before students turned in their work for grading. For instance, in the Amelia Earhart "retelling" activity described above, Ms. Gonzales asked the students to first fill in the template with their own words, then share these drafts with their peers. Peer-reviewers were encouraged to respond to the grammatical aspects of the exercise, based on

what the students had learned in earlier Daily Oral Language exercises. Once the students made changes, they quickly turned in their exercises to the teacher. That sequence was pretty typical of the roles Ms. Gonzales asked peers to play in responding to one another's work; their role was to "catch any mistakes" in their partner's writing, assisting their peers in isolating grammatical errors.

Another important component of fifth grade writing in Ms. Gonzales' class was the state report, "a major project" on which students spent six to eight weeks, containing several parts related to one of the fifty U. S. states, "including the people of the state, its demographics, and population number." Students were required to create a bibliography of "both primary and secondary sources," and Ms. Gonzales lectured the students on "reputable sources." She asked her students to think, "Why are there different dates or different numbers?" in different sources, and why some sources may be more reliable than others, in essence encouraging her students to double-check their numbers and figures. She had the children write sections on the state's economy, agriculture, and manufacturing. By means of example, she asked the children, "What do we grow here in the Central Valley?" She then went on to bracket information on the board, either "grow" or "make," explaining later that "we grow corn" and that we "don't grow cars." She said that when using vocabulary like "grow" and "manufacture," Ms. Gonzales could not assume that the children "knew the meaning of the words." Ms. Gonzales told the children, "This is how you research," and "This is how you cite sources," because "the students are expected to know how to write in these ways" in junior high and high school. Several examples of state reports were displayed on the walls in the classroom, containing pictures, facts, and figures drawn from reference materials and websites along with small amounts of student writing. The student writing was focused primarily on the historical facts of a particular state and measured approximately a half of a page in length.

Ms. Gonzales explained that she usually asks her students to keep their work at school: "Kids with computers are hard to find. Only three or four students in my class will have parents with computers. Many parents are ELD [English language deficient] or have very little education," she said. For students to "do hard work at school, it depends on their parents and teachers. Students need parents who want them to succeed." If students said they needed to take math notes home to study for a test, Ms. Gonzales explained that she "wanted them to keep their notebook at school," because she wanted students to "take good notes" and if students take their notebooks home "they might be misinformed by their parents." For example,

some parents did not know “to only capitalize mom and dad if it is a proper name,” and Ms. Gonzales did not “want to get into a debate with the parents;” instead, she wanted students to “know the language convention right now.” Thus students were urged to keep their work at school: “If students keep their work here, I will help [them] with it.”

### **Case Study: Ms. Barrera**

We observed and interviewed Ms. Barrera in 2004–2005 and 2005–2006, the third and fourth years of her participation in the IIMPac program at Huerta Elementary. Ms. Barrera explained that her goals for students in writing for the fifth grade were for the students to have “a basic understanding of what the traits for good writing are” and to “build an author within them.” She said she has been trying to build a community of authors and wanted students to come to see themselves as authors. Her second goal was for her students to be successful in academic writing. She said, “I want them to be able to manipulate language so that it’s communicated well in the community as well as the academic setting.” Like Ms. Gonzales, Ms. Barrera was also attentive to state standards, but she tended to cite these overall goals first before mentioning specific standards or the specific genres (persuasive, descriptive, informative, and narrative) in which California fifth graders were asked to write.

Her objectives for specific activities and assignments followed from these larger goals. In general, Ms. Barrera said she was trying to teach her students the “solid traits of writing,” which influenced her instructional and assessment focuses for each of the various assignments students wrote during the year: she wanted them to “manipulate words, ideas, sentences” and to feel comfortable and “fluid” with language. For instance, in a previous assignment, she was looking at word choice, If “they can play around with words.” For another assignment, she was looking for sentence structure and if “they can play around with sentences, flip it back and forth and play around with clauses. Can they do sentence combining?”

