

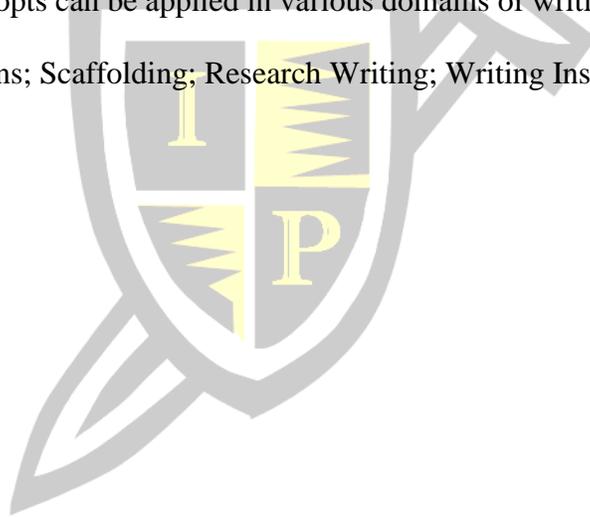
Let's talk about writing: A case study on a successful research writing seminar

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ABSTRACT

Teaching research writing at the graduate level can be challenging. Graduate students usually regard academic writing as a solitary activity. The traditional lecturing by faculty at graduate levels on how to write is not sufficient to help students construct their writing knowledge. Socio-cultural theory and post-modernism theory make researchers revisit the effective writing instructions at the graduate level. This case study aims to find out what makes a research writing seminar so successful at an American university. It explores the features and patterns of the writing instructions adopted by the teacher. Major instructional patterns include 1) providing writing samples; 2) talking about discourse patterns explicitly; 3) talking through the writing process; 4) using students' work as a platform to start conversations; and 5) learning to work with writing buddy. Even though the seminar is on writing qualitative research paper, the approach the teacher adopts can be applied in various domains of writing instruction.

Keywords: Conversations; Scaffolding; Research Writing; Writing Instructions



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INTRODUCTION

Teaching research writing at graduate level can be challenging. Graduate students usually regard academic writing as a solitary activity (Mullen, 2006). They listen to the lecture in the seminar, go to the library to write and then receive a letter grade. Many graduate students feel that the writing instruction they receive in class is insufficient for them to write publishable articles (Harris, 2006). In reality, many faculty members have little or no instruction on how to teach scholarly writing skills to graduate students (Thomas, 2005).

So far we have little idea of how graduate mentors actually help students assimilate the written conventions of language in a classroom context. In the composition literature, some graduate students failed in this learning process (Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 2002) and some students succeeded with effective social help (Belcher, 1989; Meyer, 1995). These studies show that a teacher's assistance plays an important role in students' learning process.

It is necessary to teach academic writing at the graduate level because the writing competence they acquire from the undergraduate study does not automatically transfer to the scholarly writing skills (Harris, 2006; Rose & McClafferty, 2001). Scholarly writing, for example, research writing has different discourse structures and different group of audience. This is the time when student writers need the mentoring most from their teachers if they want to participate in the professional discourse community.

The traditional lecturing by faculty at graduate levels on how to write is not sufficient to help students construct their writing knowledge. Mullen (2006) points out that though the opportunity to write and share writing is emphasized in the K–12 context, the importance of creating interactive learning environments for adult writers is gaining recognition (Mullen 2003; Thomas 2005). This case study is designed to examine a successful graduate seminar on research writing, exploring the features of an interactive teaching environment.

This case study aims to find out what makes the writing instruction so effective. Even though the seminar is on writing qualitative research paper, the approach the teacher adopts can be applied in various domains of writing instruction. Major instructional patterns include 1) providing writing samples; 2) talking about discourse patterns explicitly; 3) talking through the writing process; 4) using students' work as a platform to start conversations; and 5) learning to work with writing buddy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Socio-cultural theory and post-modernism in writing

This study is framed and informed by socio-cultural theory. Socio-cultural theory seeks to understand how culturally and historically situated meanings are constructed, reconstructed, and transformed through social mediation (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985, 1998; cited in Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006). Socio-cultural theory views meaning as being negotiated at the intersection of individuals, culture, and activity, rather than as having subjective or objective existence for individual participants.

