

The Spatialized Practices of Teaching Writing in Australian Elementary Schools: Diverse Students Shaping Discoursal Selves

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This paper discusses the teaching of writing within the competing and often contradictory spaces of high-stakes testing and the practices and priorities around writing pedagogy in diverse school communities. It uses sociospatial theory to examine the “real-and-imagined” spaces (Soja, 1996) that influence and are influenced by teachers’ pedagogical priorities for writing in two linguistically diverse elementary school case studies. Methods of critical discourse analysis are used to examine rich data sets to make visible the discourses and power relations at play in the case schools. Findings show that when teachers’ practices focus on the teaching of structure and skills alongside identity building and voice, students with diverse linguistic backgrounds can produce dramatic, authoritative, and resonant texts. The paper argues that “thirdspaces” (Soja, 1996) can be forged that both attend to accountability requirements and also give the necessary attention to more complex aspects of writing necessary for students from diverse and multilingual backgrounds to invest in writing as a creative and critical form of communication for participation in society and the knowledge economy.

Currently in many countries around the world, the teaching of writing is beset by converging and at times contradictory spaces for enacting pedagogical priorities. These spaces can include daily practices, locations, infrastructure, relationships, and representations of power and ideology. In Australia, the increased focus on standardization within the new national curriculum,¹ along with the regulatory and contracted spaces of testing regimes, sits uneasily beside the protracted and individualized processes that teachers have traditionally maintained for quality writing outcomes. Understanding the ways in which teachers mediate these “real-and-imagined” spaces (Soja, 1996) around writing is crucial to make sense of the kinds of writing practices that ensue in specific classrooms (Ryan & Kettle, 2012) and their effects on student writing. This paper explores the writing practices in two linguistically diverse—but quite socioeconomically different—Australian elementary schools, taking into account the spaces in which these practices are

produced. Linguistic diversity in Australia tends to be defined outside of specific school spaces and in relation to the proportion of students who have language backgrounds other than Australian English, including Aboriginal languages and dialects. Linguistic diversity, thus, is defined at the national level, but it is enacted quite differently within individual school contexts where it intersects with socioeconomic status and other identity markers. The paper argues that localized assessment programs that prioritize identity building and making visible the relationship between writer, context, and product are crucial to reliably assessing writing development of linguistically diverse students. First, it provides an overview of research about and approaches to the teaching of writing within the context of high-stakes testing. Next, it uses the spatial theories of Lefebvre (1991) and Foucault (1977, 1980) to explain how “conceived” or normative ideological spaces of education and schooling influence, and are influenced by, “perceived” spaces of everyday practices in the teaching of writing at two case schools. It specifically identifies the writing priorities at each school, and the technical and aesthetic capacities demonstrated by the schools’ students in writing. Finally, the paper identifies evidence of a “thirdspace” (Soja, 1996) for teachers to question, challenge, and transform pedagogical practices for teaching writing.

Influences on Teaching Writing

This section includes discussion about three main influences on the teaching of writing. First, it reviews different approaches to writing and the assumptions and practices inherent within each approach. Second, it elaborates the construct of writing evident in high-stakes, standardized testing instruments, and the effects of these on practice. Finally, it explains the development of the “discoursal self” (Ivanič, 1998) in writing, and how this is crucial to gain nuanced insights into the writing development of linguistically diverse writers (Hyland, 2003).

Discourses of Writing and High-Stakes Testing

Ivanič (2004) offers a useful summary of the discourses of writing that engender particular beliefs about language, writing, and learning to write, and teaching approaches that tend to be utilized within each discourse. She identifies six discourses from a range of data such as policy documents, teaching and learning materials, teacher and student interviews, and media coverage. These discourses include: (1) a skills discourse, (2) a creativity discourse, (3) a process discourse, (4) a genre discourse, (5) a social practices discourse, and (6) a sociopolitical discourse. A skills discourse focuses on sound-symbol relationships and syntactic structures to construct text; a creativity discourse is learner-centered and prioritizes writing about topics of interest; a process discourse foregrounds the teaching of mental and practical processes of constructing a text; a genre discourse acknowledges that the social context and purpose of the writing shapes it as a particular text type; a social practices discourse sees writing as a purpose-driven communication in a social context; and a sociopolitical discourse is interested in the ways that language represents people and things and is related to identity building. Stagg Peterson’s

(2012) recent analysis of the writing curricula of all Canadian provinces shows that most of these discourses are represented in varying degrees, with the exception of a sociopolitical discourse that is evident in only two provinces. A process discourse seems to be the most dominant in Canada, according to Stagg Peterson's research.

These discourses are evident in the academic literature on writing. Huxford (2004), for example, is a proponent of the National Literacy Strategy in the UK and advocates a well-structured functional (genre) approach to the teaching of writing, with explicit scaffolding of skills by teachers at every step of the composing process. Others, such as Myhill (2009) and Levy (1996), foreground the importance of scaffolding through metacognitive strategies in the process of writing. These authors particularly focus on the translation process as students move from mental ideas and representations to written text production. Myhill (2009) warns that process writing has now been institutionalized as a programmatic approach to writing, which assumes all students undertake the composing process in similar ways. Turvey (2007) argues that over-attention to forms and features of writing dictated by external strategies and assessment systems has led to a corresponding neglect of the importance of developing the writer's ideas to establish a relationship with the reader. Hilton (2006) similarly argues that "genre pedagogy" in the Australian context often assumes a mechanical texture and that transformative practice can only be achieved through the examination and reenactment of a particular text (whether prose, music, or image) and in particular how it "speaks" to its audience. Further, she argues that deep reflection is critical in this process to enable students to experiment with the relationship between themselves, the subject of the writing and the audience for which it is intended (see also Yancey [1999] and Ryan [2011a, 2011b] for discussions about reflective aspects of writing). This process of transformative practice is affected further by the limited time provided to teach writing effectively and even more so considering the lack of time for teaching writing in other curriculum areas (Freebody, Barton, & Chan, 2012).

The new national curriculum for English in Australia (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012b) is organized around the three strands of language, literacy, and literature, and promotes each of the six discourses of writing by seemingly affording equal value to the written text, the mental processes of writing, the writing event, and the sociocultural and political context of writing. Although the new national curriculum promotes each of the six discourses of writing, the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), a standardized test for students in years 3, 5, 7, and 9, has grading criteria that suggest a much narrower construct of writing. NAPLAN is an annual program developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) that has been in existence since 2008 and is administered by all schools in Australia. It is aimed at identifying skills necessary for students to participate successfully in everyday living in the community. These include reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and numeracy (<http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/naplan.html>).

While on the surface NAPLAN purports to test the most complex aspects of writing, in reality, it encourages formulaic writing. For example, the criterion of

audience at the highest level includes establishing “a strong credible voice” and “taking the reader’s expectations and values into account.” While these descriptors suggest the development of a relationship with the reader and identity building through voice, NAPLAN writing doesn’t have a “real” audience, and the conditions of production (Fairclough, 1992)—usually 5 minutes planning a prescribed genre in response to a visual or written stimulus, 30 minutes writing, and 5 minutes editing—do not allow time for deep reflection on one’s relationship with the topic, or interrogation and research of the subject matter. Even though the tests are evaluated by trained graders rather than machine-graded, the majority of grades (33 out of 48) are based on syntactic structure and rhetorical skills. Results from the NAPLAN tests are presented in a number of formats, including individual student reports to parents/carers, a public national summary report, and school results on the public My School website. The public reporting of these results has heavily influenced parents’ decision-making about school choice, so rather than considering all that the school can offer their children, many use NAPLAN scores to rule out particular schools. School enrollments are also affected, with many schools requiring parents to provide previous NAPLAN results prior to admittance.