Like Ms. Gonzales, Ms. Barrera often modeled prewriting and planned tasks for students as well as providing graphic organizers for students to plan their work. During one observed class, for example, Ms. Barrera asked students to work in groups to compose a persuasive essay about the need for physical education. (This topic evolved out of the school-wide preparation for state physical fitness testing that had been going on during students’ usual writing class period all week.) She began the class by telling the students, “Writing affects every area of our life.” She noted how writing is a



part of many subjects, including physical education. Recalling that some of the students in the class had mentioned in the past that they wanted to be writers, she pointed out that there are many ways to write that take up the topic of physical fitness, including writing sports books, novels pertaining to health and fitness, or even instruction manuals for games.

Ms. Barrera then discussed with students different interpretations of “being physically fit.” She told the students they could choose their own word that meant physically fit, and she instigated a whole-class conversation about ways to stay fit, including jogging and a healthy diet. Ms. Barrera also made sure students understood the difference between a healthy diet and dieting to lose weight. The class continued to discuss what it means to be physically fit and how different body types respond differently to diet and exercise. Students had learned to write persuasive essays about a month before, and the fitness activity served as a review of that genre. After the whole class brainstormed general ideas, students engaged in prewriting activities and drafting in groups. Ms. Barrera also gave the groups of students the option of using a graphic organizer or immediately beginning to writing.

One important project for Ms. Barrera’s fifth-grade classroom was the research report. Ms. Barrera described in an interview how that process unfolded over time for her students, and she and the students were observed working on the reports at several stages in the process. On the first day of the unit, she worked on students’ organizational skills and set expectations for the project as a whole. The class constructed writing folders, working portfolios where everything related to the project would be kept. That folder contained standards and rubrics and was divided into sections: one section contained models and activities that had been guided by Ms. Barrera, and the other contained “their stuff,” independent work students accumulated toward a final product. Using this portfolio, students continually referred to models both of finished writing and of the various processes and steps along the way. Further, a clear and physical line was drawn between those activities which were completed as models (such as templates composed aloud as a class and then copied off the overhead) and the students’ original thought (such as notes and drafts of an individual student’s report)—in sharp contrast to many of the comparison classrooms, in which students’ finished work was often essentially copied from whole-class models.

On the second day of the project, Ms. Barrera talked with students about the reason for writing a research report at all, which she described as “finding information and sharing it with other people.” The writing task was framed as primarily communicative, and while Ms. Barrera did speak

to specific skills and standards, they were treated as features of the writing task rather than as the purpose of the activity. Soon after the discussion, the students chose topics, which had to fall under the broad umbrella of ancient civilizations (the class' social studies focus). Ms. Barrera explained, "We try to look at the possible topics because not everything is going to be easy to research. I had two students pick Isaac from ancient Israel, and it was hard to find information about him." Once the students identified topics, Ms. Barrera conducted a workshop to narrow these topics and develop ideas for the project. She offered a graphic organizer students could use for the purpose and modeled how to use it on the overhead using Amelia Earhart, a topic students had studied previously, as an example. She first asked them to "skim" the selection they had previously read on Earhart in order to prepare for discussion, then she demonstrated how she would prepare for a research project on Earhart, using the graphic organizer to identify promising research ideas and gradually reach a specific focus. Students contributed ideas to the process along the way and copied the model onto the outside of their portfolios.

Students continued to work on their research reports as writing in Ms. Barrera's class was presented as a fluid and recursive process. Although there were tasks Ms. Barrera wanted each child to accomplish on the way to a finished product, students took up these tasks when they were ready to do so and were considered to be responsible for their own progress. Ms. Barrera's sense of writing as individually directed and process-based was dramatized through the pathway to the research report observed on her blackboard. The pathway consisted of 8½" by 11" sheets of colored paper marked with each step in the research report process which Ms. Barrera wanted the students to complete. These steps included selecting, narrowing, and researching a topic, as well as a variety of specific tasks in composing and revising. For example, students were to complete such activities as filling out a "fluency chart" for each paragraph of their paper, getting comments from their peers, and having a conference with Ms. Barrera—each one of these activities would represent one stage. As an individual student finished each of these activities, he/she or Ms. Barrera would move that student's name into the appropriate space on the board to indicate where he/she was in the process. Writing activities unfolded in that way over several days.