Higher cognitive processes, such as writing and reading, have their origins in social processes that occur on an inter-psychological plane, and are mediated through language signs, symbols, actions, and objects (Vygotsky, 1978). In keeping with this theory, this study explores

how students develop their knowledge of qualitative discourse, examining the social or semiotic activities that mediate their learning processes.

Socio-cultural theory falls under post-modernism. Post-modernist philosophy (Wilson, 1997) that can be used in interpreting the socio-cultural model of writing include: 1) Knowledge is constructed by people and groups of people; 2) Reality is multi-perspectival; 3) Knowledge is dynamic; 4) Learning is a natural consequence of performance; 5) Reflection/abstraction is critical to expert performance and to becoming an expert; and 6) Teaching is negotiating construction of meaning. These underlying theories provide a framework for interpreting **the** data.

Socio-cognitive apprenticeships in writing

One important concept in socio-cultural theory is the cognitive apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990). Although writing seems to be a solitary discipline, the roots of writing competence are developed in social interaction with experts who can most effectively demonstrate the problems, processes, and discourse features. Such teachers create a space in which they make available to students the full range of semiotic tools and discourses in constructing written texts. It is the teacher who activates the relationship between “knowing and doing” for the individual (Shotter, 1995).

The concept of the socio-cognitive apprenticeship requires a great deal of coparticipation and guided practice in the interaction between novices and experts. In Vygotskian (1978) terms, cognitive processes are required on an inter-mental or social plane. The expert and novice combine their mental resources to perform a process. The expert assists in the performance of actions and processes that lie beyond the novice’s independent attainment. Eventually, what was performed on the social plane of assisted performance is enacted on the intra-mental (individual) plane by the novice. The discourse and collaborative actions are turned inward to direct and assist the writer’s own performance.

Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of semiotic or social mediators in the social interactions between experts and novices. In the writing context, providing novices with cognitive tools and strategies scaffolds writing performance by reminding them of the procedural steps, perspectives, tools, or higher order strategies that they may self-employ to plan, monitor, or revise their texts (Baker, Gersten, & Scanlon, 2002). Text structure is one of the important tools novices may adopt (Daniels, 2001; Kozulin, 2003; Pea, 1993; Wertsch, 1998; Wertsch & Toma, 1995). These tools support cognitive performance by helping writers organize their mental reasoning. Effective usage of the tools helps make the elements of writing more visible, accessible, and attainable. Getting access to those tools allows students to perform at advanced levels before they attain independent competence.

A socio-cultural model of learning to write starts to emerge. Developing writing knowledge is a social process: students learn how to write through their participation in the literacy practices of the specific discourse community. The way in which students are positioned and supported in their interactions influences the course of their apprenticeship in learning to write.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses case study design (Stake, 2000). The research setting was a doctoral seminar entitled *Qualitative Techniques for Education*, an introductory research methodology class intended to prepare doctoral students for qualitative research. The researcher chose this specific seminar because this course has been successful and has good reputation among students. Johnson's¹ teaching philosophy and teaching practices during this 15-week seminar are the focus of the study. Data sources include field notes of the seminar, the teacher's instructional discourse, in-depth interviews with the instructor, and feedback he wrote on the written documents students handed in.

Research participant

The class instructor, Dr. Johnson, an American of European descent, is in his forties. A professor of Social Studies at a world-known research university in America, he is active and well published in his field. He is well-known among students and faculty for the excellence of his qualitative research course. His name is abbreviated as S. J., and students nicknamed him "Scaffolding Johnson" because he is considered to be consistently good at helping students build their writing skills. His class always fills to capacity very quickly after registration opens. **The study** aim to discover what makes his teaching so effective and popular among students. **The researcher** let the instructor sign the consent form² before the study started. The consent form includes details of the ethical procedures.

Data collection

The researcher attended each meeting of the seminar. In class, the patterns of class activities and the teacher's instructional discourse were the focus. The researcher took field notes on class activities, audio-taped and transcribed the teacher's instruction. All sketches and drafts students wrote for each assignment were also collected.

