WRITING CONFERENCE INTERACTION AND SCAFFOLDING:

THE POSSIBLE AND THE ACTUAL

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WRITING CONFERENCE INTERACTION AND SCAFFOLDING: THE POSSIBLE AND THE ACTUAL

Miles Lamar DeMott

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WRITING CONFERENCE INTERACTION AND SCAFFOLDING:

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Miles Lamar DeMott

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Miles Lamar DeMott, son of Frank Lamar and Mary (Miles) DeMott, was born on May 4, 1964, in Moultrie, Georgia. He graduated from Emory University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1990 and earned a Master's degree in English Education from Auburn University in 1995. After five years of teaching high school English, he returned to Auburn University to begin doctoral work in 2000. While a doctoral candidate, he taught Developmental Studies in English, supervised student internships in English Education, and served as Editor of *The Professional Educator*. Miles is married to Elmore Inscoe DeMott and has two daughters, Mary Elmore DeMott and Anne Miles DeMott.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

WRITING CONFERENCE INTERACTION AND SCAFFOLDING:

THE POSSIBLE AND THE ACTUAL

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Doctor of Philosophy, May 11, 2006
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Writing conferences during the freshman composition course are characterized by role-based, dyadic interactions between a teacher and his or her students that have implications for students' development in academic writing. Scaffolding, a type of interaction associated with the novice-expert role dyad, is considered to be among the most widely used pedagogical strategies in composition instruction. Data were gathered during a single semester's freshman composition course and included audio recordings of conferences, conference observation field notes, and post-conference interviews with student participants. Features described as possible by

current literature in composition studies were synthesized into operational categories and compared with transcriptions of actual teacher-student writing conference interactions.

The transcripts of actual conferences revealed that scaffolding as described in current literature was not a pervasive type of interaction during teacher-student writing conferences. Many of the features of scaffolding described by the literature were evident, but the potential for scaffolding during the interactions was hampered by limited student contribution to dialogue, missed opportunities at critical decision points, and the inability to discern student demonstration of comprehension or increased competence as a result of the interaction.

The transcripts revealed a student preference for directive instruction, a recognition of the teacher's authority, and a hesitance to question authority that are characteristic of the developmental stage associated with college freshmen. Implications for teacher-student interactions during writing conferences and the ability of such interactions to facilitate instruction in academic writing are discussed.

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I would like to thank my daughters for their smiling encouragement, my bride for her amazing patience, and my father for his quixotic inspiration.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

The writing conference, during which a teacher and student engage in one-to-one conversation about the student's writing, has been characterized by many (Black, 1998; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Walker & Elias, 1987; Wong, 1988) as a mainstay of freshman composition. It provides teachers an opportunity to get to know individual students more thoroughly and help them along their path of personal discovery (Murray, 1979; Tobin, 1993). The conference also offers a timely and relevant vehicle for providing students with individualized feedback at key points in the writing process when student minds are at work (Rose, 1982). In the review of literature for their study of student-teacher interaction in college writing conferences, Freedman and Sperling (1985) describe the writing conference as a "popular and seemingly effective pedagogical tool" (p. 106).

Popken's (2004) review of Edwin Hopkins's (1904) work documents that writing conference pedagogy, characterized by individual students receiving the full attention of the instructor and constituting, "in a sense, a

class by [it]self," has been promoted for over a century. Over the past thirty years, studies have explored the effectiveness of writing conferences at the elementary level (Calkins, 1983; Michaels, 1987; Nickel, 2001), the secondary level (Atwell, 1987; Murray, 1979; Sperling, 1991, 1992), and the college level (Carnicelli, 1980; Carroll, 2002; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Sperling & Freedman, 1987). Most of these studies have found writing conferences to be an effective method for teachers to work individually with students on their writing. According to Carnicelli (1980), conferences allow teachers and students to engage in genuine conversations that facilitate positive change in students' written texts and student participation in and ownership of the writing process.

A number of studies at the college level, however, have documented persistent problems with student-teacher conferences. These problems relate to the following questions: who should control the conference, what should the content and boundaries for the conference be, and what constitutes constructive feedback within a conference?

In examining the element of control and factors associated with student satisfaction with writing conferences, Walker and Elias (1987) found that conferences characterized by a focus on the student's work were more satisfying and successful from the student's perspective than those that focused on the tutor's agenda. Wong (1988) contrasted freshman composition writing conferences with those held in upper division technical writing

courses. Freshman composition conferences, for Wong, were characterized by greater teacher control and contribution, while upper division conferences were characterized by greater student control related to increased student control of the content of writing. Wong found that the more equal distribution of knowledge and control which characterized upper division conferences produced more substantive student contributions to the conference conversations.

In an empirical study that used discourse analysis to illuminate the content and structure of conferences, Black (1998) found that some problems with the content and boundaries of conferences are gender-related. She identified women as being disadvantaged in a conference environment because of their tendency to broach more affective topics and to weigh more heavily than their male counterparts the expression and acknowledgement of feelings in a conference. Black suggests that the extent to which the student's feelings are addressed has an important effect on the outcome of a conference. While the teacher's words might otherwise have been helpful, a student's discomfort with lack of emotional responsiveness on the part of the teacher could inhibit learning. When there is this mismatch between the content and boundaries of the conference and the student's need for acknowledgement of her feelings, the teacher's lack of discernment of, or response to, these feelings makes a successful conference less likely.

Further research has described a gap between what teachers and students expect a conference will accomplish and the ultimate effectiveness of conferences among certain groups of students. At the elementary level, McCarthey (1992) found that teachers who shift from their normal classroom roles to more student-centered roles during writing conferences by engaging in types of interaction such as scaffolding produce more authentic responses to student writing. Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997), examined the outcome of conferences by measuring the amount and type of subsequent revisions made by college students. They found that there was less disparity between the teacher's expectations before the conference and the students' revisions among students whose previous achievement in English was relatively high than among students whose previous achievement in English was lower. They found further that the disparity between the teacher's expectations for the conference and the students' revisions was most severe among students who were English language learners. Freedman and Sperling (1985) found that higher achieving students received explanations that were more "expository" that those lower achieving students received and "more elaborate invitation[s] to return for future conference[s]" (p. 128) than lower-achieving students.

Thus, while writing conferences have been argued to be generally effective, they are not effective for all: particularly for students whose previous achievement is low, who are English language learners, who are

women, or who are enrolled in freshman rather than upper division courses. Within each of these three areas of literature on writing conferences – the literature on who should control the conferences, the literature on the establishment of content and boundaries for the conference, and the literature on inconsistencies in whether feedback is constructive – examination of what roles students and teachers assume, and of key role-related behaviors, can further research on the writing conference.

Studies on the element of control reviewed earlier in this chapter (Walker & Elias, 1987; Wong, 1988) found that from the students' perspectives, conferences characterized by a focus on the student's work or by mutual distribution of knowledge and input were more successful than more teacher-dominated conferences. These studies of students' perceptions of conference effectiveness suggested that the students' writing and knowledge should be central to the content of the teacher-student conference. Black (1998) found conferences with fewer discourse markers characterizing hesitation on the part of the student to be more successful than conferences with higher frequencies of hesitation. Thus the empirical literature on teacher-student conferences suggests not only that conferences should not consist mainly of teacher directives but also that these conferences should be organized to provide guidance to the student as to how to proceed, to provide understandable input to the student from the teacher, and to engender ready and appropriate student responses to the teacher.

Tobin's (1990) generational perspective on conferences describes an evolution of these writing conferences from teacher-directed to student-directed conferences. What Tobin identifies as "first-generation" (p. 97) conferences were characterized by one-to-one teaching aimed toward highly directive, efficient dispensation of teacher feedback. What Tobin described as a "second-generation" (p. 98) conference focuses on the student and on the writing process as determined by the student, who develops the questions the conference will include and thus guides the teacher's responses to the students writing, with some aid from the teacher.

Tobin (1990), as Murray (1985) had five years earlier, anticipated that a third generation of writing conference would grow out of greater examination of the relationships among students, teachers, and texts viewed through a social-constructionist lens, an examination that implies roles for the teacher and student congruent with awareness of language as the medium through which members of a discourse community negotiate what knowledge will be constructed and how. The roles of "novice" and "expert," enacted by the student and teacher, respectively, and the scaffolding that characterizes that role relationship correspond with the social constructionist orientation that Tobin forecast would shape a new, third generation of writing conferences during – or following – the 1990s.

At the college level, Carroll's (2002) longitudinal study found that writing proficiency "developed slowly, often idiosyncratically, as [students]

chose or were coerced to take on new roles as writers" (p. xii). Carroll defines changes in the roles writers assume in writing classes and in subsequent college classes as changes in response to social expectations for behavior within certain circumstances – in the case of Carroll's study, the circumstances of being in a college writing class compared with subsequent college classes. The student-teacher writing conference is a social construct that implies a discrete set of social circumstances. Carroll found that, over time, the roles assumed by students and, by implication, the roles assumed by teachers and the types of interaction that occurred while students and teachers enacted these roles affected student development in writing.

While other roles are possible, the roles of expert and novice are currently the most prominent in the literature on writing conferences (Sherwood, 2002; Sommers & Saltz, 2004). It is rare, however, that the roles assumed by teacher and student are explicitly or thoroughly established at the outset of a conference. Usually what role(s) each participant will assume remains tacit or, at most, implied. If, for example, the teacher sees his or her role as questioning and guiding, but the student perceives the teacher's role as rightfully being more directive, the interactions between teacher and student can be unproductive or even miseducative (Dewey, 1967).

Scaffolding is an integral type of interaction within the novice-expert role dyad. By knowing in what patterned ways a college writing teacher and her students engaged in scaffolding during conferences across a semester –

and how those scaffolded interactions when compared with other types of interactions affected the content and coherence of the talk during these writing conferences –writing teachers and scholars who study writing conferences can better understand the impact of scaffolding on a writing conference and the implications of scaffolding for the quality and effectiveness of writing instruction.

It is impractical to think that conferences could ever achieve a uniform, all-purpose configuration of teacher and student roles and, consequently, uniform and effective use of scaffolding throughout the conference. Just as impractical, however, is to continue relying so heavily on this pedagogical tool without closer examination of the interactions between the two people involved in the conference. As Black (1998) suggests, "Conferencing is something we do, but unexamined, it remains something we do not understand and thus cannot improve" (p. 5).

The Problem: Scaffolding as Role-Dependent Behavior

Anson (1989) has described the teacher's role in responding to student writing as a

> …schizophrenia of roles – now the helpful facilitator, hovering next to the writers to lend guidance and support, and now the authority, passing critical judgment on the writer's work; at one moment the intellectual peer, giving "reader-based feedback…

> and at the next, the imposer of criteria, the gatekeeper of textual standards. (p. 2)

Because the writing conference involves a dynamic interaction between student and teacher, the student, like the teacher, faces a range of roles he or she can assume. Three dyads of roles students and teachers can assume during a writing conference are the roles of writer/reader, novice/expert, and consumer/provider. Of these three, the most prominent dyad or pair of roles in the literature on writing conferences is the dyad of student in the role of novice and teacher in the role of expert. Scaffolding is the type of interaction that defines novice-expert interaction in the foundational literature on those roles (Bruner, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978). Newkirk (1995) has stated, "The most frequently used theoretical construct for examining writing conferences is that of scaffolding" (p. 195). The concept of scaffolding (Bruner, 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) has been employed to analyze classroom discourse (Applebee & Langer, 1983; Cazden, 2001) and, specifically, to analyze talk during the writing conference (Sperling, 1990, 1991).

The concept of scaffolding stipulates interaction between a novice and an expert working toward a specific goal. Composition scholarship has most often conceptualized students as novices (Newkirk, 1995; Sommers & Saltz, 2004) working with teacher-experts in what Vygotsky (1978) called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and defined as

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86).

The roles of novice and expert imply reciprocal interdependence between student and teacher; the student-novice works with an expert in the course of performing a specific task (Vygotsky, 1978). The novice writer relies on the expert for specific knowledge, then receives, assimilates, and acts upon that knowledge to complete a specific writing task. The teacher-expert works with the novice to address a given task, assisting the novice in performing the task at hand and guiding the novice toward performing other tasks like it independently (Vygotsky, 1978; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997). In the novice/expert dyad, the expert represents and advocates for the discourse community and the student's induction into it (Elbow, 1986). The expert contributes to the writing by helping the student link academic and private interests (Herrington & Curtis, 2000) and by acting as both socializer (Dewey, 1963, 1967) and advocate (Elbow, 1986).

There has been considerable exploration of the roles played by students and teachers during writing conferences (Carroll, 2002; Freedman & Katz, 1987; Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Gray, 1988; Newkirk, 1995; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Sperling, 1995). This literature on roles during

writing conferences has systematically examined the variety of roles that students and teachers assume during writing conferences, the behaviors and limitations associated with those roles, and the impact of those role-dependent behaviors on student-teacher interaction. The impact of scaffolding has been examined across a wide range of disciplines and school settings (Applebee & Langer, 1983; Gaskins et al., 1997; Hogan & Pressley, 1997; Lepper, Drake, & O'Donnell-Johnson, 1997; Roehler & Cantlon, 1997; Wood et al., 1976).

Significance of the Study

Scaffolding during freshman composition writing conferences has not been systematically examined. This research focused systematically on scaffolding in the setting of the teacher-student writing conference. The purpose of the present study was to describe the occurrence of scaffolding during writing conferences between three students enrolled in a lower-division composition course and their teacher. This study analyzed the effects of scaffolding and of other patterns of interaction that emerged from qualitative analysis of conference transcripts on the content and developmental coherence of interaction between each student and the teacher during each conference and across the conferences that occurred throughout a semester.

Several researchers have contended that Vygotskyan scaffolding is too limiting a metaphor for teacher-student writing conferences at the college

level (Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Newkirk, 1995; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997) and that fluidity or shifting in the teacher's and student's roles during writing conferences is important for the development of writing proficiency at the elementary level (Larson & Maier, 2000; McCarthey, 1992; Michaels, 1987; Nickel, 2001; Ulichney & Watson-Gegeo, 1989) and at the secondary (Beach & Liebman-Kleine, 1986; Sperling, 1995) level as well. This study does not contest the claim that roles and role-related behaviors during teacher-student conferences beyond scaffolding and even beyond novice-expert interaction may be important to students developing proficiency as writers. Rather the intent of this research was to focus systematically on scaffolding as one important role-related behavior during teacher-student writing conferences.

Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. What patterns of interaction emerge from qualitative analysis of transcripts of the writing conferences between a freshman composition instructor and each of three students over the course of a semester?
2. In what ways do the patterns of interaction that emerge from these data correspond to and contrast with the words a teacher and student could say to each other when their interaction meets the standard of an operationalized definition of scaffolding?

Methodology

This section introduces the methodology used in this research. Chapter 3 offers a more detailed account. The empirical literature on teacher-student conferences suggests that freshman composition is a more challenging setting within which to accomplish scaffolding than the discipline-specific settings that characterize upper division classes. Despite the more challenging nature, the freshman composition course persists as a ubiquitous organizational structure for assimilating college students into writing as a prospective member of academic discourse community. For that reason, I selected a freshman composition course as the setting for this research. I chose Ms. Smith as a teacher-participant for this study because she had over five years of experience teaching freshman composition at a large university and because she seemed genuinely interested in the project.

Initially, I interviewed Ms. Smith to create a description of her as a provider of feedback: a picture of what types and methods of feedback she reported constituted her everyday teaching. The protocol for the interview is included as Appendix A. I supplemented the interview with field notes from most of the class meetings of her Freshman Composition II class during spring semester 2003. I attended most class sessions and collected field notes that outlined the feedback provided to the class as a whole, and I collected each draft of four writing assignments evaluated by the instructor. I met individually with the 12 participating students twice during the three writing

cycles that resulted in a different essay. The first of these meetings was the writing conference the participating students had with the instructor to review an initial draft and peer review. The second meeting was a scheduled interview with each participating student that was conducted after the final draft of each writing assignment was graded by the instructor and returned to the student. The questions that guided the initial interview with Ms. Smith and the interviews with the participating students and are attached as Appendixes A and B. The conferences and interviews for all 12 participating students were taped and analyzed. The final three participants were chosen for case studies because they most closely represented the range of writing achievement and student-teacher interaction of the larger group. The interview and conference tapes of these three participating students were transcribed for more focused analysis. No data are included that might identify the participants. Names have been changed to conceal participants' identities.

Formal data analysis was deferred until all data were collected (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). To begin the data analysis process, I transcribed the audio recordings of writing conferences and interviews and checked these transcriptions against my field notes. I reviewed the conference tapes, post-conference notes, interview tapes, and written teacher comments for each of the participants, noted any trends or red flags, and returned to the memos from the previous sets of data to note any recurring elements.

To explore more fully the recurring themes within the data, I developed and constructed data matrices for each writing conference to characterize key comments and responses that I felt represented or typified the interactions within the conferences. Using Microsoft Excel, I created a spreadsheet that captured characteristic teacher comments and student responses and a separate spreadsheet that captured characteristic student comments and teacher responses. The data matrices further reduced the data under consideration to a manageable size, one sheet of legal-size paper, and allowed me to view teacher comments and student responses, as well as student comments and teacher responses, from a macro level, taking the conference as a whole and trying to characterize it in order to more effectively analyze it.

The result was a collection of 27 data matrices from which a list of patterns or themes emerged. These themes and issues formed my initial coding categories for analyzing the entire data set. Once the code list was assembled, I created code families, or networks of related codes, and articulated defining characteristics of each code. I then tested the code list by using Atlas.ti, qualitative research software, to code one conference transcript for each participating student. Through this process, codes were eliminated from the code list, merged with other codes, or added to account for unforeseen patterns or characteristics within the data. The result was a final code list which was used to analyze the entire data set.

The focus of the analysis to this point was to identify emerging patterns in teacher-student interaction. As expected, based on the literature, one pattern that emerged was scaffolding. As this was considered a prominent type of interaction associated with the novice-expert relationship between student and teacher, I conducted an intense review of scholarship surrounding scaffolding to delineate specific features. This new list of features formed a refined code list and prompted more focused coding to identify instances of scaffolding that were readily discernible from other types of teacher-student interaction. With this coding complete, I conducted a peer review session – presented my findings to a group of 20 education researchers – to confirm my coding strategies, code definitions, and instances of scaffolding. With peer confirmation in hand, I created new data matrices using Microsoft Excel to visibly display for comparison the actual instances of scaffolding discerned from transcribed conferences together with the possible features of scaffolding presented in the literature.

The analysis resulted in multiple case studies (Merriam, 1998) concentrating on a specific phenomenon, scaffolding. Specifically, the case studies compared the scaffolding considered possible by current literature with the scaffolding that was discerned from the actual transcripts. Initially, this process involved the synthesis of possible features of scaffolding into four categories: engagement, processes, critical decision points, and general qualities or characteristics. These categories were then used to examine

interactions within actual conference transcripts that were thought to include scaffolding based on the initial coding. This examination resulted in a narrative comparison of the actual interactions thought to include scaffolding with the features considered possible by current literature.

Once the case studies were complete, a cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was conducted in hopes of increasing generalizability as well as understanding the comparison of these features of scaffolding across cases. Construction of the cross-case analysis began with an intense rereading of the individual case studies. The purpose of this reading was to discern patterns that emerged with each individual case. Three patterns emerged: the relative absence of dialogue, the impact of decisions that were made – or not made – at critical decision points, and lack of evidence that participating students demonstrated any sense of comprehension resulting from the conference interaction. These three patterns were used to explore the presence – or absence – of features of scaffolding considered possible by current literature in the transcripts of actual writing conferences.

Limitations

This study examines the teacher-student writing conferences within one section of Freshman Composition II at a large, public land-grant university in the southeastern United States. Of the 12 original participants, eight were male and four were female. All were White. Among the three participants who were the subjects of case studies, two were female and one

was male. Greater ethnic and gender diversity might produce different findings.

While I had hoped for more student participation throughout the research process, resulting in a greater number of case studies, participation waned as the semester progressed. Of the original twelve participants, three males formally withdrew from the study early in the process. Of the remaining nine participants, four did not fully participate through the end of the project. At the end of the project, their data were incomplete. The remaining five participants supplied all of the requested data, participated in all of the conferences and interviews, and participated fully through the end of the project. Three of these are presented as case studies. It is possible that those who withdrew from the study prior to its completion might differ in important ways from those who persisted.

This study therefore considers the interaction between one instructor and three college students in writing conferences across one semester. Study of larger numbers of instructors and college students might modify or contradict these findings.

This study was also limited by the rhetorical requirements of the class and the writing program of the parent university. The class requires three papers and a final examination. The three required papers provide the students with opportunities to address three different rhetorical purposes: the exploration of sources related to a specific topic, the presentation of a

problem and a solution grounded in reviewed literature, and the execution of a specific and supported position on a relevant issue. Future studies might profit from a longer period of examination, greater student choice and responsibility for deciding on the purposes and audiences for writing, or greater diversity of rhetorical requirements or papers.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

During the past 30 years, composition studies has emerged as a discipline and field of study in its own right. The field has focused mostly on introductory composition instruction at the college level, known as freshman composition. The goal, explicit or implicit, of freshman composition is the induction of students into one or more academic discourse communities in preparation for students' choice of academic major areas. Much of the research surrounding freshman composition examines the relationship of composition instruction with these specific disciplines. For example, an ongoing debate centering on whether freshman composition should be characterized mainly as either academic writing or more personal expressive writing depends on claims regarding to what extent cross-disciplinary academic writing can be taught (Bartholomae, 1995a, 1995b; Dewey, 1967; Elbow, 1973, 1995; Fish, 1980). The present study adopts the construct of freshman composition as a setting where new college students learn

cross-disciplinary writing following the conventions of writing in academic discourse communities.

The Writing Conference as Mainstay of Freshman Composition

In the research on freshman composition, writing conferences between teachers and students have been one main topic of study. Attention to writing conferences has led scholars and practitioners to produce scholarly books (Black, 1998; Harris, 1986) that have been well received and widely read, suggesting that the writing conference is widely used in freshman composition instruction. Additionally, scholarship on writing conferences has held a regular position in peer-reviewed academic journals within the field of composition instruction (Bruffee, 1986; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Murray, 1979; Newkirk, 1995; Nystrand, 1989; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Sperling, 1990, 1991, 1995; Walker & Elias, 1987; Wong, 1988). As a result, in part, of this discourse within established publications that feature applied as well as basic theoretical scholarship in the discipline of written composition, the writing conference has become a mainstay in the field of writing instruction.

Both practitioners and scholars have suggested that the teacher-student writing conference should be an integral part of teaching freshman composition. Few of these writers, however, have moved beyond recommendations for practice or theory-building to examine empirically the verbal interactions that occur in association with specific roles that the

teacher and student enact during writing conferences. The present study examines the verbal interactions in writing conferences between a teacher of freshman composition and three of her students and compares the emerging patterns and qualities of those interactions with the patterns and qualities that practitioners and scholars suggest should characterize those interactions. In support of this analysis, this review of literature is organized to introduce the following: the concept of roles and the inevitability of roles and dyadic interaction during writing conferences; the manner in which roles and dyadic interaction facilitate negotiation during writing conferences; the particular importance of the novice-expert role dyad to the understanding of writing conference interactions; and a graphic synthesizing the literature on scaffolding together with a verbal review of the literature on scaffolding as one characteristic type of novice-expert interaction.

The Concept and Significance of Roles

The conceptual framework for this study has a theoretical footing in two distinct areas: role theory within the discipline of developmental psychology and social constructionism, a cross-disciplinary theory. It is important to understand the influence of these theoretical bases at this point because they also provide a lens through which the following review of literature for this study should be read. This study explores the interaction between student and teacher during a writing conference, interaction definable by roles initiated and assumed by the participants in the

interaction. Because the purpose of a teacher-student writing conference is not only to improve a given written text but also to further the student's development as a thinker and writer, I have relied on a concept of role taken from the discipline of developmental psychology to quantify and characterize the verbal interactions between students and the teacher during writing conferences. Social constructionism, currently the dominant theoretical perspective in composition studies, delineates how the roles and verbal interactions of teachers and students may facilitate the student's entry into the discourse community or communities of academic writing. Together these dual theories, with their complementary sets of theoretical constructs, provide a framework for analyzing the verbal interaction between teacher and student during the writing conference. Teacher and student initiate and assume certain roles, between them knowledge concerning academic writing may be constructed, and when that knowledge-construction has occurred, student novices gain increasing competence in the discourse communities of their academic major fields.

Roles in the Context of Human Development

For the present study, human development is defined as "a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). The environment is, for Bronfenbrenner, conceived of as a nested structure including the developing individual, the immediate setting within which that individual encounters

face-to-face interaction, and the relations between that individual and others within the environment. Specific to freshman composition instruction and the present study's focus on the writing conference, student development in writing must also include progress toward greater competence in the general academic writing that forms the core of freshman composition instruction. Carroll (2002) defines this development in writing as students' ability to "accommodate the often unarticulated expectations of their professor readers, to imitate disciplinary discourse, and to write in forms more diverse and complex than those they could produce when they entered college" (p. 23).

In his explication of the ecology of human development, Bronfenbrenner (1979), a developmental psychologist, begins with the idea that human development occurs within a social network or society that defines its members and facilitates their growth or development. Bronfenbrenner suggests that there are positions that support the daily endeavors within the social structure, such as teacher or student, that humans occupy to achieve the goals or accomplish the business of the society. Bronfenbrenner defines "role" as including activities and expectations of persons occupying these positions in society, suggesting that every role or position in any given society carries role expectations that define activities and behaviors for that person as well as all persons interacting with that person.

Applying Bronfenbrenner's model to freshman composition instruction establishes the writing conference as one of many manifestations of the social network surrounding freshman composition instruction. The society of the writing conference, as the present study defines that entity, exists to instruct students in the diverse and complex forms of writing that transcend the boundaries between the various academic disciplines. In this society the primary positions are student and teacher. For a writing conference to occur there must be a student and there must be a teacher present. Each of these positions is vested with a specific set of activities and expectations that define what roles the participants may play while they enact these positions, such as the roles constructed in the wider society of a good student and of a bad student. In the context of freshman composition, the individual enacting the role of good student produces essays or other writings in response to the teacher's instructions or assignments and attends writing conferences with the teacher that support revision of the student's writing and further the student's writing proficiency. The person perceived as occupying a bad student role participates to a lesser degree in these activities or participates but exhibits less compliance, engagement, and enthusiasm than the good student. Both persons occupy the student position but assume different roles within that position. For the purposes of the present study, the concept of role was used to facilitate the discovery and classification of patterns that emerged from the data.

Bronfenbrenner identifies the dyad, a two-person system or structure, as the innermost level of the ecological structure of role-influenced human interaction. He suggests that role-influenced interaction is typically nested inside of a setting, a place where people can readily engage in face-to-face interaction, and the larger ecological environment or culture in which a person grows and develops. The writing conference, then, is a setting that occurs inside the larger ecological environment of freshman composition instruction, the university and the wider society. The writing conference is an instructional setting where face-to-face, role-influenced interaction occurs between teacher and student engaged in the activities and expectations delineating one or more dyads of student-teacher roles. The present study examined one type of role-influenced interaction, scaffolding, that is characteristic of and integral to the novice-expert role dyad.

Bronfenbrenner characterizes role-influenced interaction using three dimensions: reciprocity, balance of power, and affective relation. Reciprocity, for Bronfenbrenner the primary defining dimension, underscores the inevitability that – and extent to which – the actions of Person A will affect Person B and vice versa through their roles during interaction. Balance of power refers to the manner in which the participants in role-influenced interaction share or distribute authority – or the ability of one participant to influence the actions or direction of the other participant – within social structures characterized by asymmetrical power relations. The dimension of

affective relation describes the inevitability that participants in role-influenced, dyadic interaction will develop more pronounced feelings toward one another, whether these feelings are mutually positive, negative, ambivalent, or asymmetrical. To illustrate the developmental implications of these dimensions, Bronfenbrenner contrasts the teacher role with the parent role, suggesting that while both roles share high levels of reciprocity, a balance of power in favor of the adult, and mutual affection, the parent role is presumed to enjoy a higher degree of these elements across a broader segment of the child's life.