On the day of one observation, for example, stations were established, and Ms. Barrera was located at the front of the class near the door at a circular table marked Revision/Teacher Conference. On the chart/pathway posted on the blackboard (described above), each student's name was posted on

the wall, so each child was able to see where he or she stood in relation to: the entire task, their classmates, where they should be, and where they could be and still be current in their work. Students sat in different sections of the classroom based on their progress. The table closest to Ms. Barrera was where the students who were struggling the most sat. Some students used the computer stations throughout the class period. The pace of the project was flexible as students were at various places on the timeline without penalty. As students worked, they utilized their portfolios to collect drafts, consult models, and retrieve information they had gathered in other class sessions. In addition, they consulted models of finished pieces of the research report posted on the walls—models they had analyzed as a class during an earlier session with Ms. Barrera.

Ms. Barrera was also flexible with the time allotted for each part of the writing process. The pace for prewriting, discovering ideas, and drafting appeared to depend on students' skill and comfort level. She told the class, "I'd like to suggest a time; you can follow or not. You have a total of 7 minutes for the graphic organizer, and then I'll tell you how long for the writing." Later, after the students had spent some time on the graphic organizer, she told them, "I'd like to suggest you start writing."

Ms. Barrera explained that for most assignments, the audience for the students' writing was their peers. She admitted that the students may ultimately think it's for the teachers, but she said she works to make the case that "it's really so they can share it with their peers and get a rise or not out of them." In past years, Ms. Barrera was the only source of feedback for students, and she noted that students still tend to look to her first for feedback, but over time she has worked to change that dependence. "Little by little, they are doing the affirming of one another." During one observation, for instance, a student's work was used by the class as a whole to talk about the traits of a successful product, and peers offered suggestions to that student and made similar changes in their own work. Ms. Barrera frequently asked students to turn to a partner for a response, noting that she "sets up class so they immediately have a partner next to them." These partnerships varied according to the writing task: students usually worked with a partner to share work, but other times, such as when they began writing research reports, they were grouped according to topic in order to assist each other.

Parents also saw student work, as portfolios were used during parent conferences to help them understand the students' progress over the course of the year. That communication with parents was important to Ms. Barrera

was further confirmed by her calling a parent on the phone during one observed lesson to let the parent know that a student had come to class without the day's homework.

## **Discussion**

These two fifth grade teachers worked with similar students under similar conditions: in addition to the demographic similarities noted earlier, they also worked with similar curricula (both working on Amelia Earhart around the same time, for example) and assigned similar types of writing (such as the research reports both teachers introduced in fifth grade). Perhaps more notably for our study, both Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Barrera talked about writing as a process and deployed a fairly sophisticated set of strategies to guide students through a writing task, such as whole-class modeling, graphic organizers and other planning tools, as well as work with peers. Yet each teacher used different approaches to three major areas: preparing students to write, developing a piece of writing over time, and encouraging student investment and independence in writing.

### **Preparing to Write**

Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Barrera explicitly taught students approaches for planning their writing; in particular, they occasionally offered students models of finished writing and regularly asked students to brainstorm or use graphic organizers before drafting a piece of writing. However, Ms. Barrera's approach to before-writing activities explicitly helped students to make sense of models and draw upon them as resources. She also offered opportunities for students to develop their own topics and shared a range of prewriting tools while encouraging students to use those tools independently.