After class, the researcher conducted four in-depth interviews³ with Johnson, focusing on his teaching philosophy behind the way he taught research writing. All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed.

Data analysis

Stake (1995)'s model was used for data analysis. First, in the stage of categorical aggregation, the researcher seeks a collection of instances of the teaching activities, hoping to establish some patterns from these activities. Then the researcher looks for the relationship among those patterns. Finally, Naturalistic generalizations are made from analyzing the data, generalizations that people can learn from the case either for themselves or for applying it to a population of cases. To give readers a glimpse of how the data analysis is carried out, the researcher will provide an example of how she followed the above procedures.

¹ Johnson is the professor of the seminar. Pseudonym is used to protect the professor's privacy.

² See Appendix A for the consent form

³ See Appendix B for interview questions.

Some of the initial categories are 1) talking about discourse patterns in published articles; 2) giving regular and constructive feedback; 3) writing a sketch; 4) initiating conversations with students; and 5) working with a writing buddy, etc. The prominent theme underlying all these categories is the socio-cultural model of learning. Finally, the researcher points out pedagogical implications for qualitative research mentors in general based on the successful teaching practices of Dr. Johnson.

FINDINGS

Johnson's qualitative seminar constituted the most direct and the most important learning environment for student researchers. He was their first guide into this new discourse community. The central concept in his teaching philosophy is "talking about writing". His teaching practices reflected this philosophy from a variety of aspects. Themes of his teaching practices include 1) providing writing samples; 2) talking about discourse patterns explicitly; 3) talking through the writing process; 4) using students' work as a platform to start conversations; and 5) learning to work with writing buddy.

Providing writing samples

First of all, since he was aware that students commonly lack experience in writing qualitative research, Johnson showed them some tentative models, posting writing samples of students in previous classes on-line so that students could study and refer to them outside of class.

He made it clear to students that the models were not perfect, and that students were not obliged to follow them: he supplied the samples so that students might see the range of topics and forms that is possible for qualitative research writing.

In reading the writing samples, students were actually having conversations with "senior students." The study shows that all students referred to the on-line writing samples while they were writing their own projects. They "consulted with" their predecessors when they had questions about how to organize their texts, and what information should be included in each section. These "conversations" gave them a general idea of what the professor expected.

Talking about discourse patterns explicitly

Johnson directed students' attention to the linguistic and rhetorical devices used in published research in order to familiarize them with the discourse features of qualitative research writing. He encouraged students to study, reflect on, and discuss the language and rhetorical structures used by seasoned researchers. He believes that the more students are able to identify rhetorical elements in the work of others, the easier it will become for them to use these elements in their own work. The following is an excerpt from his class:

(5:20 p.m., Oct. 17. Prof. Johnson and the students are working on *Creating risk and promise: Children's and teachers' co-constructions in the constructions in the cultural worlds of kindergarten* by Skinner et al., 1998)

Johnson: Let's go through Skinner's piece to look at how they wrote the article, the argument, themes, claims, evidence, and interpretations. Because again my thinking is that the more you are able to pull those things out, to be able to identify in other people's

work, the easier it will become for you to see these things in your own work. So can anybody spot the argument?

Students: ... (inaudible)

Johnson: Where can we find the argument? The title. There ought to be someplace else that they say that.

Students: ... (inaudible)

Johnson: The end of the introduction on page 299, half way through the first column: 'We view both teachers and students as actively co-constructing the school experience in ways that can lead to promise and in ways that do not replicate structural inequalities.' That sounds like an argument for a piece? Is there anything else that they talked about in this piece that does not fit underneath that sentence? If everything that they talked about in this piece falls under this umbrella, then that's probably the argument. An argument is not a question, not a paragraph. It's not a phrase. An argument is a sentence that summarizes the whole piece, which could tell the reader, 'This is what I want you to understand and be persuaded about.'