Bronfenbrenner argues that these three dimensions of role-influenced, dyadic interaction have implications for human development. Reciprocity, for example, requires that each participant in the dyadic interaction synchronize her activities with the other member of the interaction, facilitating the development of interactive skills and stimulating a sense of increasingly complex interdependence that Bronfenbrenner argues is important in cognitive development. The dimension of balance of power is developmentally instrumental according to Bronfenbrenner because it allows the developing person both to conceptualize and cope with the differential power relations that Bronfenbrenner argues characterize the physical and social world of the developing person. Bronfenbrenner also argues that the optimal developmental situation is characterized by a gradual shift in the balance of power in favor of the developing person through which that person

engages in greater control. Bronfenbrenner views the dimension of affective relation as developmentally instrumental because of the likelihood that positive affect between the two participants in the interaction will lead to future interactions and that, presumably, negative affect will have the opposite effect, discouraging further interaction. Bronfenbrenner also suggests that affective relations between participants continue to developmentally influence those participants even when they are not together but appear in each others' thoughts.

Carroll's (2002) definition of writing development during college suggests how role-influenced, dyadic interaction manifests itself in developmentally instrumental ways. Student development in writing, Carroll argues, involves accommodating the "often unarticulated expectations" (p. 28) and imitating the accepted patterns of writing characteristic of specific disciplines. Students at the beginning of their college experiences, who will eventually write across a variety of disciplines, are often introduced to these college-level expectations and patterns in the freshman composition course, and their negotiation of these requirements to accommodate and imitate often begins with their freshman composition teacher. This introductory characteristic of freshman composition highlights the developmental significance of the dyadic interaction that takes place during that course.

To discern these unarticulated expectations and fulfill them requires all three of Bronfenbrenner's dimensions. Reciprocity – teacher and student working together with common purpose, jointly constructing new meaning – would offer the student the opportunity to gather implicit clues as to what the teacher is expecting and to enact skills that are specific to academic discourse. As the negotiation of meaning between student and teacher continues, teacher output becomes student input and, once internalized, becomes a model or scaffold for student output. Balance, or imbalance, of power – a typically asymmetrical relationship of power between teacher and student – is affected by the negotiation of meaning that takes place during dyadic interactions. The imbalance of power is developmentally instrumental, as argued by Bronfenbrenner, because it helps the learner to recognize that imbalance and develop coping strategies that facilitate her fulfillment of unarticulated expectations and imitation of accepted patterns of writing in freshman composition and, eventually, across disciplines. Affective relations would lead the student to understand – through negative affect – what the teacher, as a member of an academic discourse community, didn't want and more appropriately – through positive affect – what the teacher was looking for. If the teacher reacts positively toward a student idea or revision strategy, the student will naturally follow that idea or strategy assuming it to find favor with the teacher. Additionally, positive affect will

lead the student to welcome future work with the teacher and thus to welcome further work on her academic writing.

For the purposes of the present study, I argue that roles assumed by student and teacher influence the interaction that occurs during writing conferences and that role-influenced interaction can have developmental effects. This argument is based largely on Bronfenbrenner's analysis of three studies (Milgram, 1963; Sherif, Harvey, Hoyt, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; Zimbardo, Haney, Banks, & Jaffe, 1973) of human behavior. From this analysis, Bronfenbrenner develops a series of propositions and hypotheses regarding processes and relationships through which roles influence human development. These propositions and hypotheses culminate in a formal theory of development that stipulates that what is perceived or acquired as knowledge changes as a result of a person's exposure to and interaction with an environment and that human development occurs as a function of a person's exposure to the environment through role-influenced interaction.

Researchers in one of the three studies analyzed by Bronfenbrenner, the Stanford Prison Experiment (Zimbardo et al., 1973), simulated a prison environment to explore the interpersonal dynamics of such an environment. Subsequent examination of the results, with which Bronfenbrenner agreed, suggested that the outcome of the study had less to do with the physical environment than with roles and expectations. Bronfenbrenner agreed with Zimbardo and his associates also that both mock prisoners and mock guards

brought to the experiment preconceived, socially constructed definitions or understandings of their respective roles. Bronfenbrenner hypothesized, as a result, that participants in a role dyad will act in accordance with the expectations embedded in their role and those that they harbor for the role of the other member of a dyad as well. With respect to the writing conference, it can be inferred that students will act in a manner they presume to be expected by the teacher – typically a subordinate role – while they expect the teacher will act from a position of authority. This inference corresponds to both the prominence of the roles of expert and novice in the scholarly literature on teacher-student conferences and the assertion that one purpose of freshman composition is the induction of students into a transdisciplinary academic discourse community.

Social Constructionist Theory

An essential component of Bronfenbrenner's ecological orientation to human development is the concept of the interpersonal system – a pattern of activities, roles, and relations experienced by the developing person – through which individuals participate both in and across settings, defined as places where people can readily engage in face-to-face interaction. The activities experienced by humans within their interpersonal systems range broadly across all human experiences and can include the acts of conversation and writing. The activities inside the interpersonal system that the setting of the writing conference permits include talk about already

transcribed, student-generated writing, introduction of invention or revision strategies, generation of possible alternative versions of the student's writing, and introduction or reinforcement of formal conventions of academic writing. The roles characteristic of the interpersonal system of the writing conference primarily include student and teacher, but others might include peer reviewers or writing groups that operate as part of the writing class and whose critical commentary might enter the conversation between teacher and student during the writing conference.

The writing conference is an example of a setting where student and teacher initiate and enact roles from among those in their respective interpersonal systems to achieve particular goals. One goal might be that the student will, through the writing conference interaction, improve her skills for anticipating the unarticulated expectations of readers. Another goal might be the student's increased ability to imitate patterns of academic writing across various academic disciplines leading toward skillful participation in the specific academic discourse community of the student's undergraduate major subject. The discourse community, a social organization with both formal and informal organizational features, carries out the work of accumulating a particular kind of knowledge. The academic discourse community can also be considered part of its established members' and apprentices' interpersonal systems because it provides an infrastructure through which like-minded individuals can initiate and perpetuate a

conversation that is fully intellectually discernible only to members of that academic discourse community.

A tenet of social constructionist theory, and the basis for its relevance to the present study, is the assertion that knowledge is constructed and meaning is negotiated among members of social networks or "mutual communities" (Bruner, 1996) that ensure the interpretation and perpetuation of specific discourse. While social constructionism is currently the dominant theoretical perspective among scholars and researchers in the field of composition studies, its roots reach into various academic disciplines. Writing in the field of sociolinguistics, Bakhtin (1981) developed two central concepts that facilitate the understanding of social constructionism. The first of these, dialogism, posits that all utterances are interrelated and that no word exists outside of its context with other words, suggesting that the meaning of any text is socially negotiated and not the work of a sole author. The second of Bakhtin's sociolinguistic concepts, heteroglossia, asserts that an individual's voice works in concert with other voices in discourse or dialogue that is situational, or relevant only in a specific context or situation. Together, these concepts form the assumption that reality or truth is socially constructed through discourse among members of a specific community, and that the resulting truth is significant primarily to that community or situation and has selective application beyond that community or situation.

For the present study, *discourse* is defined as communication, written or oral, among members of a particular group or social organization that is, in turn, defined by that discourse. A discourse community, similar to Bruner's mutual community, is a social organization that perpetuates and facilitates the development of a specific body of knowledge. Freshman composition is a gateway and, if successful, a temporary, mediating discourse community that supports college students' transition from secondary school to upper division coursework in their academic majors. The purpose of freshman composition is to assimilate new college students into the specific characteristics and procedures of the academic writing that they will be expected to produce during their college courses. Successful completion of an undergraduate major program requires college students if not to speak and write in ways congruent with the discourse communities of the academic disciplines that are these students' respective major subjects then at least to demonstrate apprehension of the ways of speaking and writing characteristic of that discourse community as those have been translated to the student through lectures; textbooks; and, increasingly, electronically mediated materials.

In the discipline of the philosophy of science, Kuhn (1970) theorizes that all scientific knowledge is socially created. He argues that what he terms *normal science*, science that develops existing paradigms, centers on facts, knowledge, and even definitions of truth and reality generated by an

academic discourse community and articulated through language or symbols agreed upon by that academic discourse community.

Bruffee (1984) draws on Kuhn's identification of the mediating role of language or symbols to infer specific implications for composition studies. Bruffee contends that "writing always has its roots deep in the acquired ability to carry on the social symbolic exchange we call conversation" (p. 210), implying that normal discourse, like normal science, depends on language, often in the form of agreed-upon written symbols, to perpetuate the collective truths of particular communities of readers and writers. Bruffee further suggests that mastery of a knowledge community's normal discourse is the basic qualification for acceptance into that community.

In summary, then, the discourse communities surrounding freshman composition are represented most directly by the freshman composition instructor, and the ethical, responsible instructor intends for the students to gain entry into these various discourse communities, though the students' intentions may lie elsewhere. Negotiating the language of the academic discourse communities that correspond to freshman composition students' prospective academic majors manifests itself not only in the student's writing but also in the dialogue or conversation that occurs between teacher and students in the classroom and during writing conferences. It is the fundamental character of freshman composition as a setting where

negotiation of academic discourse and meaning are intended to lead to human development that is illuminated by social constructionist theory.

Social Cognitivist Theory

A related theory, with roots in a separate discipline, but worth mentioning here because of the way it refines social constructionist theory is social cognitive theory. Similar to social constructionists, social cognitivists agree that knowledge is created and communicated within discourse communities (Flower, 1990). Unlike social constructionists, however, social cognitivists emphasize what occurs inside writers' heads, asserting that individuals internalize expectations and conventions as schemata that influence subsequent thought, action, and writing (Ackerman, 1990; Thralls & Blyer, 1993). An advantage of the social cognitivist theoretical perspective for the study of student-teacher interaction is the capacity of this framework to represent individual human agency during interactions between teacher and student intended by the teacher to induct the student into the academic discourse community of the student's prospective undergraduate major subject. This representation of human agency depends on a concept of learning as internalization of expectations and conventions (Ackerman, 1990). The present study addresses the impact of internalized expectations and conventions on teacher-student talk during writing conferences and on student development through analysis of the talk between student and

teacher for evidence of the student's appropriation of expectations and conventions initially modeled or otherwise scaffolded by the teacher.

The literature reviewed above suggests that an understanding of the concept of roles and role-related interaction is important to understanding human development. The following section argues that roles and dyadic interaction are also necessarily a part of the writing conference interaction between teachers and students.

The Inevitability of Role and Dyadic Interaction during the Writing Conference

The effectiveness of a writing conference depends on the ability of teacher and the student to negotiate the authority (Wong, 1988) and, consequently, the agenda (Newkirk, 1989) and content of a writing conference (Walker & Elias, 1987). In order to negotiate these elements of authority, agenda, and content, students and teachers inevitably assume roles that define the interaction during the writing conference.

Newkirk (1989) suggests that the importance of roles to the interaction between students and teachers is felt from the very beginning of a college writing course. In case studies of college writing conferences, Newkirk found the opening negotiation between student and teacher set the agenda for conferences that were largely controlled by the teacher, as indicated by word count in the opening minutes of the conference. In two of the three conferences, the teacher spoke almost twice as much as the student. The

third conference, by contrast, revealed a teacher speaking roughly 25% of the overall words during the conference. Newkirk characterized this third conference as the most productive because, rather than dictating the conference agenda or revision agenda, the teacher allowed the student to proactively take control of the agenda and, by extension, the student's own writing. Newkirk's conclusions across these case studies include the ideas that teachers talk too much; that the opening minutes of the conference are critically important; that the agenda for a conference should be limited in scope; that student input on the agenda is essential; and that teachers must be responsive and, at the same time, directive.

Extension of Newkirk's implications illustrates the importance of roles and role negotiation, concepts outside of Newkirk's focus. To accomplish this extension for the purposes of this review of literature, I use the first two conferences Newkirk described, during which student participation was limited, to illustrate how lack of awareness of the teacher's and the student's role during a writing conference on the part of the student impeded learning and development. "One senses the student's lack of familiarity with the intent of the conference," Newkirk wrote about the student who was the subject of the first case study, "and her lack of awareness that the teacher's primary concern at this point in the conference is with the process of writing" (p. 320). The same description could apply to the second conference during which the student failed to progress toward the teacher's "ideal text"

(Knoblach & Brannon, 1981), in part because the student didn't appear to understand how the teacher was defining that ideal. In both of these cases uncertainty on the part of the student as to how to execute his or her role and as to how to respond to the role initiated by the teacher impeded the conference's effectiveness.

Freedman and Sperling (1985) similarly concluded that failure to negotiate an agenda early in a conference can lead to role ambiguity. In their study of one teacher and four of her college composition students, Freedman and Sperling concluded that student agendas often surface in subtle ways, sometimes initiated by the student and sometimes not. Freedman and Sperling, though, also found that the student agenda or concern is not necessarily as important as the fact that teacher and student share that concern or agenda, concluding that the "quality of exchanges in which the students wedged in their own agendas is clearly different from instances in which there is a match between what [teacher and student] wish to discuss" (p. 118). These authors define or characterize a high-quality exchange as one during which teacher and student share a focal concern, as opposed to one during which teacher and student may be mainly discussing different topics, paying little attention to what the other is saying. Although they do not explicitly refer to the teacher and the student's roles during a writing conference, Freedman and Sperling's definition of low-quality exchanges during teacher-student writing conferences illustrates how incompatibility in

the roles the teacher and student enact can undermine the effectiveness of writing conferences. Successful negotiation by the student and teacher of the authority and agenda of a writing conference is made more difficult, Freedman and Sperling found, by differences between students that correspond to students' previous achievement. Freedman and Sperling found that students of higher achievement focused on rhetorical and global-level topics more so than their lower-achieving peers, who focused more on grammatical and local-level issues. They also found a reciprocal behavior in the teacher, who focused on more intellectually challenging topics with higher achieving students than she did with lower achieving students. There was a discernible difference in the level and amount of praise given to students of different perceived abilities, with higher levels of praise extended to students demonstrating what were perceived to be stronger abilities. The roles that teachers and students assume – whether they initiate them or enter into them as a response to the other participant – may stem from student achievement, real or perceived. These role assumptions can affect the quantity and quality of instruction as well as the extent to which students proactively pursue that instruction.

Shifting Roles and Scaffolding

Student-teacher interaction that fosters shifting among roles can be developmentally beneficial. The following studies are included because, while they don't explicitly argue for the inevitability of roles, it can be

inferred from their findings that students and teachers will inevitably shift among multiple roles during the course of a writing conference and that roles are an integral part of the writing conference. Scaffolding, the focus of the present study, requires a type of shifting among roles, even though the interaction takes place within the single dyad of the roles of student as novice and teacher as expert. Consider the following scenario described using percent as a way of describing the extent to which the student enacts the role of novice and the teacher enacts the role of expert. In this imaginary scenario, the student enters the relationship at 100% novice. Scaffolding is provided by the teacher enacting a 100% expert role. As Bronfenbrenner argues and as scaffolding requires, the student must increase her competence, taking on at least a small percentage of expert status, for scaffolding to have occurred. The following studies explore shifting within and across dyads of roles and the necessity that teachers and students recognize the interplay of roles and its impact on their interactions as they engage in what Sperling (1991) describes as "dramas of composing."