Both teachers were attentive to state standards and listed as goals the hope that students would be prepared for testing. Ms. Gonzales tended to begin by telling students what standard they would be addressing, writing the standard's name and number on the board and sometimes asking students to copy it down on to their own paper. Ms Barrera also planned activities to address specific standards and sometimes discussed these standards with students; however, conversations about standards and testing occurred after the task had already been framed as a communicative one. For instance, when Ms. Barrera had students write about the importance of physical education (an activity explicitly tied to the upcoming P.E. testing and also in a genre, persuasive writing, on which students would be tested), she

opened by discussing the pervasiveness of writing in all areas of life and by having the students brainstorm genres in which they might write about fitness outside of school.

Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Barrera either showed samples of finished work or modeled how to approach assignments before asking students to write. But in Ms. Barrera's classroom, the models provided were usually student-written or written on the spot, in front of students, for the assignment in question (as in the case of the research report, in which she spontaneously created an example on Earhart), whereas Ms. Gonzales was more likely to use models that came with the textbook or would pre-make models before presenting them to students (as in the case of the pancake recipe).

Ms. Barrera posted models of recent, successful student writing around the room from an assignment about tsunamis. Classroom discussion frequently referenced the specific traits that made such pieces successful, such as word choice or sentence fluency. In another instance, when Ms. Barrera's students were working on a research report, models of finished sections of the research report were available on the walls as students drafted those sections. In contrast, Ms. Gonzales' room also had student research reports on the walls, but they were not referred to in the course of instruction or examined by students. Ms. Gonzales tended to provide models of specific steps students were to complete on the way to a finished product (such as graphic organizers for planning). She did not share or discuss student-authored models and only occasionally showed a model of finished writing that she had created herself.

In Ms. Gonzales' class, topic selection was rarely discussed in observed classes or mentioned in interviews, and in the cases in which it was discussed, topics were assigned by the teacher. On the other hand, Ms. Barrera was frequently observed teaching topic selection and discussed it in interviews, and in all of these cases, the topics were at least to some degree student-selected.

Ms. Gonzales, for example, assigned specific topics for her students to use in writing a descriptive piece, such as "a day at the beach" or "getting lost." When the beach topic proved inappropriate for her students, Ms. Gonzales devised a different topic but still retained control over topics. In Ms. Barrera's classroom, topics were occasionally assigned (such as in the case of the persuasive essay about physical education), but other times they were left for students to choose and develop. Further, Ms. Barrera taught explicitly about topic selection and development, as observed for example in her teaching of the research report. Her explicit teaching of topic selection seemed to better prepare her students for writing outside of the class-

room and school setting, where writers rarely find themselves writing to an entirely pre-set prompt. When students participate in choosing topics and in generating the ideas on those topics which will be included in a piece, they can gain experience in shaping and developing ideas rather than simply writing down the ideas of others.

Both Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Barrera devoted class time to presenting and guiding students in using prewriting tools such as graphic organizers on a regular basis. However, differences emerged in the types of strategies used, the way these activities were presented, and the extent to which students applied these strategies in their writing. Ms. Gonzales, for example, offered a “paragraph map” that students used to compose paragraphs. After writing sentences into the map, students simply recopied those sentences onto fresh paper to make a final draft. Prewriting of this type was most often completed as a whole class, with Ms. Gonzales filling in a template on the overhead with ideas the students contributed. When students were then directed to fill in their own templates, several students were observed directly copying down what had been written on the overhead, while other students took those same ideas and cast them into their own words.

Ms. Barrera also offered organizers for students to use in planning their writing. Like Ms. Gonzales, Ms. Barrera often composed a model for students aloud and on the overhead, explaining what she was doing and asking students to contribute to the ideas as she worked, as seen when students were preparing to write their research reports. However, Ms. Barrera’s model used not the students’ assigned topic (after all, these varied significantly among the various students) but a topic the class had studied earlier. Thus the modeling demonstrated *how* to use the planning tool but not *what* exactly to write. Students copied down the model much as they had in Ms. Gonzales’ class, but in Ms. Barrera’s class students then attached the model to the front of their working portfolios and were observed referring to it as they worked on their own pieces. In Ms. Gonzales’ class, “all students have to do all prewriting,” and each student’s prewriting takes the same form for each assignment, but in Ms. Barrera’s class, prewriting is still required but self-managed (as in the case of the research report) or is offered as a tool that students may or may not take up (as in the P.E. essay).