In this instruction, Johnson used a specific example to illustrate the definition and the features of an argument. He did not just tell students that what a general argument looks like. Instead, he let students find it out from a real article and then he made an explicit summary. Through extracting, questioning, discussing, and illustrating the rhetorical structures used by experts, Johnson made the discourse features of qualitative writing transparent for students. Specifically, he pointed out the argumentative structures authors used, such as presenting a main argument, elaborating themes, making claims, providing supporting evidence, and interpreting findings. He made this information about what experts think and do accessible for students so that students would know exactly what they are expected to do in their own work.

Making discourse features accessible for novice writers has been proven to be a successful teaching practice in literature. Postmodernism believes that reflection or abstraction is critical to expert performance and to becoming an expert (Wilson, 1997). Johnson let students reflect on the discourse features and then abstract the example to the general pattern. In this way, students are able to see how experts write. Rogoff (1990) also points out the importance of experts demonstrating most effectively the problems, processes, and discourse features in constructing writing competence.

Talking through the writing process

In his class, however, Johnson always allocated a considerable portion of class-time for students to talk about their writing progress, allowing them to discuss their topics and arguments and to ask questions about their writing. He encouraged them to talk to each other and talk with the teacher.

One of the reasons [for asking students to talk about writing regularly in class] is that I want the writing part to be very visible. I want everybody in the class to understand that maybe their writing is not very good and that other people are also struggling with writing too. And so it makes sense to me to talk about how hard the writing is in the whole class. And the writing problem one person might have is the same problem the other one has but can't be articulated, or isn't sure how to call it. So, it seems to me, that it's a way that helps people who never talk much about the writing, to think about and then be able to talk about their writing (Johnson, Second interview).

Johnson believes that these discussions contribute to a supportive learning environment. His rationale is that in discussing their challenges and learning about those of others, students would know that they were not alone in their struggles in writing. Besides, in listening to his students' problems, Johnson was able to provide suggestions on the spot.

For decades, writing has been done in a solitary manner where people sit in a room, thinking and writing by themselves. Even in the formal educational settings, like elementary, middle and high schools, students are usually asked to finish their writing assignments independently. But Johnson argues that in learning to write research papers, talking about the challenges, sharing ideas and getting responses help the writing process.

This practice of getting together and talking about writing is not a new concept in primary or secondary education. Literature has proved this as a helpful strategy several decades ago (Reid, 1983). Reid found out that talk in the secondary writing classroom help improve both expressive and expository writing. Talking activities can be helpful in prewriting, drafting and revising stages.

But it is not a popular literate practice in higher education or research writing until recently (Elbow, 2010). According to Elbow, there's a new cultural practice that professionals get together to keep each other company and talk during the "solitary" process of writing. He said that at University of Massachusetts, for nineteen years, the Center for Teaching has run well using all-day retreats for faculty to write together in a large room or two with lunch and coffee laid on. Other colleges and universities are following suit. These practices allow writers to share ideas, asking questions, providing feedback and also chatting to relax.

Using students' work as a platform to start conversations

Johnson regards reading students' assignments as a means of beginning his conversations with students. In his view, a writing assignment is not completed merely for the grade. Its major purpose is to provide an opportunity to talk about ideas with students.

In class, Johnson always encouraged students to submit whatever they had written to him on an ongoing basis. He made it clear that he did not expect a finished product from them. He wanted to assess his student's progress, and to see if they were on the right track. He viewed students' writing products as a platform for targeted scaffolding. He said to the students:

I'll tell you, one of the best ways to learn how to analyze data is to give me something to read. So those of you who are perfectionists and holding back on turning your case study until it gets perfect, stop that. Give it to me, and then I can respond to it, and then you will learn more from my comments on your paper than you will from reading Spradley four or five different times. Give me something to read, give people that you trust some of the work you are doing. And listen to what they have to say (Field notes).

By clearly stating to students that their drafts need not be perfect, Johnson created an encouraging and secure environment for them. Students would not feel afraid to hand in their unfinished or ongoing writing products because they knew that the professor's purpose was not to grade their texts, but to provide help based on their texts. Therefore, they could hand in their drafts, no matter what stage they were in, and then listen to what the professor had to say about their writing. Conversations with the professor started from the initial sketch of their writing.