As a result of such public scrutiny of test results, teachers are under pressure to prioritize basic skills and quick-response writing (Turvey, 2007). Indeed, Amrein and Berliner (2000) and a number of other researchers in the USA (for example, Linn, 2000; Swope & Miner, 2000) report that teachers spend hours teaching students only those things they know will be tested, having students memorize facts, drilling students on test-taking strategies, and rehearsing test protocols. These practices are to the detriment of subjects that are not tested, such as music and physical education. These washback effects on curriculum, and ultimately students, are profound. Hillocks (2003), for example, provides evidence of poorly constructed tests across the USA that have resulted in reductive pedagogical practices as teachers “teach to the test.” He makes a strong argument that teachers’ practices in preparing students for such tests lead to “blurry thinking and obfuscation” rather than critical thinking and an ability to critique specious arguments (p. 70). Further, Amrein and Berliner (2000) have found that such tests disproportionately impact students from racial minority, language minority, and low socioeconomic backgrounds (p. 10). These students, who often perform poorly on such tests, are being disproportionately “held back” in school or expelled from school in order that they do not take the tests. The curriculum is also narrower for these groups, with more constrained writing norms (Enright & Gilliland, 2011). Culturally and linguistically diverse writers in particular are disadvantaged by assessment that is based on correct forms and functions of a dominant English rather than writer dexterity in constructing identity and meaning (Anson, 2012; Athanases, Bennett, & Wahleithner, 2013).

Developing the Discoursal Self in Writing

More than 30 years of research on writing has shown that writing development is more complex than simple knowledge transfer or vertical learning (Beard, Myhill, Nystrand, & Riley, 2009). Writing development is mediated learning, it is

uneven, and its uses, meanings, and transformations are informed by the contexts in which it is found (Macken-Horarik & Morgan, 2011; Myhill, Jones, Watson, & Lines, 2013). Writing ability, according to Slomp (2012; see also Beaufort, 2007; Smit, 2004), is a much more complex construct than the knowledge transfer evident in a single writing product. Knowledges that are considered important for effective writing, not all of which are evident in a single product, include forms of metacognitive knowledge such as: discourse community knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, process knowledge, genre knowledge, and subject matter perspectives (Beaufort, 2007). These knowledges are also evident in Ivanič's (2004) discourses of writing and other approaches explained in the previous section.

One thing that we know about the development of writing abilities is that writers who are deemed "more proficient," including multilingual writers (Canagarajah, 2006), can shape a discursal self in their writing that aligns with the expectations of their readers. Ivanič (1998) explains this identity-building process clearly through her model of the writer as performer (after Goffman, 1969), which moves away from a purely cognitive view of writer's voice, to a more social view of the relationship between the writer and reader, making visible the discursal self. This approach foregrounds the ways in which writers might "perform" a role to suit the task or manipulate the reader, and also how they represent their own creativity, values, or commitment to the subject matter. Importantly, Canagarajah (2006) emphasizes a similar approach for multilingual writers—that is, treating context, rather than language, as the main variable as writers switch their languages, discourses, and identities in response to contextual change. He strongly argues that multilingual writers are not passively conditioned by their language and culture, but rather, they can choose how to perform as writers for different texts and contexts. The opportunity to "code mesh" by blending, merging, and hybridizing language and dialect for the purposes of constructing ethnic identities in writing must be considered in writing assessment (Jordan, 2012). Hyland (2003) and Athanases et al. (2013) argue that a focus on writers as individuals who build an identity in writing in different ways for different purposes is of utmost importance for linguistically diverse writers. Understanding the ways in which writers construct a discursal identity through voice requires assessment approaches that capture the intentions of the individual in relation to the context and the writing product.

Elbow (2000) explicates a theory of writer's voice which aligns with Ivanič's (1998) discursal self and links writing with identity and creative expression. Elbow identifies five ways that voice can be present in writing: first, the audible voice to describe the sound of a text—that is, the rhythm, tone, or accent of the text as a spoken piece, which is not valued so much in expository or academic texts; second, the dramatic voice to identify the persona, or character, taken up by the author; third, a recognizable voice, or style of writing, that is distinctive of an author; fourth, an authoritative voice able to speak the truth, or convey the truth, which is highly valued in academic or formal writing (Carbone & Orellana, 2010); and fifth, a resonant voice, or presence, which reveals the relationship between what the writer commits to paper and his or her unconscious—that is, how writers show

what they don't know as much as what they do about this style of writing or the subject matter (Carbone & Orellana, 2010).

Harris (2012) draws extensively on Elbow's theory of voice, but he prioritizes the way in which writers *construct* their voice in response to the multitude of voices, languages, and materials available to them. This perspective on voice and its role in writing ability is consistent with Slomp's (2012) argument for students' explication of metacognitive knowledge as a key element of writing assessment.

Theoretical Framing: Spatializing Pedagogical Practices and Outcomes

Foucault (1980) contends that analysis of discourse and discursive practice through spatial, strategic metaphors is a way of grasping the precise points at which discourses are transformed in, through, and on the basis of power relations. He sees the individual, with his or her identity and characteristics, as the product of power that has been exercised over the body, movements, desires, and forces. Different forms of power are not only evident at different times in history and across one's life, but also in different places or spaces. Foucault (1977) suggests that the disciplining of bodies creates complex, "mixed" spaces that are both "real" in how they govern the disposition of buildings, rooms, and furniture, and also "ideal" as they are projected over the characterizations, assessments, and created hierarchies of individuals (p. 148).

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) "triple dialectic" of historicity, sociality, and spatiality, which produces perceived, conceived, and lived spaces of representation, is not dissimilar to Foucault's spatial theorization of disciplined bodies. Foucault's (1977) "real" and "ideal" spaces of institutionalized bodies have parallels with Lefebvre's "perceived" and "conceived" spaces, respectively. Foucault (1984) also posits "other spaces" or "heterotopias" as spaces of difference, or counter-sites where real sites are "simultaneously represented, contested and inverted" (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). Soja (1996) regards Foucault's heterotopias as consistent with Lefebvre's (1991) "lived space," which underpins his own theorization of "thirdspace" as an open, critical spatial imagination of how things can be different.

We use Lefebvre's (1991) trialectic theory of spatiality to foreground the teaching of writing as a complex process. The three spaces operate simultaneously, each influencing and being influenced by the others; however, for ease of explanation they are separated here.

Spatial Practice (Firstspace: Perceived; Real)

Lefebvre considers this to be the space of daily practices, routines, locations, infrastructure, and relationships that are established and reproduced. Dubbed "firstspace" by Soja (1996), it is a space where everyday things and practices are "perceived" (Lefebvre, 1991) as normal. Lefebvre suggests that spatial practice ensures continuity and some level of cohesion.

In educational institutions such as schools, "perceived" space is signified by what students, staff, and community members do, where they do it, who they

relate to (or not), and the nature of their established routines and practices. In the teaching of writing in primary schools, perceived space includes classroom practices around textual composition, programs of writing and professional development for teachers, parental resources (Comber & Cormack, 2011), and the relationships between all involved in these firstspace practices. It is important to understand what constitutes firstspace practices if we want to change space in a strategic way (Sheehy, 2009).