These differences in how teachers approach samples, topics, and prewriting are important in that they help to frame writing tasks as governed by communicative needs rather than classroom needs. In classrooms such as Ms. Barrera’s, rhetorical situations presented themselves much as they do in the world outside the classroom, and it was up to students (with the teacher’s support) to navigate those situations by developing ideas, choos-

ing tools for invention and planning, and making all of the other decisions writers must make. In Ms. Gonzales' classroom, writing was usually framed as necessary for school assignments more than for communication, and tools and support were made available to assist students in meeting the requirements of these school assignments. We have found that when models of writing are available and include not only professional examples but also locally-produced examples and examples written by students of similar age and skill level, students more easily imagine how to craft a product incorporating similar features. When students participate in the selection and development of topics, they are usually better able to develop ideas within the eventual product, for they have a stake in the writing's purpose. Further, when students possess experience with a range of prewriting strategies, those strategies are often more portable. If they have experimented with several strategies, students in a new writing situation can select from their toolkit of possible approaches, whereas if students have practiced prewriting as the filling out of forms, they may be at a loss in writing situations where no form is provided. Thus, Ms. Barrera seemed to better support her students in planning to write effectively on independent writing tasks and tasks occurring outside the context of that one classroom or that one assignment.

### Developing a Piece of Writing

The two classrooms also differed in a second major area: their approach to helping students develop a piece of writing once a first draft has begun. Both teachers used "process terms" such as "editing" or "revision." Both Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Barrera, for example, took students through a series of steps toward a final product, including prewriting, drafting, and revision and/or editing. However, in Ms. Barrera's class, those terms took on nuanced, open meanings, denoting moves a writer might make rather than rigid sets of procedures, stages of the development of writing rather than components of an assignment. For instance, students in Ms. Barrera's class had more flexibility in how they used graphic organizers for planning. Further, they had more flexibility in the timeline on which they completed various parts of the writing process, as seen in the pathway chart that Ms. Barrera kept on her blackboard when students were working on their research reports. While students in her class were all expected to engage in certain activities on the way to a product, the class structure implied that different students or different pieces of writing might require that time be allocated in many ways.

"Revision" activities in Ms. Gonzales' classroom (many of which were

actually editing activities) seemed geared toward moving pieces as quickly as possible toward a correct final draft; rarely if ever did pieces get longer, more complex, or change direction between the first and final draft. For example, Ms. Gonzales offered her students a list of “proofreading marks,” a “proofreading checklist,” and an opportunity to work with a peer to “catch any mistakes.” For one assignment, students were also asked to complete a self-assessment sheet in which they identified strong and weak points of their paper as a whole (which might be interpreted as promoting revision of content), but these self-assessments were not used as tools for changing or improving the writing (instead, they were simply completed and turned in after the writing was complete). In Ms. Barrera’s classroom, a series of revision activities was geared toward improving a piece along a variety of lines, including making the piece longer or more detailed, clarifying confusing passages, varying word choice, and improving sentence variety. Students’ goals in changing drafts included not only making writing more correct but also making it more complete, more clear, or more effective in achieving its rhetorical purpose. Editing for mistakes was also encouraged, but it was done after these other activities had been completed.

### Encouraging Student Investment in Writing

The third major area in which the classroom practices of these two teachers differed was in promoting student investment in writing. Both teachers expressed interest in engaging students, and both program and comparison classrooms were generally positive, learning-focused environments. Both Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Barrera, for instance, offered frequent praise for students and their writing, tried to set writing tasks that students would be interested in, and celebrated student writing by posting it on the walls of the classroom. Ms. Barrera, however, tended not only to emphasize fun and hard work, but also to encourage students to think of their writing as their own, consider themselves as authors, and take an active role in their own development as writers. In fact, Ms. Barrera explicitly named this aim as one of her main goals for students: to “build an author within them.”