From the very beginning, students' writing activities were well scaffolded. Johnson asked them to write a one-page sketch, which included the topic of their study, an argument, and some potential themes to develop, even while students were still in the process of collecting data. The

purpose of this was to let students “get some pre-writing experience” (Johnson) and start conversations with him. Reading students’ early sketches allowed him to monitor their writing process from early on so that he could provide students with the necessary help and guidance.

[Asking students to write a sketch] also gives me a chance to start to see if the students are going off track in terms of the way they think about things. Plus writing a case study or field study is a huge piece of work, and some students really don’t know how to begin. I want students to have some sort of pre-writing experience. A lot of times the sketch would be the opportunity that students will say, I wrote my sketch, but I really don’t know what to do. Can we talk about it? It becomes a way to have conversation about what the students want to do (Johnson, First interview).

In addition to assigning the sketch, Johnson provided very specific and direct comments on students’ drafts. As part of his teaching philosophy, he believes that an instructor should give a great deal of feedback to students. He hoped that students would pay attention to his feedback and then revise their work based on his comments.

Part of my philosophy is that instructors need to give lots and lots of feedback. It seems silly to me to give a student paper and just mark a grade on it. So I really see students’ work as the beginning of a conversation between students and me. That’s why I encourage students to rewrite. I make both general and specific comments. I am hoping they will react to them and revise (Johnson, Third interview).

Johnson’s feedback therefore focused mainly on argumentative structure. His most frequent comments are: “What is your argument?”; “Develop the claim first before you offer the quote”; and “Think about how to develop the interpretation.” By specifically pointing out key omissions, he brought students’ attention to the argumentative structure. In their later writing assignments, all four students made a conscious effort to use these guidelines in developing their argumentation.

From the above analysis we can see that Johnson adopts the process writing approach, which has been proved as one of the successful writing strategies in literature (Collins, 1995; Graham & Perin, 2007; Lacina & Block, 2012). Process-based writing instruction encourages prewriting, providing extended writing opportunities, personalized instruction and promoting multi cycles of writing (Lacina & Block, 2012). All these strategies are used in Johnson’s writing instruction.

This process-based writing instruction also agrees with Vygotskian learning theory (1978), which considers that learning happens on an inter-mental or social plane. In Vygotskian terms, Johnson and students combine their mental resources to perform the writing process. Johnson assists in students’ writing process that lies beyond their independent attainment. Instead of asking students to hand in the final product, he facilitated a dynamic co-participation between him and students in constructing the writing competence.

Learning to work with a writing buddy

Johnson says, “Good writers always find good readers.” (Third interview). He emphasized the importance for each student to discuss what he or she is writing with someone who is willing to listen and provide feedback. He let students choose a “writing buddy” in class, so that each student could find a classmate with whom he or she might comfortably talk about the progress of their writing projects. Johnson believes that expressing the ideas aloud helps

make them clearer. In addition, he wants the students to get feedback from each other, as well as to learn how to provide critical feedback to others. As he said:

When we say something in our heads, it all sounds reasonable and smart, and then when we say them aloud, they start to fall apart. So saying your words aloud will help you sort through what's valuable and what's not valuable. The second reason you talk with somebody is that you get his response. You are presenting this argument that you think is so sound. The twitching, gasping for air, the things people usually do when they don't understand tell you something. Coupling those reactions with the questions like "I am not sure I understand this part" should be able to get you closer to the argument that you want. Again, most of us have gone through school experiences where we are supposed to do everything on our own. It was considered cheating to talk with somebody else about our ideas. You have to get over those ideas. That's not what researchers do, just go out collect the data by themselves, sit in their office, make sense out of it, and then write it up and send it off and get published. That's not how it works. We need one another to sort of help us understand what we are thinking and find our ideas. So the more you can cultivate your relationships with students, people who are willing to listen to you talk about your work, you're better off in the end (Field notes).

Johnson's belief about working with a writing buddy is a characteristically dialogic attitude (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). The writing process, to him, requires chat, conversation, and dialogue with others to make ideas more sensible. Having a constant dialogue with other people, showing the writing to people whom writers trust, and listening to what they say would let writers see where revisions might be needed. In other words, Johnson doesn't believe writing is a solitary activity at all. Through talking with each other, student writers and their peers construct their writing expertise together.