Representations of Space (Secondspace: Conceived; Ideal)

“Conceived” spaces (Lefebvre, 1991) are representations of power and ideology, of control and surveillance (Soja, 1996). They are the “ideal” (Lefebvre, 1991) of how society should be, and thus they influence what happens in perceived everyday space, while at the same time being influenced by such spatial practice. Artifacts and architecture laid down in history are elements of this conceived or “secondspace” (Soja, 1996). So too, government policy is instigated to regulate everyday practice to achieve an “ideal” society. Everyday practice does, however, influence such policy or the design of institutions in a continuous dialectic relationship that Soja names “real-and-imagined.”

Media and government-commissioned reports and policies work in and around these spaces to shape what is considered a “good” teacher and “good” student. Teacher and school quality is called into question with the publishing of national test results and comparative league tables for Australian schools in a bid to provide transparency for parents. Such strategies quickly become “name and shame” devices of so-called quality control, predictably leading to “teach to the test” tactics (Comber, 2012).

Lived Space (Thirdspace; Heterotopia)

Lived space is a space to resist, subvert, and reimagine the real-and-imagined spaces (Soja, 1996) of everyday realities and hegemonic ideologies. It offers the potential for space to be made and remade with generative possibilities for critical transformation and civic participation. It is a space for new possibilities and imaginings of how things could be, a space of transgression and symbolism (Lefebvre, 1991). This thirdspace to which we refer is drawn from sociospatial theory, rather than learning theory. However, it is similar in intent to Gutierrez’s (2008) theorizing of thirdspace in classrooms, with its focus on multiple social spaces and power relations, “script” and “counterscript” (p. 152), and the possibility for something new and transformative.

This is the space where teachers can make choices about which firstspace and/or secondspace practices/ideologies they might interrupt or resist and how they might do so in time and space. Educational researchers have begun to use Lefebvre’s spatial theories to explain how space permits some actions, suggests others, and prohibits others. For example, Sheehy (2009) demonstrates the stranglehold secondspace can have on teachers and students. She argues that even if individual teachers attempt to introduce new ideas based on their thirdspace ideologies, unless they can play along with the ideologies of the institutional space and point in history, they have little chance of take-up or success.

Background of the Study

This research specifically aimed to:

1. Identify the types of writing that students in years 5–7 undertake in school.
2. Identify what students see as writing, and how they perceive themselves as writers.
3. Understand how these results are shaped by broader influences of curriculum, school priorities, and the effects of NAPLAN testing.

The study took place in two Australian elementary schools (pseudonyms are used throughout), chosen for their linguistic diversity—that is, a high proportion (30% or more) of students with language backgrounds other than English. One was in a low socioeconomic band according to census data (Mountain Gully School, or MGS) and the other in a high socioeconomic band (Willow Edge School, or WES), with 33% and 32% of students (respectively) coming from language backgrounds other than English. The writing coordinator/head of curriculum at each school was interviewed about whole-school approaches to writing. Students in years 5, 6, and 7 completed a questionnaire about their writing practices and attitudes toward writing (MGS, $n = 40$; WES, $n = 42$) as a way to identify students for a follow-up interview. Subsequently, 12 students from each school (chosen to represent a range of backgrounds and writing practices) agreed to be interviewed and to provide writing samples. School writing programs, interview data, and student work samples are analyzed in this paper.

Approach and Methodology

The research was designed, according to Thomas's (2011) typology of case study, as multiple, parallel case studies, with the two schools constituting the subjects of the two key cases. The object of the cases was the teaching of writing and associated writing practices, allowing for interpretive comparison in a cross-case analysis.

The analytical method used was critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is concerned with the workings of power through discourse on three intertwined levels: the macro level of sociohistorical ideologies and influences on teachers and teaching, the meso level of the contextual specificities of the textual occurrences and how these influence the discourse, and the micro level of the language choices that are used to represent particular groups and ideas. We used Fairclough's (1992, 2003) linguistic point of reference, that of Hallidayan (1978) systemic functional linguistics, which is concerned with the social character of text and the relationship between discourse and discursive practice.

Attention to the macro level in CDA enabled exploration of the conceived (Lefebvre, 1991) secondspace of ideological norms and historical influences on the physical spaces and how things are done in those spaces. The meso and micro levels in CDA illuminated the perceived (Lefebvre, 1991) firstspace of daily prac-

tices and the spaces in which they occurred. The meso-level analysis outlined the contextual specifics of these data, including when they were produced, how and where they were produced, and for whom they were produced. The micro analysis highlighted how these daily practices and spaces were represented through the data.

Critical discourse analysis is also interested in possible resistance to, or subversion of, power. This aspect of CDA can draw attention to any evidence in the data of Lefebvre's (1991) lived space or Soja's (1996) thirdspace as possibilities of resistance to regulatory literacy agendas. Specifically, the analysis of school writing programs and writing coordinator/head of curriculum interviews categorized genres, modes, and media used, and used lexicalization to identify priority areas, dominant discourses (Ivanič, 2004), and teachers' use of the metalanguage of text in relation to students' writing. Linguistic transitivity and appraisal within the interviews were used to identify the conditions or spaces of influence (including school contexts and high-stakes test environments) and ways of mediating these to prioritize and enact particular writing pedagogies and practices. Discourse analysis of students' interviews utilized linguistic evaluation and appraisal to determine students' self-appraisal as writers and their motivations and writing capacities within this space. Students' writing samples were analyzed for identification of student voice (Carbone & Orellana, 2010; Elbow, 2000; Ivanič, 1998) and for their positioning as writers within these contextual conditions. Specifically, assumptions that were made, grammatical mood, styles, modality, and evaluation were examined to determine aspects of the discursive self and how writers represent their identity and develop a relationship with the reader in different texts.

School Case Studies: Data and Analysis

Case 1: Mountain Gully School

Mountain Gully is a metropolitan elementary school with a total enrollment of 270 students from years Prep to 7. It is situated in a suburban area of low socio-economic status, although surrounding suburbs and schools vary from low to high. It sits in a low Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) band,² with only 12% of parents indicating income levels in the top quarter. Out of 270 students, 8.6% are indigenous and 33% speak languages other than English at home, and there is also a high proportion of students with special learning needs. The school is multicultural and aims to "support students in contributing to a socially, economically and culturally vibrant society in the future" (as stated in the school's list of aims on the MGS website).

Spatial Influences at MGS

Mountain Gully's writing program aims for students to "communicate experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, opinions and knowledge effectively through the written mode" (MGS writing policy). Students are expected to be able to write for a "range of purposes – to inform, persuade, entertain, respond, instruct, describe or explain and to relate to, move, inspire, motivate, up-skill or gain support from a range

of audiences” (MGS writing policy). This set policy, steeped in a genre discourse (Ivanič, 2004), was arranged to assist the school in improving its results overall in NAPLAN tests. According to the head of curriculum, Barbara, the school has had a “really focused, concentrated effort around writing.” At the time of the study, the teachers had also been attending professional development presented by two school staff members who were NAPLAN graders. The professional development focused on “what makes good writing, what the kids need to do to improve NAPLAN. . . . We’ve spent a lot of work around the process that sits behind teaching kids to be good writers” (Barbara). These statements indicate a lexical link between NAPLAN writing and “good” writing, setting up a logic of equivalence (Fairclough, 2003) between them. The conceived space of what is deemed to be an indicator of quality—standardized test results—permeates the perceived practices at the school, which is understandable under the regulative gaze (Foucault, 1977) of highly visible test results and performance goals.