Ms. Gonzales and Ms. Barrera frequently had students work together to complete tasks, and in fact both teachers had desks arranged to facilitate working with a partner. However, the nature of the collaboration was somewhat different across the two classrooms: Ms. Gonzales’ students collaborated primarily for the purpose of editing, whereas Ms. Barrera’s students collaborated on brainstorming, planning, and revision in addition to editing. Thus students in Ms. Barrera’s class were consistently expected to use



one another as resources, and written pieces were crafted to meet the needs of an audience of students rather than solely a teacher who would assign a grade. A reorientation of audience away from the traditional single teacher/evaluator shifts writing tasks from low-investment activities for school requirements to high-investment activities which improves communication within a real social context.

In Ms. Gonzales' class, peers helped one another with editing, but not with ideas; writing was framed primarily as an activity where correctness was prized over ideas. In that scenario, the teacher gave ideas to the students, and the students' job was to present those ideas correctly. The student got good grades and was prepared for junior high by doing the assignment the way the teacher deemed correct, and other students' role in the process was to help identify errors for which the teacher might later deduct points. In Ms. Barrera's class, on the other hand, students became a roomful of authors who could freely turn to each other for help not only with editing but with ideas, understanding the social nature of composition. Students in Ms. Barrera's classroom did help one another find and correct mechanical errors, but assistance was usually provided more in the spirit of helping to make the piece of writing more effective for communication rather than as a way of avoiding lost points. These divergent paths for positioning students as authors or as the completers of assignments were further evidenced in the ways students amassed a body of written work into portfolios over time. Both teachers kept portfolios of a sort, but for dramatically different purposes. The purpose for collecting student work in Ms. Gonzales' room was partly to keep it from being lost or corrupted at home and partly to send home at the end of the year. Ms. Barrera's students kept two portfolios: one was a collection of finished work, to be used in parent conferences as a record of students' growth, and the other was a working writing folder in which models, drafts, and notes were stored during a writing project. In the first case, students rarely if ever accessed the collected material; in the second case, students frequently consulted the collection and participated in its construction, using portfolios much as authors might.

## **Implications**

While both teachers used similar terms and strategies when they taught writing, such as having students prewrite, showing models, taking pieces of writing through multiple drafts, and having students work together, they framed these practices in strikingly different ways, beyond instrumental knowledge of possible teaching practices that teachers are aware of or the

degree to which a single set of “desirable” strategies is implemented. Instead, these differences speak to the ways in which generally accepted classroom practices relate to writing as a process. The nuts and bolts of these teachers’ materials and strategies were not especially different, but there were considerable differences in the framing of the purposes and processes of writing and what students’ relationships to writing were imagined to be.

These data suggest the potential for inquiry-oriented professional development to influence more sophisticated enactments of the teaching practices such as prewriting, peer review, portfolios, and other elements which have in some regions become standard. The differences seen here follow at

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least in principle from the IIMPac program’s emphasis on inquiry, and these teachers’ anecdotal comments in interviews support the notion that IIMPac’s opportunities for in-depth discussion and for supported experimentation contribute to a more nuanced understanding of issues in the teaching of writing. They suggest that program teachers find an increased sense of responsibility for improving instruction and an increased desire to interrogate received curricula and practices—to question and reevaluate even those practices which have become so standard in today’s classrooms as to seem unremarkable. Any time particular classroom strategies are modeled, recommended, or discussed in the IIMPac program, they are interrogated and reflected upon by the teachers. Thus teachers in the program have an opportunity to understand

not only the procedures of instruction (as might typically be emphasized in any programs recommending practices to teachers) but also the principles that underlie those procedures—and to consider how those principles align with their own existing knowledge.