This approach of peer collaboration aims to get the response from the audience. Bakhtin calls it "addressivity" (1981). The importance of getting readers' response in writing has been confirmed in many studies. Elbow (2010) suggests the practice of "speak onto the page" (p.8). This means producing language in the mode we are best at, that is, as though we are actually talking to someone. When student writers have a real audience to work with, it helps them create language and thinking that connects better with readers.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher aims to develop the naturalistic generalizations from analyzing the successful case of Johnson's writing seminar. The researcher explores the theoretical base of these successful teaching strategies and at the same time making those strategies applicable for other writing instructors as well.

Making the genre knowledge comprehensible and accessible for novices

At the beginning of the seminar, Johnson made the genre features of qualitative research explicit through providing previous students' writing samples and published articles. Making genre features comprehensible and transparent for students is a prerequisite for efficient writing instruction. Socio-cognitive apprenticeship argues that teachers should make available to students the full range of semiotic tools and discourses in constructing written texts. Most of the time when students struggle with writing a specific genre, they are usually not familiar with the

rhetorical structure. Especially in learning to write research papers, students need to know the format and readers' expectations from early on.

Adopting process-oriented instruction

Another efficient strategy Johnson uses is his focus on the writing process. Abundant writing literature has proved that process-oriented instruction is effective (Baker et al. 2002; Collins, 1995; Elbow, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007; Lacina & Block, 2012). Following Johnson's mode, writing instructors can start pre-writing activities, provide meaningful feedback during the process, encourage students to submit their work in progress and require revising. It lowers students' writing anxiety if they know the teacher does not expect them to hand in the perfect final work. Writing research paper usually involves a long process of doing research and writing up. Teachers need to divide the process into smaller segments and provide scaffolding throughout the different steps.

Providing abundant social scaffolding

Johnson has a nickname by students as S. J., meaning scaffolding Johnson. He is good at providing help through social interactions. Socio-culturalists (Vygotsky, 1978) strongly advocate that knowledge is constructed through meaningful social interaction. Johnson turns the traditionally quiet writing activity into the audible and conversational process. Following this spirit, writing instructors should provide a socially rich environments in which students can explore knowledge with fellow students, teachers and experts. Teachers and students can have conversations about discourse features, talk about ideas, ask questions, provide feedback and learn to making decisions about others' feedback, etc. In other words, writing instructors should not make the writing process a solitary and quiet practice. Instead, they should make it a social practice where writers construct knowledge through interacting with all the possible social agents: teachers, outside experts, peers, texts, etc.

Encouraging dialogic activities

Social interaction may take many forms: modeling, having dialogues, performing, reciting, etc. The major form of social interaction taking place in Johnson's seminar was having dialogues: talking about model articles, answering students' questions, providing oral and written feedback about students' work in progress, and promoting peer conversations. These are "dialogic" (Bakhtin) activities. Conversations about the model articles and discursive discussions between teachers and students provide background knowledge for students to generate new discourse. Carrying dialogues, instead of lecturing or imitating, gives students opportunities to negotiate, share their ideas, and speak out their voices in the knowledge construction process.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, analysis of this successful seminar shed lights on the efficient instructions of research writing. The major learning philosophy underlying Johnson's instructions is socio-cultural model of learning, which also falls under postmodernism. It believes that knowledge is

constructed through social interaction rather than merely within individual's mind. The social interaction can take the forms of modeling, having conversations, emphasizing the process or the performance and providing responses. Following this line of thought, research writing is never a solitary practice. It needs social scaffolding from experts, peers and texts. Scaffolding from experts is at the center of social interaction. Students should be provided abundant opportunities to see what experts think and do, to "talk aloud" their writing processes with experts, and to write papers with substantial feedback from experts.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER

This consent form explains my research study. Please read it carefully. Ask questions about anything you don't understand. If you do not have questions now, you may ask later. For information about this research, please ask me, XXX. This research study has been reviewed by the Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, XXX. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you should contact (anonymously, if you wish) the Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board at XXX.