Barbara revealed in an interview that the focus on writing in the school over the last two to three years had been “huge.” She indicated that this had made an impact on the NAPLAN results of most year levels apart from one. The reason given was that the individual teacher’s knowledge of the teaching of writing was limited and that his or her approach “probably isn’t quite as, just knowledgeable about, you know . . . [He or she uses a] more traditional approach.” This indicates that the school’s administration felt that their newly adopted focus on the teaching of writing required more contemporary strategies than those previously used. However, one of their approaches to improving writing included having some staff provide professional development because they were NAPLAN graders, indicating a deep immersion in the conceived space of standardized testing and its effect on their perceived reality. Although the focus on writing in NAPLAN did shift attention to writing instruction at MGS, that focus was solely on the kinds of tasks required for the NAPLAN test and left little chance for development of other abilities—an outcome that was felt most by multilingual writers.

The school has integrated a number of strategies to improve writing, but overall the approach is to teach the skills required to write in particular genres through systematic and explicit teaching. An essential part of this targeted approach is the discourse that occurs around the teaching of writing between staff members and administration. Mountain Gully’s perceived practices are greatly influenced by conceived practices. For example, the head of curriculum admitted that a “huge focus [was] on persuasion because it was for NAPLAN.”

Spatial Productions of Student Writing at MGS

While Mountain Gully’s approach was intended to be an explicit genre-focused strategy and ultimately produced an overall improvement in NAPLAN results (over the three years before the study), it left little chance for the students to capture and reflect on their learning of specific genres. It also disallowed the chance for students to flout writing conventions, which is indicative of an overly mechanical approach to genre (Hilton, 2006). This became more evident in the 12 students’

interview data. For example, Simon (an Australian-born student who speaks English at home) said, “I like to write stories but I don’t normally get a chance.” Simon described his opportunities to write as “quick” writes (consistent with the on-demand writing required by NAPLAN) but talked about how he received one chance to continue writing a story because his teacher at his old school understood his passion for writing stories.

He also described most of his writing in the following way: “We’re told to do it like that. . . . I would have my, like my introduction and then I’d have like my paragraphs of the, like main story and the like complication. . . . I’d have my introduction like a thesis, this thing and then I’d have/I’d state reasons for why the thing’s better or worse—and then I’d restate my thesis at the end.” Simon’s talk around writing indicated his disappointment in not being able to write creatively as there was never enough time. Simon recounted a structured and formulaic approach to writing, which on its own neither facilitates identity building as part of the writing process (Ivanič, 1998) nor leads to creative flow (Jackson, Thomas, Marsh, & Smethurst, 2001).

David, an Australian-born student who speaks Vietnamese at home, also indicated that his approach to writing aligned with what the teachers asked, but he did not like writing as much as Simon. “We have to do what the teacher says, but otherwise I wouldn’t do it. . . . It’s something that I have to do, not like, because we get in trouble if we don’t do it, so I have to do it.” David repeated “have to do” a number of times and used causal statements to indicate the consequences of not conforming to the teacher-directed perceived and conceived spaces around writing in this classroom. While David did not particularly like writing, he had the technical language to talk about it, using phrases such as “high modality” and “in the third person” and also naming text types such as narrative, information reports, and persuasive texts. Interestingly, David said that he would not talk to anyone about his writing, as when they write in class “*it’s mostly quiet time and we’re not allowed to talk.*” David is immersed in the “school” discourses of writing in which you write for the teacher and according to the teacher’s accountable conditions of production, often a feature of classrooms with multilingual writers (Enright & Gilliland, 2011). He is not involved in the identity work that might pique his interest in writing and enable him to draw on his cultural and linguistic resources to construct a discursive self. David has not developed a recognizable or dramatic voice (Elbow, 2000) to connect with the reader (given that the reader is generally the teacher).

An analysis of David’s writing sample—a persuasive text on why mobile phones should not be allowed at school (Figure 1)—shows that there is a distinct structure in the text, with paragraphs starting with the words *I strongly believe*, *firstly*, *secondly*, *finally*, and *in conclusion*. While David has clearly “followed the rules” and provided three clear areas of argument (brainstormed in the planning stage in class), his writing fails to convince the reader as it employs limited dramatic or resonant voice (Carbone & Orellana, 2010), showing little evidence of investment in these arguments.

Persuasive Text

I strongly believe that mobile phone shouldn't be allowed at school, Somethings are taking pictures of someone and they don't want them to, childr could use mobile phones to cheat eg calculator and they can google something and it will come up and cyber bullying.

Firstly, taking pictuyes without their permission is illegal and the victim doesn't know what they will do with it and they can do bad thin with it like pasting it on worldwide internet site and saying bad things about them. They could tell the victim friends about that perso that isn't true and he doesn't have any friends.

Secondly, mobile phones with internet do not mix, children can and will use it to cheat in test, and exams. They could go on free online calculator and write down what the calculator says or they can google something that they didn't know and didn't leavn't it during class, also they can text to someone and ask for answer and communicating with some one in a test is cheating.

Finally, children use their mobile phones and internet on it to play free online games and they will play games that they are not allowed to e.g if your in primary school and play MAIST without their parents permission and they will certainly be distracted from their learning and the kid will be addict and have a possibility that the kid becomes more violent.

FIGURE 1. David's persuasive writing

David hasn't utilized a variety of moods to appeal to the reader and create dramatic impact; he has maintained a declarative mood throughout, with a series of conjunctions used to indicate additive semantic relations. Unfortunately, these additives give the sense of afterthoughts being added as they come to mind, rather than a coherent building up of an argument with causal, contrastive, or elaborative semantic relations (Fairclough, 2003).

The same task was discussed in another interview with Quinn, an Australian-born trilingual (English, Kirundi, Swahili) student. Quinn described the persuasive task: "It was about this park and we had to write about it, and we had to persuade the reader why they should come there and not the others." She elaborated on the task later in the interview: "Well, this is telling me how to set it out, this right here I just put it there because I thought putting a line between the 'argument three' and 'restate thesis' would help me and it's good to acknowledge the other side, but don't put too much into it or the reader will think they're right."

The student would write words down first that she thought would help and were "not everyday language choices," such as *amazing*, *incredible*, or *best*. This, she said, "made the text sound more 'adulty.'" Quinn associates writing with adults.

Adults tell her how to set out her writing, and how to use big words. She doesn't acknowledge that children can be writers or take responsibility for decisions about writing or make creative choices. Like David, she is immersed in the discourse of "school writing" as opposed to identity work such as making choices about writing for real social purposes or as a way to contribute ideas about an issue or topic.

Quinn also talked about writing her biography on her father. She had devised her own approach to the organization of this task through the use of colors and highlighting. For each particular topic that was given by the teacher, Quinn would use specific colors to highlight the relevant sections in the interview with her father. For example, purple was "school years," and orange "early years." She then wrote a first draft using this organizational strategy and verified her work by getting both her father and her teacher to proofread it. While this structural and procedural approach conformed to the teacher's conditions of production (Fairclough, 2003), Quinn did invest in the task as she learned more about her father and his time in Africa. She explained the type of writing that she prefers: "I find if I wanted to write I wouldn't really write about somebody else, I would rather write about me or friends . . . and yeah, sometimes I write songs and make up music for my clarinet." Quinn is locked into the secondspace expectations of NAPLAN and the resulting firstspace practices as teachers limit writing tasks to those that will be tested.