Newkirk (1995) used performative theory to re-examine the negotiation that occurred during the writing conferences of two college freshmen and their teacher. Performative theory contends that teacher and student cooperate in the performance of roles so that information that might jeopardize or undermine the roles is not revealed. Newkirk concluded that viewing these conferences using performative theory illustrated how fluidity

in the role of teacher and student during a writing conference is necessary for effective interaction in this setting to occur. Newkirk contended that the existing models for student-teacher interaction during the mid-1990s, with their emphasis on empowering students, forced students into roles for which they were unprepared and with which they were often uncomfortable. One such model was Murray's (1979) foundational response theory of teaching writing that centered on the premise that teachers' initial open-ended solicitation of students' reflection on their writing could further students' writing development.

Newkirk (1995) suggested that teaching be viewed as a process wherein participants recognize, as performative theory suggests, the interplay of roles inherent to teacher-student interaction and readily shift roles and clarify expectations. For example, the teacher may, in the beginning of the conference, use Murray's (1979) response theory to encourage the student to assume the lead role in discussing the student's writing. Students uncomfortable or unfamiliar with this new role and responsibility may have difficulty with that lead role. Newkirk found that, in order for both teacher and student to "save face," the teacher often reassumed the lead role and guided the student through the discussion, encouraging greater participation in another fashion.

Black (1998) employed discourse analysis and critical pedagogy to study writing conferences between first-year college writing students and

their teachers. She focused on the impact of gender, authority, race, and culture on existing power structures during writing conferences, including her own. Black concluded that language is linked with gender, authority, race, and culture, and that traditional power relations influenced the roles students and teachers enacted. She also concluded that power and authority manifested itself in conferences in two ways. First, the teacher inherently and socially occupied a seat of authority. Second, teachers extended that power and authority by controlling conference talk in two ways: they contributed significantly more words to the talk, and they used more discourse markers – words such as "and" and "I mean" – to hold their position in and control of the series of conversational turns. Black found that students marginalized because of their gender, race, or culture often faced reinforcement of the traditional power relations in their conference interactions. Females, she concluded, often received feedback and revision guidance that reinforced the traditional, subordinate roles of women. At the same time, though, teachers in the writing conferences rewarded those women for accepting the subordinate role by offering them more praise and more suggestions for revision – both higher and lower order – than their male peers. Black concluded that these rewards were offered and accepted despite the inevitability that the marginalized role disadvantaged the female students. She argued that other marginalized students faced similar struggles.

Black suggests that what students want from a conference, more than anything else, is a new relationship with the teacher, a relationship in which the forces of gender, authority, race, and culture are minimized. Her study concluded that students and teachers often feel defined by their roles. From this finding, Black suggests that allowing shifts in roles could mitigate power structures by allowing students and teachers to redefine the relationship through steps as simple as students requiring that teachers recognize their own authority with statements like "What do I have to do to get an A?" With this finding, Black substantiates the notion that shifting roles within and across dyads might be both simple and enormously powerful. Navigating the imbalance of power and redefining the relationship between teacher and student – presumably in favor of the student – are also goals inherent to certain types of dyadic interactions.

Negotiation through Roles and Dyadic Interaction

The ability of teachers and students to successfully negotiate roles – that is, to work together during a writing conference employing diverse and compatible roles – likely has some effect on both the conference and the subsequent student writing. Each dyadic interaction, each initiation of role and reaction to role, has developmental implications, positive or negative, for both the dynamics of the conference and the participants.

To illustrate, I return to what Wong (1988) considered the ideal conference, that which would be considered most effective: a conference

during which there is (a) balanced distribution of turns and turn size (indicating equal participation); (b) an exchange of information; and (c) joint determination by the student and the teacher of the agenda for the conference. When the roles assumed by the teacher and the student are incompatible for all or a portion of the conference, the goal of this ideal conference becomes more elusive. We can infer that the ideal conference, by Wong's definition, would produce subsequent student writing that demonstrated some evidence that the conference facilitated the student's progression toward successful entry into the discourse community of his or her chosen major subject area.

Fitzgerald and Stamm (1990), in a study of first graders, found that writing conferences did influence revision when compared against subsequent student writing produced by students who did not engage in a writing conference. The assumption that writing conferences will influence student revision in positive ways is inherent in the widespread advocacy and use of writing conferences. While theorists and practitioners advance with great clarity the assumption that writing conferences are developmentally beneficial, empirical studies examining the developmental effects of the writing conference are few and those exploring the developmental effects of roles and dyadic interactions during writing conferences, fewer still. This empirical research is divisible in correspondence with two central themes: those studies that illuminate the developmental hurdles that the writing

conference helps to overcome, and those studies that indicate how conflicting roles and expectations for and during the writing conference have both negative and positive implications for student development in writing. These are discussed in the following two sections.

Negotiating Developmental Hurdles through Writing Conference Dialogue

Empirical research at the elementary level (McCarthey, 1992; Michaels, 1987) and at the college level (French, 1999) has examined to what extent and how conferences mitigate problems students encounter during writing instruction. In particular, these three studies all focus on the ability of students and teachers to recognize and negotiate the kinds of authority the teacher should retain and the kinds of authority the student can and should exercise. Teachers' understanding of roles and expectations for both themselves and students during writing conferences holds promise as a way of helping students move past the developmental hurdle of understanding what kinds of authority (e.g., eventual evaluation authority) the teacher retains during the conference and what kinds of authority (e.g. choice of genre, topic, or even of foci for evaluation) the teacher is delegating to the student.

In her case study of writing in sixth-grade classes, Michaels (1987) studied general classroom discourse and focused on conference dialogue to understand the impact of the teacher's communication of goals and

expectations on student writing. Michaels compared the explicit communication of goals and expectations against the tacit expectations and goals that these teachers brought to the conference and to their classes. Michaels found the participating teachers' tacit expectations to be the dominant force in classroom discourse and conference dialogue. She found more specifically that the teachers' espoused emphasis on facilitating writers' recursive invention, transcription, and revision often digressed into students' focused attempts to produce what they perceived to be the teachers' desired result because of the prominence of the teacher's tacit expectations. She found further that these tacit expectations influenced the teachers' reading of the student text as well as the changes or revisions recommended by the teacher. Michaels concluded that there was, in fact, an invalidation of the larger purpose of writing conferences to communicate and generate meaning when student ideas were not aligned with tacit teacher expectations. During these conferences when teacher expectations conflicted with students' intentions for their writing, the teacher and student were enacting roles that were incompatible. Developmental opportunities and the students' intentions for their writing were countered rather than exploited.

McCarthy (1992) studied inflexibility in the role teachers enacted during writing conferences at the elementary and middle school levels. Student academic writing was characterized in this study as including personal narratives and the introduction of multiple genres. The importance

of McCarthy's study to the present study is her examination of flexibility of roles and teacher's tacit expectations. McCarthy conducted case studies of two teachers who participated in the same intervention, the Teachers College Writing Project. The purpose of this study was to more closely examine how teacher schema – or tacit expectations – affected the assessment of student writing. McCarthy concluded that shifts in these teachers' roles, from less to more flexible incorporations of their tacit expectations for students' writing into their assessment of student writing, produced more emphasis on the ideas expressed in writing and less on grammar and mechanics in teachers' assessment of students' writing. The emphasis on the ideas the student expressed in the writing, McCarthy found, resulted in a greater balance between student ownership and teacher intervention. McCarthy found that a teacher's use of assessment strategies based on a more flexible incorporation of their own tacit expectations held great potential for writers' development through writing-conference dialogue. She argued also that discourse during the writing conferences does not need to replicate the common classroom interaction pattern of the teacher correcting mistakes. Despite the difference in age between the elementary school students McCarthy studied and college freshmen, McCarthy's arguments suggest that the enactment of certain roles during a writing conference and the quality of the resulting dyadic interaction can have a discernible impact on the extent to which the student, whether during childhood or during early adulthood, assumes authority, real

or perceived, as a writer and for that student's development in academic writing.

French (1999) studied the impact of writing conference dialogue on freshman composition students' ability to complete a literacy synthesis assignment that required students to take a position on an issue related to literacy while demonstrating familiarity with the scholarly debate surrounding that issue. French analyzed teacher-student conference dialogue that occurred during the literacy synthesis assignment to explore the manner and extent to which teachers and students were able to negotiate authority during a writing conference. French concluded that students' ability to question authority preceded their ability to engage in a more significant author role, a role defined by a contribution of new ideas or new ways of thinking about established ideas. This finding suggests that negotiation of authority must occur before students are able to achieve a level of authorship – as defined by French – that characterizes the freshman composition course. She also concluded that although teacher-student interaction in a writing conference did not guarantee that students would assume a sense of authorship as she defined it, conference interaction did result in an increased number of student contributions of new ideas or new interpretations of established ideas.

From these findings, French suggests that conference dialogue can facilitate two things. The first of these, increased student consciousness of

academic authorship as a concept, follows from her finding that conference interaction increased student contribution of new ideas or interpretations, the core of authorship as she defined it. Second, French suggests that conference dialogue facilitates an instructor's ability to predict whether or not the student will successfully assume an authorship role based on the student's ability to contribute – in conference dialogue – new ideas or new interpretations of established ideas. French's study was limited by the absence of a control group who did not have access to or make use of writing conferences. Nevertheless, French's findings suggest that writing conferences can help students become conscious of and engaged in the role of academic author and such engagement can facilitate students' development as academic writers.

Developmental Impact of Roles and Dyadic Interaction during Writing Conferences

Empirical research has explored how conflict in the roles enacted and thus, presumably, conflict in the roles expected during a writing conference can have both negative and positive implications for the resulting dyadic interactions and for students' development as academic writers. At the elementary level, Michaels (1987) found, as detailed above, a mismatch between what the teacher wanted to accomplish and what the teacher actually accomplished when student ideas did not fit teachers' tacit

expectations for students' writing, documenting that incompatible roles can result in miscommunication with negative developmental implications.

Ulichney and Watson-Gegeo (1989) analyzed the talk during writing conferences in two sixth grade classes to identify what roles these teachers and students assumed during writing conferences and the extent to which the teacher controlled participation in the conference and interpretation of meaning during conference talk. Ulichney and Watson-Gegeo argued in favor of a role for the teacher as "codiscoverer of the writer's process" (p. 311). They found that during the writing conferences students assumed subordinate roles and developed coping strategies. One of the ways that the authors found that students coped with teacher control was by limiting their revisions to those areas prescribed by the teacher.

Further, Ulichney and Watson-Gegeo found that the teachers' dominant interpretive framework, a way of conceptualizing the power relationships between teachers and students, influenced what roles the student and teacher expected they and the other member of the teacher-student dyad would enact. The authors concluded that the teacher's dominant interpretive framework also exacerbated the subordinate, passive roles that students enacted in these two classrooms. The subordinate roles were made worse largely because these dominant interpretive frameworks were, at the first sign of uncertainty or confusion, prone to revert back to the same, status quo power relationship that inevitably privileged the teacher's

intentions for a student's writing. This finding suggests that writing conferences characterized by poorly understood or incompatible roles can result in the teacher's assertion of a role specifying what students' intentions for their writing will be. Such a transition can result in miseducative dyadic interactions that can have negative developmental implications including forcing a student to develop coping strategies in lieu of writing strategies.

Nickel (2001) found, similarly, that in the first-grade classroom she studied and four resulting case studies of individual students, students would often retreat from or withdraw from writing conferences that the students characterized as "confusing." Nickel transcribed writing conference discourse and coded those transcripts for different roles that teachers assumed during writing conferences. She found that conferences students labeled as "confusing" were characterized by a mismatch between the teacher's and the student's expectations. This mismatch typically occurred when a student either didn't understand the teacher's suggestion for revision, presumably because it was too complex, or when the student felt the writing task or the story was complete and wasn't expecting further revision suggestions. The student viewed herself as the complete authority, or author, and the teacher's attempts to direct the student's efforts were perceived as invasive.

This mismatch in expectations was often exacerbated by the teacher's questioning because questions often required closure as opposed to reflection and often assumed error. Simple questions such as "What do you have

planned?" and "Why did you select that title?" often resulted in the student's retreat from the conference when she felt her ownership was threatened because she couldn't answer the question conclusively or felt the teacher disapproved of her title selection. Nickel found that students withdrew from the interaction with the teacher when suggestions for revision were not understood and when students felt their writing was complete and weren't willing to consider revision suggestions. These findings illustrate how incompatibility in the roles enacted by the teacher and student can negate the potential of writing conferences for students' development as writers.

Tobin (1993) argues that a "productive tension" is inherent in conflicts between the roles students and teachers expect themselves and the other to assume. Tobin studied the experiences of three students enrolled in a freshman composition class he was teaching to examine how this tension played out in both his own conferences with students and student writing. The students involved in Tobin's study expected the teacher's role to be that of informed adviser, guiding each student through the essay process while allowing each student to retain complete ownership of the process. Tobin structured each conference around questions that drew the students into the conversation. Tension resulted because Tobin's method largely put the onus of directing the conversation and discovering meaning back on the student, a role for which the student was not always prepared. Tobin found that the high levels of tension when the teacher was challenging the student and

focusing the student's attention on specific items in the essay kept student and teacher engaged in the process. He found that too much tension, however, resulted in student retreat from the conference and subordination by students of themselves to the teacher's ideas and suggestions.

Tobin found that one significant threat to productive tension is silence or uncertainty on the part of the student or the teacher during the conference. Both teacher and student, uncomfortable with moments of uncertainty or silence, assert themselves or retreat in ways that have developmental implications. Tobin, for example, found himself providing aggressively directive suggestions – assuming control of the student text – though he couched his directions in the form of a question as he had been doing through the entire conference process. He also found himself undermining the maintenance of a fairly high level of tension in each conference, filling the silent, thoughtful space often required by students to formulate responses with more challenging ideas that he was generating.