You are invited to participate in a research on exploring doctoral students' processes in learning to write research papers. Although my research focuses on students' experiences, your interaction with students will also be observed. I will audiotape part of your instructions that are related to writing. Also, I will take field notes about your interaction with students in the writing activities.

My role as the researcher is as a non-participant researcher. I will sit quietly in your class and won't participate in the students' activities. I won't intervene in your teaching activities, either. What I will be doing is just observation of how the class interactions help students with their writing. But if you want me to offer some help for the students, I will be more than willing to do so. You just teach the lesson the way you usually do.

I will observe your class throughout the fall semester. While I am observing your class, I will take notes. Additionally, I will audio-tape part of class discussions that are related to writing. The data I get from classroom observation and the recording will probably be used for educational purposes, in conferences and written publications. You have the right to use your real name or a pseudonym in the published work. You will not know who is participating or not in my project.

Your participation is voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable with my presence in your class and if my presence in your class affects your teaching, you have the right to refuse to let me sit in your class.

This document is to provide the information participants need to know in order to make a good decision about study participation. It is not to execute a waiver of liability on behalf of the researcher. By signing this form, you are not waiving any legal rights.

I, _____ have read the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to let the researcher carry out the research in my class. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Participant & Date

I give my permission to be audiotaped: Yes__ No__

I certify that I obtained the consent of the subject whose signature is above. I understand that I must give a signed copy of the informed consent form to the teacher, and keep the original copy in my files for at least 3 years after the completion of the research project.

Signature of Researcher & Date

APPENDIX B

Interview with the teacher

First interview

1. Could you talk about your philosophy of how to teach rookie doctoral students to write qualitative research?
2. What would you say about the features of this particular writing genre of qualitative research?
3. What are the characteristics of a good qualitative research paper?
4. What are your expectations for the students' achievement in this class in terms of their writing?
5. You emphasize the sequence of argument-theme-claims-evidence-interpretation in writing. What's your source for that?
6. What kind of problems do you see from rookie doctoral students' writing in your class? Are there any problems particular to American students or international students?
7. What would you say about the comment: "If you are not a good writer, don't do qualitative research." Does qualitative research put international students at a disadvantage?
8. What kind of changes, if any, have you perceived in your students' writing throughout the semester?
9. What sorts of things or activities do you think in your class help doctoral students' writing qualitative research? And in what ways do they help?
10. What would you say about the relationship between doing qualitative research and writing qualitative research?
11. What kind of references or literature would you recommend on how to write qualitative research?
12. Did I miss anything interesting or important about learning to write qualitative research?

Second interview

1. Why do you try to urge your students to write in a more deductive way?
2. Could you talk more about why you emphasize that students should follow the order of claim, evidence, and interpretation in their writing? Is there any specific philosophy underlying it?
3. Why do you think the idea of writing buddy didn't work very well?
4. What kinds of things do you think are important for the rookie doctoral students to learn in your class in terms of learning to write qualitative research? What kinds of things do you think you spend most of the class time on?
5. Last time you said the genre of this writing is persuasive writing and based on argumentation. Could you say more about it?
6. Last time, you mentioned a couple of times that "putting our words into coherent structures is a hard task." Could you say more about what do you mean by 'coherent'?
7. Do you see any difference between the writing of Asian students and Americans? What is it?

8. Do you think writing qualitative research puts special demands on writing skills? Does it put nonnative speakers at a disadvantage?
9. What kinds of things do you think make this qualitative writing a hard task for students?
10. Last time you said, writing from data is very different sort of thing from writing from your imagination. Could you say more about that? What specific things do you need to do when you write from data?
11. Why did you let students talk about their writing regularly in your class?
12. Why did you ask students to write a sketch before they write the paper?
13. Oftentimes students complained about not knowing how to do interpretation. Students say, “Too subjective,” “I can’t trust my interpretation,” “I really don’t know what else to interpret,” etc. Why do you think it’s difficult for them to write the interpretation?

Third follow-up interview

1. What’s your philosophy of teaching qualitative research writing?
2. What’s your view of the process of learning to write qualitative research?