Parvathi, an Indian-born bilingual (English and Hindi) student, said she struggled with writing, although her discourse around the structure of writing indicated how she would take up the instructions given by the teachers. Through the use of metalanguage—"We try to use high-modality words like *will* and *must*"—and her description of setting out persuasive text—"You have an introduction like taking a position, and then you have like three main points, and then each write some sentences to back it up and then a conclusion to like sum it all up"—she showed her understanding of the structure of writing in a particular genre. While she understood this structure, it was the actual task that Parvathi found difficult: "I don't know, but it takes me a while to think of sentences because I'm not really good at making sentences. . . . I have to think about some more ideas and use a little bit more high-modality, and sort of change the structure of my sentences because they don't fit. . . . Sometimes because I can't think of other words that actually go in there and sometimes you have to change the whole sentence around to fit another word in."

Parvathi articulated the fact that she is unable to write "good sentences" but failed to recognize that her grammatical understanding is lacking. Jordan (2012) argues that linguistically diverse students need many opportunities to read deeply and write for real purposes so they can start to identify what needs improvement in their writing. Parvathi sees writing as a series of words and sentences used to form a particular structure mandated by the teacher. Skills and genre discourses of writing (Ivanič, 2004) dominate the perceived spaces of writing in her classroom, influenced by the need to follow the NAPLAN formula for the tested genres.

In Parvathi's writing samples (Figure 2), she used a Y chart to assist in brainstorming ideas for her narrative text on "Funland." She listed words under the

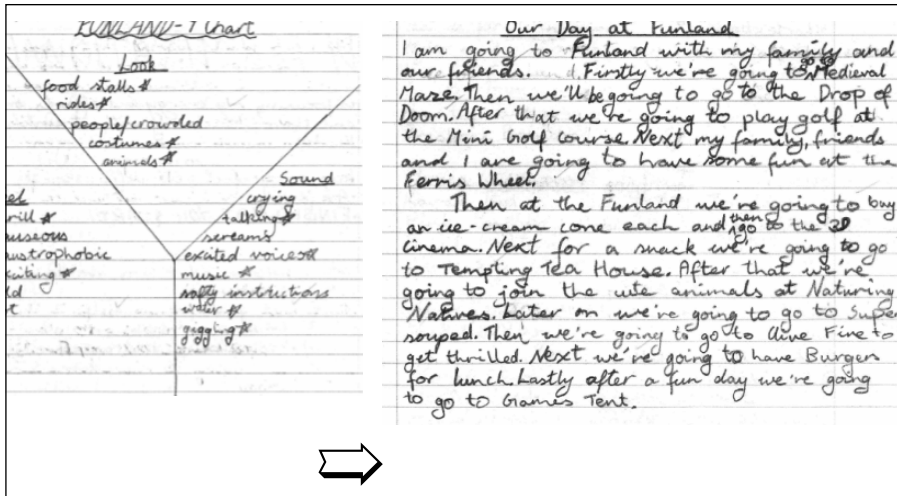


FIGURE 2. Parvathi's writing plan and narrative

headings of “Look,” “Feel,” and “Sound” in order to create a picture in her head about what her Funland would be like. Despite doing this task, Parvathi did not include these listed words in her final copy of the text but rather reverted back to simple vocabulary and additive temporal semantic relations (Fairclough, 2003) indicated by *after*, *then*, and *next*. Such metacognitive strategies needed to be unpacked with the students (Slomp, 2012) to find out why Parvathi did not utilize the planning ideas and why she made the choices that she did.

Unlike some of Willow Edge's text examples (see Case 2), the Mountain Gully students did not demonstrate skills in the development of dramatic and recognizable voice, and therefore, rather than being able to make an impact through their discursual selves, the students followed set steps to writing that their teachers had given them. In some regards, MGS is similar to WES in that the perceived and conceived practices in teaching writing are highly visible in the students' writing outcomes. The concerted effort by Mountain Gully staff to improve students' writing purely to increase standardized results on their NAPLAN tests (also see Comber, 2012) was a reactive approach governed by systemic constraints. This approach may well have improved results on these tests, but it has done little to develop the more complex writing skills and identity building that is necessary for students to become effective writers contributing to society and the knowledge economy.

Case 2: Willow Edge School

Willow Edge is a metropolitan elementary school with enrollment close to 700 across years PreK–7. It sits in a high Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA band), with over 70% of parents indicating income levels in the top quarter.

At the time of this study, 32% of students had language backgrounds other than English, making it a linguistically diverse school. The local community is

quite multicultural, with around 45 different nationalities attending the school, including indigenous students and families from countries in South America, North America, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific Islands.

Spatial Influences at WES

Similar to MGS, perceived or firstspace practices (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) around the teaching of writing at WES have been greatly influenced by conceived (secondspace) practices (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) in Australia around high-stakes national testing and highly visible curriculum audit practices across state education in some states. This school was found to be below average in writing results across the range of year levels tested by NAPLAN two years prior to the beginning of the current project. As a result, the school implemented strategies highly focused on improving the type of writing required by NAPLAN. The school performance targets developed by school management (required to be published online) indicate “Goals for Writing” which include “having standardised marking criteria sheets,” “cross-marking and moderation,” and “data logged to inform teachers for improved teaching practice.” Each of these goals places the regulatory gaze (Foucault, 1977) back on teachers and expresses the existential assumption (Fairclough, 2003) that NAPLAN is an indicator of good or poor writing skills and good or poor teaching performance. These goals also make the propositional assumption (Fairclough, 2003) that the teachers at this school are to blame for below-average writing results and that by showing data to teachers, they will improve their students’ performance. The “Goals for Writing” also state that in terms 1 and 3 teachers will “have on-demand writing tasks (1–7) to inform teaching practice.” This goal implies a “teaching to the test” strategy (Comber, 2012), but it attempts to justify such a strategy as educationally feasible with the verb *to inform* collocated with *teaching practice*, setting up a false “logic of equivalence” (Fairclough, 2003) whereby practicing on-demand writing equals improved teaching practice. The positioning of these (school community) goals as “activity exchange” (Fairclough, 2003) requiring action to improve test results is understandable within conceived spaces of “naming and shaming” schools by publishing results in news media and the accountability of making performance goals public.

The enactment of these goals within the lived space (Lefebvre, 1991), however, shows some evidence of budding thirdspace (Soja, 1996) possibilities at the school in relation to the teaching of writing. The school appointed one of the teachers (Sam, who has undertaken targeted professional development in the teaching of writing) as a writing coordinator to run a streamed ability-group writing program across the entire school. Streaming is based on NAPLAN results and teacher assessment from school-based writing achievement. Sam indicated in her interview that “we work around the NAPLAN, but only because it’s an easier way to sort of have a particular focus. . . . What actually happens is, teachers are also teaching other genres or other aspects of writing in their classrooms. Running coincidentally so that kids are getting a variety.” This is consistent with Sheehy’s (2009) findings that suggest if thirdspace practices are to take hold, they must play along with the ideologies of secondspace practices. Sam is dabbling in thirdspace practices

while at the same time trying to satisfy the conceived or secondspace practices of NAPLAN. She decided to pair teachers to work with different groups as a form of professional learning and development: “I worked with Aria—she works in year 7—and it was really great because she sees things differently to me, and then I see things . . . so working in teams has helped a lot too in those groups. That teacher power, helping each other.” Sam’s representation of “teacher power” suggests that working to a script is not necessary for some teachers as they see different things and learn from each other. She is in some ways subverting the conceived spaces of school performance goals by facilitating improved professional practice through informal peer modelling and discussion, rather than by checking up on teachers or presenting them with standardized data.