These findings suggest that student and teacher roles during writing conferences have developmental implications because roles establish or perpetuate a hierarchy or familiar ground to which students and teachers will retreat to resolve tension. Tobin found that teachers would retreat to a role in which they provided directive feedback and that students would assume the subordinate role of receiving and acting on the directive feedback. Tobin concluded that the element of tension between participants in a writing

conference acts as an informal agitant and shapes the interaction. The element of tension that Tobin argues shapes the interaction during writing conferences arises from associations or inferences by the teacher that have ties to roles such as expert facilitating scaffolding and direct supervisor giving step-by-step directions. These role-related associations or inferences have implications for students' development as writers through the interaction that constitutes writing conferences.

Larsen and Maier (2000) analyzed general classroom discourse between a teacher and her first-grade students for one year to explore the characteristics of a participation framework, a construct similar to dyadic interaction that describes a type of interaction between teacher and student. Larson and Maier found that both students and teacher shifted roles in the participation framework of writing activity among teacher, author, co-author, and overhearer. Larsen and Maier found that the resulting flexible participation frameworks facilitated the co-construction of written texts. The positive developmental implications of this flexible participation framework were evidenced when students assumed, through shifts in participation roles, authorship processes modeled by the teacher. The teacher began each writing session by modeling six discrete segments of the writing activity or process. These included topic selection, picture drawing, writing the story, discussing what the group liked about the story, questions and revision, and student topic announcements. Larsen and Maier found that, by the end of

the period of study, students would assume on their own most of the segments that the teacher had modeled earlier and, as a result, assume roles previously played by the teacher in co-constructing texts. This finding suggests that shifting from more subordinate and passive to more substantive, active, and reciprocal student and teacher roles can be developmentally beneficial for the student.

At the college level, Carroll (2002) studied 20 students over a four-year period to understand the impact on their development in writing of the roles these students enacted as writers in relation to the roles enacted by the teachers who read their work over four years of college instruction. While her longitudinal study did not specifically examine writing conferences, Carroll's research on roles college students enacted as they wrote academic texts informs the present study in substantive ways. Carroll's central finding was that students progress along a continuum of novice-expert dyadic interaction that facilitates the slow development of literacy skills through the college years. In the early years, characterized by general education courses and intense writing instruction, student novices rely more heavily on the teacher experts to guide their efforts to assimilate their previous writing experience into college-level academic writing.

As their competence increases, students begin to demonstrate more expertise themselves – by contributing new ideas as well as new interpretations of established ideas germane to their chosen major areas of

study – and rely less on teacher experts. Through upper-level coursework, students begin to specialize in a discipline that allows them to focus on one type of writing. This focus, according to Carroll, allows students to demonstrate more competence, if not expert status, in those disciplines. Carroll concluded that, while students are often mistakenly assumed to be competent academic writers when they enter college, it is the student's progression from the role of novice to the role of competent participant in a discipline across four years of instruction that demonstrates the developmental implications of roles.

Carroll argues that to develop as academic writers, students must begin by laying aside the assumptions and expectations they harbored as writers prior to college and apprentice themselves to the new form of academic writing. As their experience grows, students must participate more actively, assuming more responsibility and authority for their own writing by generating and clearly articulating in their writing new ideas and new interpretations of established ideas. Carroll concluded that student development in writing is enhanced not only by an understanding of role but also by students' capacity to shift from demonstrating less to demonstrating greater competence during student-teacher interactions.

Carroll asserts that the most effective learning environments provide scaffolding, supporting the argument made in the present study for particular consideration of the novice-expert dyad and of scaffolding as an

important type of interaction. Carroll concluded that students benefited developmentally from what she describes as interactive experiences as they entered the specialized subcommunities that defined their academic major areas. In addition to describing how students' assumption and understanding of the novice role and shifts in students' participation in classroom discourse toward that role provide opportunity to practice the independent development and support of competent rhetorical arguments, Carroll found that the embeddedness of student writing in the specialized discourse community of the student's academic major subject allows students to "connect their classroom learning to an adult world outside of school" (p. 139). These academic major subjects approximate the communities of practice where local knowledge develops through legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Negotiation: Specific Roles in a Writing Conference

In the freshman writing classroom and the writing conference, the systems of symbols, definition of truth, expectations, and conventions that characterize freshman composition as an academic discourse community are negotiated between student and teacher, each participating in the process to some degree. This negotiation process has been characterized by three contrasting schools of thought. The first of these claims that this induction is facilitated most readily when the teacher assumes a posture of teacher as reader that places the student and teacher on equal ground as writers and

mitigates the inherent imbalance of power between the teacher and student as participants in a writing conference. The foundational literature for this point of view comes from the field of composition studies and includes empirical and theoretical scholarship (Murray, 1982; Nystrand, 1990; Rosenblatt, 1978; Sperling, 1994). A second school of thought, not in composition studies but in the field of education policy and management (Baldwin, 1994; Higgins & Hartley, 2001; Higgins, Hartley, & Skelton, 2002), implies that the predominant perspective students carry into the setting of the writing conference and freshman composition course is that of a consumer in an educational marketplace. Students adopting this perspective assume that their efforts and actions – in this case writing, revising, and reviewing – will ultimately be exchanged for the desired grade in the course. A third school of thought, from the disciplines of educational psychology and applied psychological research in composition studies (Chin, Bell, Munby, & Hutchinson, 2004; Hung, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Sherwood, 2002; Smagorinsky & Smith, 1992; Sommers & Saltz, 2004), suggests that students should apprentice themselves to master teachers, forming a novice-expert relationship. I identify these three schools of thought not to suggest that all student-teacher dyadic interaction is neatly folded within their boundaries, nor to suggest that each of the three schools of thought is mutually exclusive.

Focal Point: The Novice-Expert Role Dyad

The "novice-expert" dyad of roles is currently the most widely advocated configuration of roles for the student and teacher to assume during writing conferences and is considered to be particularly important for researchers of writing conferences to understand (Sherwood, 2002; Sommers & Saltz, 2004). The theoretical basis of the novice-expert relationship has two essential components: Vygotsky's (1978) concept of 'the zone of proximal development' and Bruner's (1978) concept of 'scaffolding.' The sections that conclude this chapter review the foundational literature and applied empirical literature explicating these two key concepts and their relationship to novice-expert interaction. Scaffolding is operationally defined in Chapter Three, which describes the methods and procedures employed to conduct this research.

The Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to describe the distance between the ability of an individual learner working alone (novice) and the ability of that same learner working in concert with a more experienced person (expert). When a more capable person assists a less capable person, the concept of the ZPD stipulates the condition that the novice is willingly working toward achieving expert status, or at the least increased competence, and that the expert is facilitating the novice's progression toward that end. The characteristics of

the expert's facilitation are often collectively described as scaffolding (Bruner, 1978, 1996; Wood et al., 1976). As the metaphor implies, the expert begins at the novice's base point of competence regarding a particular skill and provides a structure or scaffold that builds on that competence. As the novice achieves competence in subsequent skills, that achievement is used to support the pursuit of the next goal, presumably higher achievement in that particular skill. In this manner, the expert is able to help the novice use her own skills to support and contextualize subsequent learning. The concept of scaffolding, another focus of this study, is explicated more fully in the concluding section of this chapter.

Hung (1999) has adapted Polanyi's (1964) approach to assisting learners or novices in the zone of proximal development. The teacher or expert engages in recursive implementation of three activities – scaffolding, modeling, and coaching – while the novice responds employing three complementary activities – submitting, mirroring, and constructing. A teacher's use of scaffolding to provide support or structure for the novice necessitates that the novice respond by submitting or recognizing the authority of the expert during scaffolding. This characteristic makes scaffolding and submitting not only complementary but interdependent as well, requiring participation from both teacher and student. In order for scaffolding to occur, the student must submit. The same is not necessarily true of the other characteristics. A teacher's modeling of the desired behavior

as preparation for imitation by the student of that behavior might evoke but does not require that the student imitate, or mirror, the strategies and approaches acquired from the expert during modeling. The teacher can model, but the student can remain passive and choose not to mirror without affecting the teacher's use of modeling. A teacher might also use coaching in the zone of proximal development, continually providing feedback through the apprenticeship process until the student demonstrates competence according to the particular community of practice. The student's independent application and discovery of concepts that are important to community of practice during coaching describes the complementary activity of constructing. This progression of complementary activities between teacher and student enable the student to work toward self-regulation as he assimilates and appropriates skills and concepts learned from the experts with whom he works. These three types of expert-novice interaction can all feasibly occur during the role-influenced interactions of the writing conference. Writing instructors can enact the role of expert academic writer teaching a novice writer through scaffolding, modeling, and coaching. Students can assume the novice role by submitting, mirroring, and constructing in correspondence with the teacher's actions as the expert member of the teacher-student dyad.

Applying Hung's theory to an empirical investigation, Chin, Bell, Munby and Hutchinson (2004) analyzed one high school student's co-op

apprenticeship in a dental office in Canada. Their analysis found that the experts in this setting, a dentist and the professional dental assistant, engaged in modeling, scaffolding, and coaching, with a general progression in that order (p. 414). Their analysis also found that coaching occurs throughout the apprenticeship process. Further, Chin and his associates found that the student apprentice submitted, mirrored, and constructed while engaged in the tasks of the dental office. The last of these activities, not surprisingly, occurred more regularly toward the end of the student's experience in the dental office than earlier during that apprenticeship. Most importantly, Chin and his associates found that, consistent with Hung's theory, the student's interaction with the dentist and the professional dental assistant, and the skills and knowledge she gained from that interaction, enabled the student to construct knowledge and develop a more complete understanding of the operations of the dental office. They supported this finding with the observation that, by the end of the apprenticeship period, the student apprentice could not only describe and perform tasks independently, she could anticipate subsequent steps in the office operations, a skill characteristic of experienced staff members. Chin and his associates' findings inform the present study, despite the fact that the internal operations and goals of a dental office are very different from those of freshman composition instruction. Common ground, however, is found in the situated learning experience of novices paired with experts. In both settings,

the dental office and freshman composition writing conference, novices work with and depend on experts to facilitate their emerging ability in specific areas. Experts within these settings employ strategies that support and challenge the novice toward increased ability in specific areas. In both settings, the distance between the ability of the novice working alone and the ability of the novice working with an expert characterizes the zone of proximal development.

The concepts of the zone of proximal development and of scaffolding articulate how learning by novices from experts occurs and can be facilitated. With a student's cooperation, a writing conference can become a setting where the student's zone of proximal development as an academic writer advances through scaffolding. This advancement would be characterized by greater student ability for anticipating academic readers' unarticulated expectations and for employing rhetorical elements, methods of research and presentation, and formal conventions that characterize academic writing. The conference setting allows the teacher expert to establish, on a one-to-one basis, the base point from which to construct a scaffold that facilitates the student novice's progression toward greater competence in academic writing. The writing conference also provides opportunities to discover points of subsequent novice achievement from which to continue scaffolding.

The Novice-Expert Role Dyad

Most of the research defining the dyadic roles of novice and expert is theoretical in nature (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Carter, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991), and little of the empirical research reports directly on composition instruction. An exception to the paucity of empirical research on novice-expert interaction during composition instruction is Sommers and Saltz's (2004) longitudinal study of college writers' development, reviewed later in this chapter. The majority of the empirical work on novice-expert interaction comes from the field of educational psychology (Chin et al., 2004; Hung, 1999). This research is valuable and relevant because it articulates and provides evidence for definitions of concepts – role, situated learning, and apprenticeship, for example – that are important to understanding teacher-student writing conferences.

The novice-expert role dyad, applied to the writing conference and freshman composition instruction, assumes that a student novice works with a teacher expert to develop the skills and competence necessary for assimilation into the specific discourse community of academic writing instantiated by the freshman composition class. Simply by being a member of the writing class and attending class meetings, such as the writing conference, the student is arguably a member of the discourse community to a certain extent (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Similarly, a plumber's apprentice is a member of that community of practice from the first day of employment.

An important distinction should be made, though. The workplace and the classroom have different goals. The novice-expert relationship in the workplace is necessarily focused on a novice's competent rendering of a product or service. The classroom or writing conference is focused on training and instruction, a process more than a product. The student writer is apprenticed to a writing instructor for the purpose of drawing on the instructor's expertise to assimilate the student writer more completely into some academic discourse community. The degree to which the writing student, like the plumber's apprentice, can participate in the relevant community of practice is limited in the beginning but argued to be legitimate nonetheless. Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of legitimate peripheral participation, itself part of their theory of situated learning, grew out of their efforts to resuscitate the concept of apprenticeship, a concept with diminishing cultural consciousness but increasing cultural relevance. The idea of apprenticeship – to a master tailor, plumber, or writer – is the concept that defines the dyadic roles of novice and expert.

The nature of the instructor's expertise, and the degree to which the student is truly a novice, are part of a larger debate surrounding the distinction between general knowledge and local knowledge. General knowledge in composition is that which applies to the general act of writing. Local knowledge pertains to writing characteristic of a specific discipline or area of expertise. Carter (1990) characterizes this debate in composition

studies as placing the cognitive and social dimensions of writing in opposition to each other. Carter argues for the alternative of integrating the cognitive dimension of writing, with its emphasis on information-processing, and the social dimension of writing, with its emphasis on local knowledge developed in a specific discourse community. An expert writer is not necessarily an expert plumber, and vice versa, though Carter would probably agree that even the expert writer possesses the general plumbing knowledge that water runs downhill and must be pumped to perform otherwise. Likewise, the expert plumber brings to the writing task general knowledge that he or she can apply as a novice writer. With regard to writing, Carter contends that "beyond the level of competence, it is impossible to talk of improvement in writing without focusing on local knowledge" (p. 282).

Specifically exploring the novice-expert role dyad in freshman composition, Sommers and Saltz (2004) completed a longitudinal study of undergraduate writing at Harvard, randomly selecting 65 students from a total sample of 422 to study in great depth. While Sommers and Saltz did not explicitly study writing conferences, their findings inform this research on the extent to which the roles of expert and novice shape college writers' development. Sommers and Saltz found that students who initially accepted their novice status, viewing themselves as part of an ongoing apprenticeship into the methodologies of their specific academic disciplines, experienced the greatest gains in writing development through their college careers.

Sommers and Saltz also found, and they suggest surprisingly, that some students are able to sustain an interest in academic writing while others are not, and that the sustained interest in academic writing promoted a more thorough development in writing compared with the development of students whose interest in academic writing waned over the course of their college career.