Professional development can promote the adoption of an inquiry stance from which teachers examine and manipulate both existing practices (in our case, the features of process-oriented writing instruction that have, at least nominally, become standard practice in the region) and formal knowledge (in our case, knowledge about writing presented in inservice presentations and readings). It dramatizes the difference between teachers who have been invited to “implement” what they learned in inservice programs and teachers who have been invited to understand, to inquire, and to

develop (where we see some of the same strategies, but framed in a way that promotes student learning and eventual independence beyond testing/school writing). Thus our findings make a case for future research examining whether (and, if so, how) specific existing practices get adjusted and revised over the course of a teacher's participation in an inquiry program. For instance, research might trace one teacher's iterations of a single strategy over a period of months or years and connect that to what teachers say in their inquiry meetings and the teacher's own sense of the strategy as changing over time. Our findings also raise questions about the impact of different teachers' approaches on student achievement in writing and in patterns of growth across an academic year or set of years; and highlight the potential for differences in student attitudes toward writing in the two environments. We have begun research on the relationships between teacher professional development, student attitudes, and student achievement (e.g., National Writing Project, 2006a), but that work is far from complete.

Our study also has implications for the way we think about evaluating professional development when programs attempt to influence not just strategies used but also the thinking behind those strategies. While the IIMPac program's organizers have long thought of their work in inquiry terms, our first impulse upon beginning evaluation research was, however unintentionally, to move back toward an "implementation" concept of professional development, in which we would visit classrooms to discover the extent to which teachers were using "our" practices. While powerful exceptions exist (see for example Lieberman & Wood, 2003), prevailing approaches to evaluation research have usually emphasized the extent to which teachers adopt and implement content presented in workshops. It is generally posited, for instance, that professional development can be evaluated on four levels including (a) teachers' reactions to or satisfaction with programs, (b) the knowledge teachers acquire, (c) transfer of that knowledge or how it is enacted in behavior, and (d) outcomes for students (Guskey, 2000; Kirkpatrick, 1998). These schema maintain a divide between knowledge and practice, making it difficult to examine changes in knowledge which are connected to changes in practice or to examine how knowing and doing both construct and are constructed through teacher inquiry.

The problems inherent in this approach to studying teacher knowledge are particularly important when professional development occurs in a local context like ours, in which the markers for instrumental learning about process pedagogy (such as using common "process terms") are commonplace. The program, then, is less about presenting teachers with a new set of strategies than it is about encouraging them to interrogate and modify

strategies; in turn, our evaluation had to look not only at what strategies were used, but also how they were used and why. In other words, our inquiry needed to be sufficiently sensitive to shed light on the subtle differences in teachers' classroom practices that might result from their adopting an inquiry stance. While a range of research in this area has been done from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, in the main typical studies of professional development in the context of inservice have been of two types: (1) designs showing depth and complexity but not using a comparative reference, or (2) comparative designs which are evaluations of "implementation" of a set of strategies. Increasingly, comparative designs are the coin of the realm (our own decision to use one, for instance, was an outcome of design constraints imposed by the National Writing Project on behalf of the federal sources funding the research). Rich portraits of this kind of learning in a few teachers, without comparative reference, are extremely helpful and a necessary part of the research basis for professional development work, but they do not really resolve questions about what that program offers that another program wouldn't. A program like IIMPAC, which is sustained, long term, and not a quick fix takes time; the effects on teacher practice and student achievement may take years to accrue; in addition, the research designs best suited to capture those effects are by necessity time-consuming and costly to execute. Asking school administrators to sponsor an inquiry-based program such as SCWRIP's IIMPAC program means investing very limited resources in something that may in the long run affect test scores but won't have the immediate effect on test scores that they're under such pressure to produce, and it is asking them to do so without a great deal of the research-based evidence of effectiveness that administrators now must demand. Thus thoughtful examinations of professional development that illustrate not only how teachers learn from inquiry programs but also how that learning leads to improved classroom practice and, ultimately, differences in student learning are essential.

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