However, secondspace ideologies run deep in relation to obedient teachers who are disciplined (Foucault, 1977) to invest in practices that will improve test scores. To this end, Sam implemented a writing program, the “Seven Steps to Writing Success Program” (<http://www.sevenstepswriting.com>), developed by a children’s book author. The program is steeped in a skills discourse (Ivanič, 2004), and it makes the propositional assumption that a skills approach is the only way for students to become successful writers, even though a balanced approach to literacy and writing is widely accepted in research and professional fields. The program lacks any evidence of social practices or sociopolitical discourses (Ivanič, 2004) in its quest for high-impact writing, and it seems to prioritize narrative writing, although narrative elements are also applied to persuasive texts (possibly because these text types are almost exclusively used in NAPLAN). This type of writing program may well improve the success of struggling writers on NAPLAN tests with its focus on skills; however, it is unlikely to extend the abilities of writers, especially more skilled writers, in using sophisticated textual strategies to engage a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes and contexts. Indeed, Sam stated, “What we have found, of interest to you, would be that our ‘top group’—they don’t move.” Her acknowledgement of the meso level of interaction in this research interview indicates her cognizance of how commercially produced programs can be problematized. She has thus instigated additional strategies that defy the “quick and dirty” approach to on-demand writing required by NAPLAN: “We’ve tried to give those groups now to very experienced teachers . . . and working out what is the pedagogy that is actually moving them . . . we’re working on that now.” The teachers introduced an extended prewriting phase to develop vocabulary and oral language use: “We’ll start off by doing lots of oral work, always oral. . . . If you don’t build that vocab, you’ve got no chance . . . and some of our ESL kids can work out how to get their meaning across orally, then we can look at how to capture that in their writing.” They have also taught students to write reflectively about their writing as a way to make their metacognitive knowledge (Slomp, 2012) more visible to their teachers. Sam suggested that “*the teachers can look at the kids’ reflections and see what they’re trying to do. . . . We need to work out why they do stuff in their writing.*” This thirdspace includes informal action research into pedagogy that works, as opposed to what is expected.

Spatial Productions of Student Writing at WES

The perceived and conceived practices (Lefebvre, 1991) of the teachers at WES are evident in the students' writing and in their talk about writing. It is apparent that teachers' practices do have a big impact on students' writing, especially the writing of multilingual students, who are less likely to draw on thirdspace practices which subvert the expected discourses of NAPLAN writing. Each of the 12 students interviewed indicated knowledge of writing structures, genres, and elements related to the "Seven Steps" program, such as "sizzling starts," building tension, "heavy writing," and "backfill." These students easily talked about paragraphing, planning, processes of drafting and editing, and different text types. For example:

You need to have a complication, a sizzling start, an exciting ending. . . I can't remember because we did myths at the start of the year, so I can't remember because we had this special thing that we used—a backfill. (Sari)

You can start, um . . . you can start with a like, action, a dialogue, and um . . . probably like a sound or something . . . but it has to catch the reader's like, mind with how it's going to start. (Dale)

These students showed evidence of taking on broad skills and process discourses (Ivanič, 2004). Sari, an Australian-born student who speaks English and Papua New Guinean pidgin at home, and Dale, an Australian-born student who speaks English and Vietnamese at home, recited the components that they'd learned, acknowledging the importance placed on particular elements by the teacher. They used the second person (*we, you*) rather than the first person to show their use of the accepted elements in their class: "We had this special thing that we used . . ." and "You can start . . ." Indeed, most students interviewed suggested that the audience for the majority of their writing was the teacher, with occasional reference to peer readers or others if the work was displayed in the classroom or library. In this secondspace of accountability, there is little time for real-world community engagement and the production of texts for real-world purposes, including audiences consistent with social practices and sociopolitical discourses (Ivanič, 2004).

Students' writing at WES is steeped in the genre of schoolwork, where the social activity (Fairclough, 2003) is purposeful in its action of teaching and assessing writing structures, processes, and genres. The potential purposes of developing a writer's identity (Ivanič, 1998) or enabling creative "flow" (Jackson et al., 2001) are secondary as students mostly write for their teachers or for faceless examiners and often have little time for, or interest in, investing in the purpose or subject matter of the writing. Audible and dramatic voice (Elbow, 2000) were apparent in the writing samples as students applied the skills from "Seven Steps" to create impact, including building tension, sizzling starts, and "ban the boring." For example, Alice, an Australian-born student whose parents speak primarily Greek at home, created impact in her short story "Death by Barnacle" (Figure 3) with her use of interesting vocabulary, a variety of moods (declarative, interrogative), and degrees of modality moving from definite statements to hesitation and doubt—all effective elements in a short narrative.

As the ferocious, angry waves smashed against the strong rocks, my boat The Tiki was smashed against the rock and splintered into what looked as though a million tiny pieces. As my boat crumbled into the sea I leaped out with terror from my boat in to the icy, blue sea. The water slapped my skin the first moment I hit the water I was PETRIFIED....

I'm going to die! Will I be smashed against the rocks or be eaten by shark? The possibilities are endless.

My freezing hands tread the very unforgiving sea, my blood-shot eyes caught site of a very mysterious and disturbing figure it was about five meters long lurking behind small rock and slowly but surly creeping to wards me. I can almost imagine its three rows of razor sharp teeth slicing threw my body like a huge blender.

But I couldn't leave my loving wife and three children behind, how would they cope without me? I WILL SURVIVE I hope... I swam for dear life as fast as my terrified body could take me I scrambled frantically onto the biggest barnacled rock the barnacles ripped my body they shredded my skin. I felt I couldn't go on but I just kept on fighting for life. When I reached the top of the rock my whole body was bleeding. The man only lived for a few more painful minutes... he bled to death!

FIGURE 3. *Alice's short story*

After a tense and exciting beginning that foregrounds an audible and dramatic voice, Alice goes on to describe a “mysterious and disturbing figure lurking behind a rock” in her second paragraph. So far so good; however, she concludes with a final paragraph that has the main character thinking about his loving wife and three children, determined to survive, then climbing onto a barnacled rock and dying. Alice’s switch of tenor from *I* to *the man*, her tantalizing threads that are not revisited, and her quick and unsatisfying ending suggest little connection to the reader or this subject matter, or investment in the story. Instead, she projects a sense of “writing by numbers” which draws quite effectively on certain skills and processes of creating a narrative. However, she fails to build a writing identity (Ivanič, 1998) that is not steeped in school discourses, a resonant voice (Elbow, 2000) that acknowledges the social practices of writing or a recognizable style or stance with which the reader can connect.

Examples of persuasive texts in these data also showed strong elements of planning, structure and paragraphing, and dramatic voice used to create an impact. Notable across most samples, however, was the lack of authoritative voice (Elbow, 2000) which comes from a deep knowledge of the case you are arguing and thus enables a convincing style. Aaron, a Vietnamese-born student whose parents speak Vietnamese, tried to convince the reader that outdoor play is superior to watching TV (Figure 4).