Sommers and Saltz found that the roles of the students they studied during freshman composition involved a paradox. While as freshman these students were novices as academic writers, they were experts at developing their own moral reflections and a general worldview. Sommers and Saltz found that students who embraced the novice role during the freshman year, compared with those who didn't, had greater opportunity to be changed by what they learned, to develop new ideas, and to understand that teachers are interested in essays that reflect these new ideas. Sommers and Saltz characterize being a novice in the setting of the university as being a highly active experience being a novice involves "adopting an open attitude to instruction and feedback, a willingness to experiment, whether in course selection or paper topics, and a faith that, with practice and guidance, the new expectations of college can be met" (p. 134). These researchers also found that situations where freshman, acting as novices, were asked to do the work of experts were developmentally instrumental. It was through these experiences, Sommers and Saltz found, that student novices were

assimilating the tools of the expert writer that would lead to self-regulation and the independence of relative expertise.

The novice-expert role dyad is the dominant model for the writing conference because it pairs a novice student writer with a teacher expert and, together, the two work to assimilate the novice more completely into some academic writing discourse community. The present study draws from the concepts of ZPD, apprenticeship, scaffolding, and the developmental paradox of student novices evolving – over the years of their college experience – into student experts to characterize the extent to which the roles of novice and expert occurred during the interaction constituting student-teacher writing conferences.

Scaffolding as a Key Type of Novice-Expert Interaction

Much of the theoretical and empirical literature surrounding scaffolding deals with children as learners (e.g., Bruner, 1978; Gaskins, Rauch, Gensemer, Cunicelli, O'Hara, Six, and Scott, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1978). While there is a relative scarcity of empirical work at the secondary and college level, for the sake of the richest possible definition of scaffolding derived from the literature on the concept, I am including features of scaffolding derived from literature on scaffolding during children's learning as well as from the literature on scaffolding during adults' learning. In general terms, scaffolding means the expert supports the learner's current and emerging competence and challenges the learner to

achieve increased competence. The goal of scaffolding is enabling the learner to think for him- or herself in ways consistent with the norms and accepted procedures of the community of practice which the expert represents. As the metaphor implies, scaffolding is typically a series of supports, establishing a base point of learner competence and then advancing the learner toward increased competence in performing a specific task: in this study, academic writing.

Gaskins, Rauch, Gensemer, Cunicelli, O'Hara, Six, and Scott (1997) refer to scaffolding as "support at the edge of a child's competence," (p. 45) and summarize scaffolding as "explaining, demonstrating, and jointly constructing an idealized version of a performance" (p. 47). This general conception of scaffolding illuminates the connection between roles and development argued in this study by highlighting that meaning is socially constructed or negotiated between participants. It also suggests another crucial characteristic of scaffolding: maintaining tension between the support offered to a child and the motivation, extrinsic or intrinsic, that holds the learner's interest in the task or challenge.

Hogan (1997) suggests that instructional scaffolding "lies at the heart of the verbal interactions that induct students into the practices of an academic discipline" (p. 1). Writing conferences are verbal interactions intended to move novice academic writers toward greater competence in a discourse community of academic writers. Reference to the dyadic roles of

novice and expert is prominent in the literature on writing conferences. The statements above point to scaffolding as a key feature of the teacher-student writing conference. Hogan's assertion for the relevance of scaffolding, then, supports my closer examination of scaffolding during writing conferences.

Features of Scaffolding

Three of the four categories of features of scaffolding comprise behaviors that are discrete enough to be quantifiable. These three categories of discrete features of scaffolding are engaging the novice's interest, guiding and directing the engaged student, and taking action at critical decision points during the scaffolding process. A fourth category of features of scaffolding is the category of qualities or characteristics of scaffolding. This fourth category of features of scaffolding has to do with features of scaffolding that are pervasive rather than discrete and thus not amenable to quantification at the level of turns in the conversation between the novice and the expert. Finally, there are 10 features of scaffolding that transcended these categories, applying to two or more of the four categories simultaneously.

A recursive relationship among the three categories of features of scaffolding that can be detected in discrete conversational turns: engaging the novice's interest, guiding and directing the engaged student, and actions taken at critical decision points during the scaffolding process. Teacher and student may proceed directly from engagement to procedural features and

back again with or without encountering critical decision points. The procedural features category includes both teacher procedures and student responses. The relationship between these features is a fluid relationship between the teacher procedures and student responses. Either the teacher or the student may initiate specific procedures or responses at any point during the scaffolded interaction. The fourth category involves qualities or characteristics of interaction. The features of ownership, collaboration, and reciprocity are potentially quantifiable within conversational turns, but they also highlight the pervasive characteristics or qualities of an entire interaction. Pumping and prompting are methods of elicitation that teachers can use to engage a novice's interest, but these features are also characteristic of critical decision points at which teachers often choose to either reengage the student or provide directive instruction. The remaining cross-category features, connecting procedural features with critical decision points are procedural in nature but can be characterized as having significant utility at critical decision points.

Engaging the Novice's Interest

One category of discrete features of scaffolding consists of features of scaffolding that aim to engage the novice's interest in the shared task. When the expert member of a dyad succeeds in scaffolding engaged learning, the student is intrinsically motivated, sees the learning environment and related activities as meaningful, and carries out active cognitive processes such as

creating, problem-solving, reasoning, decision-making, and evaluation (Kearsley & Shneiderman, 1998). The category of engaging the novice's interest includes the following eight features: recruiting, inviting student participation and contribution, verifying and clarifying, rarely offering directives, teacher does not judge writing, shared goal, balance of power, and metacognitive scaffolding. These are discussed in the following section.

Multiple scholars describe recruiting activities as one aspect of scaffolding. Recruiting entails the expert's attempting to engage a novice's interest and participation in a specific joint task. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) studied tutoring and problem-solving with a focus on preschool and elementary students and found successful tutors' initial steps to include recruiting the problem-solver's interest in and adherence to the requirements of the task. Recruiting often required the tutors to operate with an "implicit theory of the learner's acts" (p. 99), suggesting to the tutee that the tutor could effectively guide him or her to successful completion of the task. Hogan and Pressley (1997) studied the dialogue in a sixth-grade science classroom and found scaffolding activities such as pre-engagement – the teacher selecting an appropriate task prior to the interaction – to be important in the recruiting process. An appropriate task is one that anticipates student difficulties, needs, and strategies while providing sufficient challenge to facilitate an increase in student competence on a particular task. The establishment and communication of an appropriate task is important

because it balances the tension between support and challenge that keeps a student interested and moving forward. Recruiting, however, is not limited to the initial moments of scaffolding. The scaffolding process is recursive, and teachers are likely to return to features of scaffolding aimed at engaging the novice's interest throughout a scaffolding interaction.

Roehler and Cantlon (1997) studied teacher-student interaction in tutoring sessions with delayed readers – those children who are unable to read on a level commensurate with that of their successful age mates – and found that teachers engaged in features of scaffolding similar to recruiting by inviting students to participate in activities such as contributing clues. In addition to recruiting their interest in the completion of a shared task, inviting student participation includes the invitation for active participation, which appears to skew the balance of support and challenge toward the teacher and challenging the student to act prior to the teacher's recruitment of his or her interest. An example might be asking a delayed reader to read a passage at a higher reading level than their current competence. The student may decline, but the invitation may help him to see that he is up to the challenge. The same is true for a student contributing clues. The student's current competence may not extend to completion of a full task, but his or her contribution of clues may serve to engage his or her more active participation.

Roehler and Cantlon (1997) also found that tutors continually work to engage students by verifying student participation and clarifying student understanding. Verifying student participation might include phrases such as "How would you proceed from here?" Clarifying student understanding might involve phrases such as "What words would you used to describe the concept we just discussed?" Both of these types of phrases use elicitation to engage the student in demonstrating their participation and understanding.

Inherent to the idea of engaging a student's interest and participation is a shared goal (Hogan, 1997) between teacher and student. The goal may be a simple as understanding the correct use of punctuation or as complex as facilitating a student's increased competence in academic writing. In the present study, the implicit shared goal is presumed to have been the advancement of student competence in academic writing. For individual conferences, however, the shared goal may have been a clearer understanding of audience and context for a particular essay. A shared goal is important to keeping the student engaged in the process.

One shared characteristic of all features in the engagement category is the idea of invitation or elicitation. Lepper, Drake, and O'Donnell-Johnson (1997), in their study of experienced tutors working with elementary school students in mathematics, found that effective tutors rarely provide pure or direct instruction or specific demonstration of how a problem should be resolved, preferring asking to telling and offering roughly 5% of their total

remarks in the form of directions. Hogan and Pressley (1997) suggest that the same is true for teacher response to student writing at the elementary level and that teachers should not judge, but instead invite student participation, when responding to student writing.

The shared characteristic of invitation or elicitation, and indeed the entire category of engagement, is supported by one of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theoretical developmental criteria, balance of power, a feature of scaffolding that recognizes an imbalance in the power relationship between teacher and student and works to mitigate that imbalance in favor of the student. Engaging the student in the process works to mitigate that imbalance by offering the student what Langer and Applebee (1986) assert is a requirement of instructional scaffolding – that students share a sense of authority and a sense of purposefulness in the task.

Hannafin, Land, and Oliver (1999), in describing scaffolding that occurs within Open Learning Environments (OLEs), suggest that scaffolding is divisible by mechanisms, the methods or procedures through which scaffolding is provided, and functions, the purposes served by the scaffolding. Of four types of scaffolding these authors delineate, all of which will be discussed within this review, metacognitive scaffolding most closely aligns itself with the category of features of scaffolding that aim to engage the novice in the joint task. Metacognitive scaffolding functions as a guide for learners as to ways to consider a problem under study as well as potential

strategies to consider. The characteristics of this type of scaffolding emphasize student efforts to plan ahead and regulate their own progress, integral parts of the active cognitive processes involved that characterize engaged learning and the engagement category of scaffolding used in the present study.

Guiding and Directing the Engaged Student

A second, extensive category of discrete features of scaffolding consists of activities and procedures of both the expert and the novice that channel engagement into learning. For scaffolding to occur, the student must be engaged in the process, but the process itself must also consist of predictable actions that are undertaken by the teacher and learner to enable the learner to progress toward appropriation of the expertise that characterizes a given community of practice. A crucial distinction between the engagement category and the procedural category is the element of guidance. The procedural category, because it includes activities through which a teacher guides and directs an engaged student, involves less invitation and more direction. The teacher typically selects appropriate procedures or activities with which to channel engagement into learning. The student typically responds through a similar set of appropriate procedures or activities. The resulting, largely teacher-initiated interaction characterizes the procedures and activities aimed at channeling student engagement into learning. Lepper, Drake, and O'Donnell-Johnson (1997) studied experienced tutors

working with elementary school students in mathematics and found that the more successful tutors remained firmly in charge of the tutoring sessions, initiating at least 90% of the exchanges that occur between tutor and tutee. This finding illustrates the distinction between the features of scaffolding aimed at engaging the novice's interest and the features of scaffolding and aimed at channeling that interest into learning.

Lepper, Drake, and O'Donnell-Johnson (1997) also found that effective tutoring sessions seem to share a fairly predictable structure involving a progression of increasingly difficult problems for solution by the tutee. This finding exemplifies the balance between support and challenge characteristic of scaffolding. The student learns to rely on the predictable structure but remains engaged because of the progression of difficulty.

Roehler and Cantlon (1997) studied elementary school children and found that, in addition to predictable structure, students anticipated that teachers would offer explanations that were attuned to the students' emerging understandings. These explanations helped students understand what was being learned as well as why, when, and how the students would use what they had learned. Offering explanations, then, served to contextualize new knowledge as the tasks got progressively more difficult.

A similar procedure or activity involves modeling solutions and behaviors associated with specific tasks, helping students to understand how they should think, feel, or act in response to tasks and learning situations

(Roehler & Cantlon, 1997). In their study of children's attempts at building three-dimensional structures with blocks, Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) found that modeling might also include presenting an ideal version of the completed task, describing for the learner what the task, or finished block structure, should look like when it's finished.

Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) also found that two other procedural features could characterize scaffolding intended to channel an engaged student and learning. The first of these involves the teacher "reducing the number of constituent acts to reach solution" (p. 98). Consider a scenario during which a small child initially considers the assemblage of a 100-piece puzzle to be a daunting task but a five-piece puzzle, appropriate to the child's age and competence, a challenging but manageable goal. Though Wood and his colleagues didn't use the puzzle analogy, they described a scenario in which the tutor reduced the task to a size considered manageable by the learner, allowing the learner to achieve and demonstrate competence at levels he or she could manage.

The second of Wood and his colleagues' procedural features of scaffolding, similarly defined by Hogan and Pressley (1997), involved the presence and actions of the teacher aimed at controlling the frustration of the learner. Wood and his colleagues suggested that the learner felt less frustration and task-related stress simply because the tutor was present. They suggested further, however, that teachers' efforts such as comments

that enable a student to "save face" following errors – i.e., "That was a tough one. I had trouble with that one as well" – kept the learner engaged and the learning on track.

Hogan and Pressley (1997), in their study of dialogue in sixth-grade science classrooms, found that teacher procedures also include three activities designed to channel student engagement in to student learning. The first of these, actively diagnosing the needs of the learner, required an awareness of the learner as well as the specific content area of the task. The key activity of this feature involved assessing the learner's current level of competence with regard to a specific task and comparing that level of competence with an external standard for learner growth in a particular task. The second of Hogan and Pressley's procedures, providing tailored assistance, took the form of questioning, direct instruction, or other verbal acts through which the teacher "adjusts the scaffolding to the student's needs" (p. 83). This procedure allowed teachers to address specific student needs and may have included phrases such as "Let's go back to your previous question and work from that point forward." The third of Hogan and Pressley's procedures, giving feedback, allowed teachers to address general relationships between progress and behaviors that lead students to regulate their own progress. This type of feedback included distinguishing between the learner's performance and an established ideal. Phrases typical of this

procedure might have included "You're doing a great job of talking through your argument. Let's work on getting it on paper."

Two of Hannafin, Land, and Oliver's (1999) theoretical classifications of scaffolding qualify as being discrete features of scaffolding that channel than novice's engagement in the shared task into learning. The first of these, procedural scaffolds, assists learners in utilizing available features and functions associated with specific tasks. Procedural scaffolds also clarify for learners how they might return to a specific point in the task solution process or employ specific tools. Procedural scaffolds are characterized by activities, similar to the other activities within the teacher procedures category of features aimed at channeling student engagement in the learning. The second of Hannafin, Land, and Oliver's classifications, conceptual scaffolds, assist learners in considering specific elements of a task which is defined, and therefore predictable. In the present study, for example, the rhetorical purpose of each particular essay might be viewed as a concept. Students are expected, as a part of the freshman composition class, to explore the concept of a problem-solution essay by presenting, in writing, a problem and a solution. This is a defined task, imposed externally by the freshman composition class. Conceptual scaffolds anticipate the demands of particular concepts, such as the demands faced by students as they attempt to complete a problem-solution essay. Mechanisms for conceptual scaffolds include the

recommendation of particular tools at specific points during problem solving, including the provision of hints and prompts.