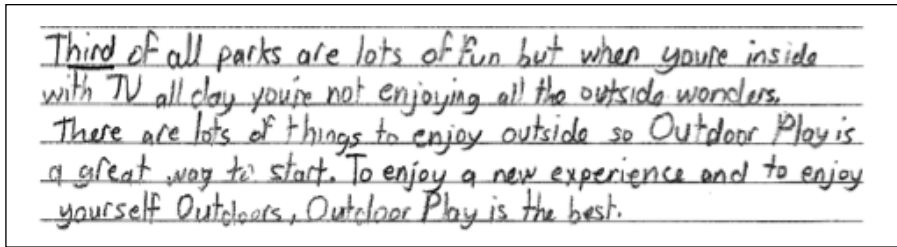


FIGURE 4. Aaron's third persuasive paragraph

Aaron's third point about enjoying parks (outside wonders) is appropriately contained in a paragraph and begins with the temporal *third* to emphasize that there are several good reasons for his argument. However, his point is not elaborated in any authoritative way; he uses a high degree of generalization and assumes that the reader is a novice in enjoying outdoor experiences but also knows what such experiences might entail. The result is unconvincing, and it seems that Aaron conforms to school discourses of writing to a structure, rather than engaging in identity work, which could include creative hybridization of textual features or even "code meshing" for multilingual writers (Canagarajah, 2006). He stated in his interview that he likes "writing stories, but reviews are good because you don't have to get like really long." It is apparent that he was not invested in this topic or this persuasive text and he hadn't researched the subject matter, nor had he carefully considered how to "grab" the potential audience. Learning the accepted structure of a persuasive text as stipulated by NAPLAN has provided Aaron with some writing resources. However, this approach alone does not engender a thirdspace of creative discourse (Kramsch, 2000) which encourages students to transpose or appropriate linguistic and cultural resources to construct new textual identities.

Thirdspace Writers

Some of the writing samples from WES were linguistically, rhetorically, and aesthetically sophisticated, particularly those from year 7 students, whose teacher the writing coordinator praised as "excellent, with lots of new ideas . . . she lets the kids choose the tone of the text, and they argue their point of view if they disagree with her comments," and who has now been given "responsibility for the top group." For example, Ged, a US-born student who speaks English and moves between the US and Australia, wrote an engaging and realistic narrative about visiting his grandfather, who has dementia, including a flashback element remembering stories from his grandfather's childhood. Ged explores the relationship between the two characters, strategies for dealing with difficult emotions, and his knowledge about dementia and its effects, demonstrating an authoritative and resonant voice and an investment in the story. He uses humor, creative wordplay, and figurative language to foreground his audible and dramatic voice and establish a recognizable style. Ged's discursal self (Ivanič, 1998) is one of a writer who has something to share

and comment about, rather than someone who is going through the motions of a school task.

Ryan closed his eyes, hoping, more than anything, that he would once again hear his grandfather's strange but comforting voice, strange because what he said bore only a tenuous connection with reality and comforting because, before his dementia, Ryan's grandfather had always been there for him. . . .

Netsook's walking was almost as unsteady as his mind. He would stumble every five steps or so . . . and would talk to inanimate objects, which included complimenting an upright fan on its hairdo. . . .

Before he left, Ryan looked deep into his grandfather's eyes, trying to see if there was any recognition, or any trace of the former self he had grown up around. But he saw only a blank, white slate without colour or meaning, an opaque window hiding what, if anything, was left of his soul. . . . "Could you pass me the salted papershredder please?" Netsook said to his neighbour. . . .

Ged indicated in his interview that he was drawing on his family background for this story, using his own memories and those of his parents to paint a vivid picture of his Inuit grandfather. His connectedness to the subject matter and the narrative style to entertain and make social comment was obvious as he drew the reader in and maintained interest using the narrative techniques of flashback, characterization, and interesting vocabulary. Ged related his confidence in negotiating his writing intentions with his teacher: "Sometimes I don't—I think the feedback is actually very anti, like it's against what I'm trying to do, which I would then explain to them and then they get it." Ged approached these tasks as a writer who self-consciously performs according to context and audience: "If I'm writing for the teacher I'm more formal, but if I want a laugh from my classmates I put more humour in."

Another example, this time a persuasive text by Hani, an Indian-born student who speaks Hindi and English, uses a variety of moods (imperative, declarative, interrogative), strong evaluative statements, and a clear authoritative voice about the subject of Nelson Mandela. She easily hybridizes the text types of biography and persuasive speech, temporally elaborating on Mandela's life and achievements while emphasizing the impact of his life on others to build her argument. Her "Global Citizen" speech is engaging, well informed, and convincing, suggesting an interest and belief in her argument about the worthiness of Mandela as a hero. Her audible and dramatic voice is used well for the speech genre: "Committee members look no further. If you want the best, you've got the best! I strongly believe that Nelson Mandela should be your number one choice for Hero of the Year. Why you may ask? This noble man has dedicated his life to achieving equality for black people in South Africa."

To highlight the actions of her subject, Mandela, Hani uses evaluative descriptors and nouns, such as "worthy cause" and "incredible hardship," and emotive verbs, such as "fighting injustice," "protecting the rights," "outraged by social injustice," and "dedicated his life." And her strong modality and resonant voice invite the reader to invest in the linguistic assumptions about Mandela's worthiness and

his inspiration to others. Both Ged and Hani showed writing styles that represent a discursive self that moves beyond school discourses. Even though Hani was writing for a school task, through her command of the genre and subject matter, and her voice, which was evident throughout the text, she positioned herself as a writer who chooses subject matter that she invests in, and who uses language to achieve her purpose. Hani injected an element of playfulness into her argument (“If you want the best, you’ve got the best!”). She explained in her interview that “you have to show that you believe your argument. . . . I imagined myself saying the words and where I would raise my voice.” While Hani met school discourse requirements, she was also confident in performing her discursive identity.

These successful writers may also have been influenced by the perceived and conceived spaces related to writing in their homes and within their peer groups. Ged’s and Hani’s parents, for example, work at universities, and writing is part of their everyday work and conversations. However, it is clear across the broad corpus of data from WES that the perceived and conceived practices and ideologies about writing for these students are heavily influenced by the perceived and conceived spaces of their teachers’ writing pedagogies. Those elements that teachers prioritize can clearly be seen in the students’ outputs. Where the lived space (Lefebvre, 1991) is pushing the boundaries of standardized and regulatory agendas by seeking pedagogies that both meet system requirements and yet also allow some time and space for identity building (Ivanič, 1998) and creative flow (Jackson et al., 2001), students can develop a relationship with the reader and represent their discursive selves in socially mediated ways. Some EAL students at WES who have had more exposure to written English at home, such as Hani, have already developed identities as writers of English. Others, such as Aaron, have begun to respond to teachers’ explicit pedagogies around voice and audience but need more time and opportunities to move into the thirdspace of identity building by learning how to draw on the linguistic and cultural resources available to them.

Discussion and Implications

Summary and Significance

Despite calls for writing instruction that allows students to develop complex rhetorical identities and contextualized assessment, national testing systems markedly shape writing instruction in contemporary Australian elementary classrooms. Understanding how teachers and schools respond to national discourses of testing is important because, as the data in this project show, teachers really do make a difference, and their pedagogical priorities have an impact on students’ writing outcomes.

This study shows how teachers and schools are under incredible pressure to improve or maintain NAPLAN scores (Comber, 2012). At both schools, teachers enact pedagogies that are influenced by the visible nature of test results. However, as our results indicate, teachers can harness secondspace testing regimes and use the trend data to convince school management of the need for a holistic and systematic (thirdspace) improvement in the school writing program. The key factor

in the difference between MGS and WES, according to our data, is the approach to writing and teaching writing taken by the teachers at the schools. The teachers' priorities (which, as we have shown, are influenced by a number of spatial imperatives) are clearly evident in the students' writing. Some teachers in this study have begun to mold their lived space (Lefebvre, 1991) just a little to disrupt the singular goal of test preparation. At Willow Edge School, the results show evidence of identity building and voice as students have begun to step outside of the discourses of schooling to position themselves as writers with something to say. The whole-school writing program at WES, which sees teachers working alongside each other and providing space for students to reflect on their choices in writing, has begun to create a thirdspace (Soja, 1996) for pedagogies to extend writers and facilitate their investment in writing choices. These teachers are attempting to provide students with more writing tasks with real audiences, as well as time to reflect on and discuss writing motivations and influences in class; they are also providing peer modeling for teachers of writing. While these strategies are useful for both monolingual and multilingual writers, the reflective aspect of making self-conscious authorial decisions is crucial for multilingual writers, who have more diverse linguistic (and often cultural) resources to draw on as they craft their writing. While the WES writing program is steeped in genre, process, and skills discourses (Ivanič, 2004), it is also enabling professional learning and action-research about ways to develop more creative, critical, and autonomous writers.

Implications for Teaching and Assessment

The results of this study suggest certain important implications for the teaching of writing, especially the teaching of writing in contexts where high-stakes, standardized testing is the norm. As the results show, the conceived spaces of standardization, structure, and skills take precedence in many Australian classrooms, such as those at Mountain Gully School. However, students need a reason, other than standardized testing, to invest in writing. They need to experience the (thirdspace) power of an authoritative command of subject matter and an ability to engage and/or manipulate a reader. For linguistically diverse students, developing a discursive self is possible and is a way to begin to understand the multiple and diverse textual ways of being in the world (Athanases et al., 2013).

All students, and particularly linguistically diverse students, need explicit instruction in the forms and structures of different text types; however, they also need time to engage critically and creatively with their subject matter, to develop their voice as writers for real audiences, and to discuss the metacognitive knowledge choices they made for each piece (Ryan & Kettle, 2012). Under highly structured conditions, without attention to creativity and identity building, the types of one-off writing that students produce show evidence of specific skill development, yet lack the fluidity and linguistic complexity used by confident writers to develop an authentic relationship with the reader. When working with multilingual writers, teachers need to encourage self-conscious and reflective code-meshing (Jordan, 2012) and provide extra time to assist students in drawing on different linguistic and

cultural resources to develop their writing identities. Writing assessment strategies should also prioritize the ways in which students utilize these resources to create products that are effective for the purpose, audience, and context.

Slomp (2012) argues that complex conceptions of knowledge choices, combined with developmental theories which consider the factors that influence development, such as Bronfenbrenner's (1999) bioecological theory, provide a much more reliable basis for assessing writing ability. This more complex view of writing ability accounts for the interplay between (1) the person (dispositions, resources, and motivations), (2) the context (both immediate and institutional), and (3) the developmental product. It is this interplay, and students' shaping of a writing identity or discursal self, which is crucial (Hilton, 2006; Slomp, 2012; Wardle & Roozen, 2012) and much more difficult to measure.

We suggest here that a thirdspace of writing pedagogy and assessment is needed to capture the complexities of writing development. Huot (2002) suggests an approach guided by a process of research inquiry to meet the needs of the school and its community, teachers, and students. Wardle and Roozen (2012) expand on this approach to propose an ecological model of writing assessment using, for example, ethnography, portfolios, interviews, student annotations and reflections, and document analyses. Gathering richer and more nuanced data over time can provide a much more reliable assessment program for writing than reductionist standardized tests. Such data can enable teachers to interpret how writers' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds have influenced their negotiation of established genres and conventions for the development of voice (Canagarajah, 2003). Further, these data can form the basis of a professional development program for teachers working alongside each other, conducting "assessment as research" (Slomp, 2012, p. 89) for their contextualized writing programs.

Too often, school writing is abstract, depersonalized, and context-reduced (Ryan & Kettle, 2012). Struggling students' writing results on standardized tests can be raised by developing formulaic approaches to written genres, as shown by Mountain Gully School. However, as found by Willow Edge School, if the goal is to raise the standard for all students and prepare them to engage in prose literacy in an increasingly globalized and knowledge-based economy, then time and attention must be given to critical, creative, and reflective writing development (Hillocks, 2003). Evaluation of this complex construct of writing development, particularly for multilingual writers, requires a program of assessment that focuses on the interplay between the writer, the context, and the product.

Further Research

This study has highlighted the need for further research in two key areas. First, more empirical evidence is needed of the ways in which linguistically diverse students make authorial choices—what resources they draw upon at different stages of the writing process (and why) and how they respond to different contextual conditions as they write. Second, further research is needed to determine the classroom conditions that are conducive to producing reflective autonomous writers.

NOTES

1. In Queensland, in particular, the state education system has developed an initiative called Curriculum into the Classroom, which outlines lesson-by-lesson and unit-by-unit exactly what teachers should be teaching. Although not yet mandatory for all state schools, it is strongly supported by principals who want to ensure consistent coverage of all NAPLAN topics.

2. In Australian schools, the variables that make up an ICSEA value include family background information provided to schools directly by families, such as parents' occupations and the school and nonschool education levels they achieved. In some cases where this information is not available, Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data on family background are used to determine a set of average family characteristics for the districts where students live. The ICSEA variables also include three school characteristics: whether a school is in a metropolitan, regional, or remote area; the proportion of indigenous students; and the proportion of students with language backgrounds other than English. The measure of student language backgrounds other than English contributes to the calculation of an ICSEA value only when it is combined with the measure of parental school education levels of year 9 or below (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012a).

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Call for Proposals for the 2014 CEL Convention

The Conference on English Leadership (CEL) will hold their 2014 annual convention in Washington, DC, November 23–25. The theme is *Leading in a Collaborative World*.

Never has collaboration been more important in schools. Common Core State Standards, literacy coaching, professional learning communities, co-teaching, mentoring, tweets, wikis, Google Docs, literature circles, and other initiatives and resources have the potential to bring together educators and students across the world. While these opportunities for collaboration are exciting, they can also present challenges.

If you are wrestling with the challenges or have experiences that could help provide insight on them, the 2014 CEL Convention is the place for you. CEL is a professional community dedicated to developing leadership qualities in English educators. The annual convention is an opportunity for leaders to gather, share ideas, and grow. A unique quality of the convention is that attendees have many opportunities to network over breakfast, lunch, coffee breaks, and social gatherings. Indeed, it is the perfect place to hone our collaborative leadership skills.

The 2014 Program Committee is accepting proposals that address issues of collaboration and topics related to collaborative leadership. In the spirit of the theme and the nature of CEL, interactive presentations are encouraged. Interested presenters should visit the CEL website at www.ncte.org/CEL for more information or to complete the proposal application. **All applications are due by April 1, 2014.** Questions can be directed to Janice Schwarze, Program Chair, at CELConvention2014@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Washington, DC, November 23–25. In the meantime, follow us on Twitter @CELeadership.

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