Hung (1999) adapted Polanyi's (1964) theoretical characterization of teacher and student interaction within the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to study novice-expert interaction between a dentist, a dental assistant, and a high school apprentice. Polanyi theorized and Hung concluded that teachers and students engaged in a predictable set of related procedures. Teachers used scaffolding, modeling, and coaching to facilitate student progress on specific tasks. In turn, students responded by submitting, mirroring, and constructing. These features of scaffolding were reviewed in greater detail earlier in this chapter, but they are reconsidered here because they demonstrate the predictable nature of the procedural category of features of scaffolding.

Most of the features of scaffolding that channel engagement into learning are teacher-driven. Student actions that channel engagement into learning are, however, also important. These student-driven the procedures of scaffolding relate to the activity of "constructing," described in the previous paragraph. Langer and Applebee (1986) theorize that one component of instructional scaffolding is internalization. Internalization suggests that, as student competence with particular tasks increases, control of the interaction or subsequent interactions related to that task shifts in favor of the student. As students internalize the support structures with increased competence,

the external supports offered by the teacher are removed, and the student is allowed to complete related tasks without assistance. Hogan and Pressley (1997) found a critical element of scaffolding to be assisting internalization, independence, and generalization to other contexts – helping learners to use their increasing competence on new tasks with greater independence. Teachers offer this assistance by helping students become increasingly aware of task-related signals that call for certain strategies. Increased student awareness of these signals and students' competent implementation of appropriate strategies help students become less dependent on extrinsic teacher guidance.

Essential to this internalization and constructing process, however, is the opportunity for the learner to demonstrate comprehension. Lepper, Drake, and O'Donnell-Johnson (1997) studied elementary school students' interactions with mathematics tutors and found that the most effective tutors typically paused after a problem had been successfully solved to reflect, in collaboration with the student, on the process involved in solving the problem. This reflective pause offered students the opportunity to demonstrate comprehension with their responses to the teacher's questions. Student demonstration of comprehension in this manner facilitated his or her internalization of important concepts and increased the student's competence, shifting control of subsequent interactions in favor of the student.

Critical Decisions Points

The third category of discrete features of scaffolding used in the present study includes actions taken by teachers and students at critical decision points during the scaffolding process. Initially, there is engagement of the learner, followed by procedures that facilitate learner progress toward completion of a specific task with the result that the learner appropriates expertise that characterizes a community of practice. As this process of engaging the novice in the shared task and predictable teacher, and also student, behaviors which channel engagement into learning occur, points arise at which re-engagement of the learner or evaluation of procedures to channel engagement into learning must be reconsidered and replaced. Scaffolded interactions may include many such critical decision points, and each critical decision point should be traceable to a single conversational turn: that point in the novice-expert interaction at which scaffolding continues on a successful course or scaffolding fails and is replaced by a different type of interaction.

The fourth of Hannafin, Land, and Oliver's (1999) theoretical classifications, strategic scaffolding, is closely aligned to the critical decision points category of the present study. Strategic scaffolding functions as a guide for learners in analyzing and approaching learning tasks or problems, and the mechanisms used include suggesting alternative ways to approach a task as well as methods or procedures to be considered in completing a task.

Theoretically, strategic scaffolding facilitates a learner's acquisition of skills with which he or she can make critical strategic decisions about present and future tasks.

Critical decision points are typically identifiable at the level of conversational turn. Either a teacher comment or a student comment can precipitate a critical decision point. In one scenario, the teacher could say to the student, "How could you create an effective argument for this particular point?" If the student either doesn't respond or offers a limited response such as, "I don't know," the teacher faces a choice. Her options include offering directive instruction, rephrasing the question in hopes of generating a student response, or choosing a different line of inquiry that might engage the student more effectively in the process. In a second scenario, the student could say to the teacher, "I need to work on the argument I'm trying to make for this particular point." The teacher again faces a critical decision point. She could respond with directive instructions on how to structure an effective argument, or she could elicit more information from the student with an open-ended questions such as, "Tell me more about the argument you're trying to make." Critical decision points, then, represent opportunities for teachers to revert to projection models of interaction characterized by teacher-directed instruction or to proceed with scaffolded interaction characterized by channeling student engagement into learning.

Qualities or Characteristics of Interaction

The features in this category are pervasive and require larger amounts of transcribed interaction – multiple turns or even entire conference transcripts – to identify. These three features, appropriateness, structure, and affective relations, help to characterize the overall "feeling" or texture of the scaffolded interaction.

The first of these three features, appropriateness (Hogan & Pressley, 1997; Langer & Applebee, 1986), stipulates that instruction builds on existing learner skills while helping the learner complete tasks he couldn't complete on his own. That is, the scaffolding exploits the learner's current competence while at the same time facilitating the learner's increased competence and progress toward a goal shared by teacher and learner. To judge the appropriateness of specific scaffolded interaction, one's exposure to teacher and learner – or the data that represents them – would necessarily be longer than a single conversational turn.

A firm and predictable structure (Lepper et al., 1997) is also an important quality and one that requires more than a single conversational turn to identify. Lepper and his colleagues found, in their study of expert tutors in an elementary school mathematics class, that a firm and predictable structure was largely teacher initiated, and that these expert tutors rarely offered purely directive instruction. They also found that expert tutors working in a predictable structure enabled the tutee to demonstrate

comprehension before solving a subsequent problem. The predictable structure of elicitation and student engagement that characterized these conferences, Lepper and his colleagues suggest, fortified learners' ability to engage in the learning process.

Affective relations – the inevitability that participants in role-influenced, dyadic interaction will develop more pronounced feelings toward one another, whether these feelings are mutually positive, mutually negative, ambivalent, or asymmetrical (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) – is another quality that is measured over the course of an entire conference, if not an entire semester. The affective relations between novice and expert are different from the expert's or the novice's decision at a critical point to revise some way of engaging the novice or of channeling the novice's engagement into learning. Although the decision at a critical decision point to revise what feature of scaffolding is in use could be reducible to a single conversational turn, the affective feature of scaffolding accrues over longer stands of time and has effects across multiple exchanges between the novice and the expert. Positive affect relations between teacher and learner will likely facilitate a teacher's attempts to engage the learner initially and at critical decision points. Negative feelings between the teacher and learner are likely to have the opposite effect (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The qualities or characteristics of interaction, while they require a larger data sample to discern, provide a rich context for the array of discrete

types of scaffolding that engage the novice, channel the novice's engagement into learning, and replace the feature of scaffolding that is in use at a critical decision point, consequently re-engaging the novice or shifting the novice from a failed to a successful channeling of the novice's engagement into learning..

Features that Cross Categories

As mentioned above, 10 features of scaffolding cross these four categories. Five of these 10 cross-categorical types of scaffolding are common to the category of discrete procedures to channel engagement into learning and the category of the discrete feature of scaffolding of recognizing a critical decision point during scaffolding and substituting a more effective for a less effective feature of scaffolding. Three of these features wed the category of discrete features of scaffolding that engage the novice's interest with the category of pervasive qualities or characteristics of interaction that constitute or contribute to scaffolding. The remaining two cross-categorical features of scaffolding apply to both the category of discrete features of scaffolding that aim to engage the novice in the shared task and the discrete feature of recognizing a critical decision point during scaffolding and substituting a more effective for a less effective feature of scaffolding.

Five features of scaffolding bridge the category of discrete procedures to channel engagement into learning and the category of the discrete feature of scaffolding of recognizing a critical decision point during scaffolding and

substituting more effective for a less effective feature of scaffolding. These features are marking critical features of the task, maintaining the direction of the learner, balancing teacher attention to the learner's cognitive and affective domains, splicing, and hinting.

Wood and his colleagues (1976) studied the efforts of children to build three-dimensional structures with the assistance of a tutor and found that one activity of a tutor during such a scaffolded interaction is marking critical features of a particular task. These authors found that a tutor, through a variety of means, highlights certain features of a task that he or she considers relevant, illuminating discrepancies between what the child has produced and what the tutor considers to be a correct solution to the task. A tutor's mark of critical features also potentially creates a critical decision point. In writing instruction, for example, a teacher's decision to mark every instance of grammatical and mechanical error in what was, admittedly, a poorly written paper might focus that student's attention only on grammatical and mechanical issues in her writing since that appeared to be, from the student's perspective, what the teacher values the most. Scaffolding procedures that addressed issues other than grammatical mechanical errors might prove confusing to the student, prompting the student to disengage. This tension between student engagement and disengagement enables a tutor's marking of critical features of a task to be viewed as an activity

designed to either channel engagement into learning or to negotiate a critical decision point.

Maintaining the direction of the learner also represents a critical decision point for reasons similar to those in the previous paragraph. Hogan and Pressley (1997) studied interactions in a sixth-grade science classroom and found a core element of scaffolding to be maintaining pursuit of the goal. These authors found that the more complex a task was the more assistance a student required to remain focused on the task and, further, that this assistance included the use of teacher elicitations for clarification and teacher praise for encouragement. Wood and his colleagues found that without tutors' efforts to keep learners in pursuit of a particular objective, learners lagged behind and allowed their attention to wander to other aims. These authors found that maintaining the direction of the learner involved keeping the child focused on the task as well as keeping the child motivated to complete the task. If, for example, the learner fails to make a connection between the teacher's chosen scaffolding procedure and the shared goal, the student might not only disengage but be reluctant to reengage as well. This possibility fortifies the idea that maintaining the direction of the learner can be characterized as an activity designed to channel engagement into learning or to facilitate negotiation of a critical decision point.

Lepper, Drake, and O'Donnell-Johnson (1997) found in their study of experienced tutors in elementary mathematics classes that tutors' efforts to

balance their attention to the cognitive and affective domains of their students influenced the decisions tutors made. These authors found that the tutors' conceptions of the students' understandings, or cognitive model, largely determined their responses to students, but that their motivational goals for the students' confidence, sense of being challenged, curiosity, and sense of being in control of their own learning also affected their responses. These authors concluded that the most effective tutors balanced their attention to both domains. Consider a scenario in which a tutor decides to focus more intently on the cognitive domain with less emphasis on the affective domain. The student might discount the possibility of any emotional connection between herself and the tutor and, consequently, might disengage from the scaffolding process. The same could be true in a scenario characterized by an imbalance in favor of the affective domain, as is the case when unwarranted praise is offered to and recognized by the student. Either way, a teacher's balanced attention to both a learner's cognitive and affective domains, activities designed to channel student engagement into learning, can also affect a teacher's ability to negotiate critical points.

The fourth and fifth of these interconnected features are described by Graesser, Bowers, Hacker, and Person (1997), who studied 66 tutoring sessions at the secondary and college level to better understand why unskilled tutors (naturalistic tutoring) are effective – measured by their ability to promote learning gains in their students when specific skills and

knowledge need to be acquired – despite a lack of training and even a lack of content area knowledge. Their findings differentiated between those pedagogical components that rarely occur in naturalistic tutoring and those that did occur in their samples of naturalistic tutoring. Graesser and his co-authors identified two features of scaffolding that qualify both as discrete features of scaffolding that channel the novice's engagement into learning and as the discrete feature of scaffolding of substituting a more effective form of scaffolding for a less effective form at a critical decision point during a novice-expert work session. Splicing describes instances when the tutor detects an error and interjects or splices in the correct answer. Hinting describes instances when the tutor supplies a partially correct answer to evoke more precise information from a student. Both of these cross-categorical features of scaffolding certainly qualify as ways an expert could channel a novice's engagement in a joint task into learning. There is a point, however, when the teacher must decide to splice or hint as a part of his or her scaffolding procedure with a particular student, understanding that providing the directive or answer might prompt the student to disengage from the scaffolding process, if only because he or she assumes the teacher will eventually simply provide the correct answers. Splicing and hinting, therefore, are procedural features that typically manifest themselves at critical decision points in the scaffolding process.

Two further features of scaffolding identified by Graesser et al. (1997), pumping and prompting, fit both the category of engaging the novice's interest in a joint task and the category of substituting a more effective form of scaffolding for a less effective form at a critical decision point during a novice-expert work session. Pumping describes teacher comments that consist of neutral feedback or explicit requests for more information. Prompting describes teacher comments that provide a student with a rich context in hopes that the student will fill in a missing word or phrase. Instead of pumping or prompting, teachers at critical decision points could choose to initiate a different scaffolding procedure or to simply provide the correct answer. Pumping and prompting offer a teacher an opportunity to reengage a student at a critical decision point and, for that reason, exemplify the type of engagement strategies that often manifest themselves at critical decision points in the scaffolding process.

Bridging the engagement category and the qualities or characteristics of the interaction category are three features of scaffolding: ownership, collaboration, and reciprocity. Considered part of the engagement process, these three features could be discernible within single conversational turns. More likely considered qualities or characteristics of larger interactions, however, these features contribute to the rich context offered by that category.

Langer and Applebee (1986) theorize that ownership, a student's sense of authority and sense of purposefulness in a task, is an important component of effective scaffolding. Ownership, these authors suggest, is achieved when students recognize the point of a task and proceed with a focus on what is being accomplished through that task, motivated by forces other than simple obedience to the teacher's requirements. Langer and Applebee's conception of ownership is similar to two features in the engagement category, shared goal and balance of power. Essential to ownership is the learner's recognition of her authority and demonstration of her belief that the task is appropriate and will facilitate her progress toward the shared goal of teacher and learner. The complexity of this confluence of realizations is not likely to be discerned in single conversational turns but more likely will emerge as a feeling gleaned from an entire conversation or multiple conversations.

The same is true for collaboration, which Hogan and Pressley (1997), in introducing their concept of scaffolding, characterize as "teacher and student acting as conversational partners" (p. 74). These authors theorize further that collaboration and scaffolding ideally involve dialogue, characterized by equal contributions by teacher and student during which the student is not a passive receiver of cultural knowledge, to expand ideas and move students toward deeper understanding. Dialogue is essential to collaboration, as is a sense of shared ownership and purposefulness.

Reciprocity – the inevitability and extent to which the actions of Person A will affect Person B and vice versa through their roles during interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) – is a feature of scaffolding that is even more difficult to identify. Nevertheless, the presence or absence of reciprocity, once discerned, can highlight qualities or characteristics of interaction that might inform a teacher's efforts to engage and scaffold a learner. Nystrand, Gamoran, and Carbonaro (1998) operationalized reciprocal roles as mutually dependent because the role of one entails the role of the other. Nystrand and his colleagues theorized that reciprocal roles during student-teacher interaction result in the following series of events: the adult or expert role recedes as the child or novice role expands. Nystrand and his colleagues concluded from their study of student-teacher interactions in ninth-grade English and social studies classrooms that learning environments are distinguished by the reciprocal, mutually dependent roles of their particular members – what one does has implications for what the other can do – and that learning space is shaped by the reciprocal roles of teacher and learner. Reciprocity in scaffolding, then, for Nystrand and his colleagues, is an integral element or component of scaffolding, facilitating if not requiring that the teacher's provision of scaffolding recede as the student's competence increases. The element or component of reciprocity also refines the scaffolding metaphor's implications for student development by

recasting development as the learner's expanding role enabled by the instructor's receding role in a joint activity.

In summary, scaffolding can be characterized as a recursive relationship among features of engagement, specific procedural strategies, critical decision points that arise during interaction, and qualities or characteristics of that interaction. Collectively, these features represent the theoretical scholarship and empirical research on novice-expert interaction.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze the oral interactions during individual writing conferences between a freshman composition instructor and three of her students to identify patterns of interaction that have implications for student academic writing achievement. Specifically, I sought to compare the features of scaffolding described in current literature on composition studies with actual scaffolding discerned from transcribed teacher-student writing conferences. Merriam (1998) identifies as the key philosophical assumption of qualitative research the "view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 6). The writing conference is an instance of this social interaction through which individuals, both teachers and students, construct reality and make sense of their world. This connection between the purpose of my study and the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research contributed to my selection of qualitative methodology for the study. Additionally, the nature of qualitative research offers a unique perspective on human interaction

through diverse data sources and analysis techniques enveloped in a specific context. As Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, "Qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts" (p. 1). The qualitative researcher offers a look at the "big picture" that can later facilitate closer examination of specific details.

Qualitative researchers utilize inductive research strategies for data collection and analysis that focus on ordinary phenomena occurring in natural settings. The qualitative researcher bases analyses on events and behaviors that are observed within a specific context. The influences of that context are taken into account to develop the "thick descriptions" (Merriam, 1998) that characterize qualitative research. These thick descriptions substantiate the qualitative researcher's efforts to understand and describe meaning from the participant's perspective rather than the researcher's perspective.

A defining characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher is the main instrument for data collection and analysis. As Merriam (1998) suggests, "Data are mediated through this human instrument, the researcher, rather than through some inanimate inventory, questionnaire, or computer" (p.7). Therefore, the connection between the researcher and the research is fundamental and significant. Having taught writing and English language arts at the secondary and college level, I have pursued an instruction mechanism for teaching writing that could be tailored to the

needs of individual students but offered within the time and structural constraints of a classroom or conference setting. I have come to believe that the interactions between students and teachers, both in the classroom and in writing conferences, have implications for the effectiveness and efficiency of writing instruction. Scaffolding is an important type of interaction between students and teachers, and qualitative research methods provide a way of systematically examining that type of interaction.

Research Design

Merriam (1998) describes case study research as one type of qualitative inquiry in which researchers concentrate on a single phenomenon or entity in an attempt to examine, using holistic description and explanation, the interaction of significant characteristics of that phenomenon. Yin (2003) suggests further that the case study is a particularly appropriate research design when the phenomenon seems inseparable from its context. The student-teacher interaction that characterizes a writing conference is a phenomenon that is inseparable from the setting of the freshman composition course. The comparative case study model (multi-case design) framed this study (Merriam, 1998). Using the comparative case study model, participants are selected based on a range of similar or dissimilar characteristics that are perceived as valuable and critical to the research design. Each case is explored individually, and the group collectively, in hopes of subsequently understanding an even larger group of cases within

that range of characteristics. Data are collected through a variety of methods, including observation, interview, and collection of artifacts, and these data are then analyzed to "develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data-gathering" (Merriam, 1998, p. 38). While a multi-case design arguably enhances the external validity or generalizability of a study's findings (Merriam, 1998), this study is limited in that regard because it draws from a single class of freshman composition students. Therefore, this study is not presented as generalizable beyond that class.

The qualitative researcher identifies and assumes a position or stance on a continuum of observer to participant while collecting data, and later while analyzing that data, to provide the reader with a context from which to interpret the data. Citing Gold's (1958) typology, Merriam (1998) describes four possible stances including complete participant, participant as observer, observer-as-participant, and complete observer. For the purposes of this study, I assumed an observer as participant stance because, while I may have participated to a small extent in class and conference activities, my role was primarily that of observer.

Research Site and Participants

I selected the site and participants for this study using purposeful sampling, a qualitative sampling technique wherein settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in search of important information that

cannot be obtained as well from other sources. Maxwell (1996) describes two goals for this type of sampling: homogeneity and heterogeneity. The first of these is the achievement of a representative or typical sample that provides confidence that the conclusions adequately represent the population under investigation. The second goal is to ensure that the conclusions adequately represent the entire range of variation.

The Research Site

This section provides a description of the research site including the philosophies and objectives of the university English Department. At the large, southeastern, land-grant university where this study took place, student enrollment is approximately 25,000. The English Department is the largest department on campus, primarily because of a high number of English classes required by the university's core curriculum. The English Department's *Student Guidelines for ENGL 1100 and ENGL 1120* (2002-2003) sets the following objectives for students who complete the English Composition II class:

- The students should be able to write, for the educated public, an organized essay of about 3-5 pages that develops and supports a claim of some kind, using standard edited American English.
- The students should be able to read and critically evaluate nonfiction written texts including grasping the argument, evaluating its support,

and making some judgment about the author's use of rhetorical resources.

- The students should be able to conduct library and Internet research and write at least one substantial, documented essay that incorporates their research. (p. 9)

The *Guidelines* further stipulate that "the total amount of graded writing will come to between 3500 and 4500 words," (p. 11) and that the writing will consist of the following three essay types:

- An evaluation of sources essay (Essay 1)
- A position essay that is supported by student research (Essay 2)
- A problem-solution essay, also supported by student research (Essay 3)

In addition to the *Guidelines*, required texts for the course are *Reading Critically/Writing Well* (Axelrod & Cooper, 2002) and *The New Century Handbook* (Hult & Huclin, 2001). In her initial review of the course syllabus for the class where this study took place, the instructor characterized these texts primarily as teaching tools to provide examples and fuel discussions.

All the class observations took place in one of two scheduled classrooms. The second classroom, a computer lab, was used each Wednesday, providing a setting for both Internet research and electronic journaling. The students, including the twelve participants, met for their scheduled class on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at 8:00. A review of the field notes I made during these class observations suggests that

much of the class time was spent in whole-class discussion of the essay in progress. My field notes further suggest that the foci of the instructor's comments during these discussions, accounting for almost two-thirds of the whole-class discussions characterized in my field notes, were three components of writing: audience, context, and self-presentation. The instructor defined each of these three terms orally during multiple class discussions and reinforced these definitions in conference dialogue. She defined audience as the intended reader, the person to whom the writer was trying to convey a message or information. She defined context as the vehicle through which that information might be conveyed. This included the format of the writing (e.g. letter, article, webpage) as well as the point of publication (e.g. magazine, newspaper, website). Self-presentation was defined as the style, tone or perspective from which the writer intended to deliver the information. Was the writer, for example, purporting to be an authority, an interested consumer, or an advocate for change? The instructor's comments explicitly referred to audience, context, and self-presentation, and each of the students' essays had to be prefaced with an explication of these three elements of the essay. These three foci extended into peer review as well, forming a part of the teacher-provided criteria for review of classmates' essays.

Conferences between the instructor and participating students took place in the classroom or in the instructor's office. Of the 11 conferences

between the instructor and the participants, 8 could be characterized by the student participants beginning the conference with questions or comments related to their writing, forming at least a basic agenda for discussion and/or revision. The remaining three conferences were scheduled by the instructor to follow up with specific issues. Of the 11 conferences, 7 began with the instructor's inquiry about the student's intended audience, context, and self-presentation, suggesting that the conferences were largely efforts to help the participants develop a sense or mindfulness of these three elements. The conferences typically lasted about 20 minutes and were positioned in the writing process between the peer review of the first draft and final revision. The three participating students who are the subjects of case studies attended one or two conferences per paper.

The interviews were conducted in my campus office in the same building where the classes were held and through electronic mail. The goal for the interviews was to guide students through a discussion of their writing process to determine how the conference interaction had affected the student writer's inventing and composing processes as revealed in the subsequent draft. The interviews also provided an opportunity to get to know the participants, their stories, and some of their feelings about writing. The first interview included becoming acquainted and the second two interviews focused entirely on their writing processes. Different protocols (see Appendix B) were used for each of the three interviews.

The Instructor Participant

I began my search for a teacher participant by working with the English department and the director of the composition program, along with other central faculty members with an interest in this area of research, to identify a teaching assistant or instructor who was scheduled to teach spring semester 2003 and who met three primary needs: 1) she had an interest in assessment and the research surrounding it; 2) she would welcome an observer to attend her classes and conferences, collecting field notes and copies of marked student drafts, and interviewing her students about her teaching and assessment practices; and 3) she would be willing to participate in the study, including participating in interviewing, planning and strategy sessions and reviewing results. The instructor for this study, Ms. Smith (pseudonym), was a graduate teaching assistant with over seven years experience working with student writers in writing centers and teaching composition, business writing, and Great Books. Ms. Smith revealed in our initial interview that her practice was guided by a combination of that "experience and composition theory and current writing center research together with departmental guidelines and grading criteria."

Ms. Smith summarized her plans for the beginning of the semester in our initial interview, saying that she began each semester by engaging the students in a whole-class conversation about the language and expectations of the English department's assessment criteria. She followed up by using

the same language in her formative feedback, tying her criticism and recommendations directly to the grading criteria and using the same criteria to guide her responses to grade disputes. Ms. Smith said in our initial interview that she mixed written and oral feedback to meet individual student needs. Typically, however, she said she used written comments to deliver more general ideas and relied on conference dialogue to provide greater specificity. For example, my examination of her written comments on student papers revealed that Ms. Smith frequently included broad written commentary on student papers about awareness of audience, context, and self-presentation. This commentary included phrases such as "Audience?" in the margins as well as "You need to be more specific in your choice of context" in the terminal comments. In conjunction with the written comments, she focused on these three concepts in general classroom discourse throughout the early part of the semester. In conference, she followed those comments with greater detail, including specific suggestions for these components drawn from the student's ideas and the conference discourse. Typical supporting conference dialogue might be characterized by the following excerpt from a conference with Hunter.

Smith: Who's your audience?

Hunter: It is people interested in harmful emissions and ways to cut them back.

Smith: I think you probably do. But you're going to have to dumb it down for us.

Hunter: That's what I was thinking. Not too technical. Make it fairly simple.

Smith: Um hum. I do think…because that will really define the problem. I'm just trying to write this down in my notes. Okay, one other thing I have for you. What is your context? Because that will help us to know how technical you need to be. If it's in *The Science of Vehicles*.com website, then you're really going to have to…you know what I mean?

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: What did you decide on?

Hunter: It's an article for a general automotive magazine…

Smith: Called what? It's got to be specific for this assignment, don't forget. And it's supposed to be one of your sources, if you can. Just so you'll be real familiar with it.

Hunter: Like a *Car and Driver* type magazine.

Smith: Okay.

Ms. Smith's general classroom discourse had included all of the requirements for audience and context, and her written comments on Hunter's initial draft

had included "Who's your audience for this?" In the conference excerpt above, though, it appears that she was able to more clearly stipulate those requirements if only because she was able to continue to provide Hunter with examples and responses in an interactive setting as they were negotiating what they mean by audience.

Ms. Smith said in our interview that her initial reading of student texts "looked for strengths and weaknesses in rhetorical elements such as clarity of thesis and supporting detail," and suggested that only much later in the process did she focus on mechanics and usage. In our interview, Ms. Smith said she "was much more likely to focus on the student's developing argument than on the formal conventions of the essay." A high percentage of her written comments on student drafts were global in nature, focusing on the rhetorical elements and arguments of the students' essays. A low percentage of her written comments on student drafts were local in nature, focused on grammatical and mechanical issues in the students' drafts. Based on her statements and a review of her written comments on students' initial drafts, Ms. Smith appeared to value global commentary more highly than local. She provided no formal, class-wide grammar instruction, choosing instead to address specific problems in conferences with individual students. The exceptions to this would be mini-lessons on specific grammatical or usage issues that arise from a large number of student papers. Citation procedures and the development of audience, context, and self-presentation were the

most common topics of the mini-lessons. To supplement conferences with individual students, she took notes during the conversations (as illustrated in the excerpt above) and gave that summary of topics discussed to the student.

Ms. Smith said in our interview that experience and research had taught her that "too much detail in written comments forced a narrow perspective on students," and they got bogged down in minutia. She repeatedly said to me through the course of my observations that she guarded fervently against controlling students' texts, as well, avoiding directive feedback. In fact, Ms. Smith apologized in conferences with Hunter for being too specific in her comments, though he expressed appreciation for her specificity.

The Student Participants

I recruited the case study participants from one of the participating instructor's sections of ENGL 1120, Freshman Composition II. At the beginning of spring semester 2003, I introduced myself to the class of 25 students and read the consent form outlining requirements, eligibility, purpose, and potential benefits to both the research and their participation. I answered questions concerning the research and/or students' participation while distributing the consent forms for students' review. All students received a consent form, and for those students under the age of 19 who chose to participate, I asked that they provide their parents' contact information (in a box provided at the bottom of the form), and I sent a consent form for

parental signature. There were 12 students, nearly fifty percent of the class, in the resulting pool of participants.

Of the original 12 participants 8 were male and 4 were female. All of the students were White and all were freshmen. There was little ethnic diversity in the class, and the only non-White student chose not to participate. While all of the female participants remained committed to the project to the very end, three of the males withdrew early in the process. One withdrew completely from the class; the other two chose only to withdraw from the project, citing time constraints. Of the remaining nine participants, four did not actively participate through the end of the course, and the data I collected from them was incomplete. Three of the remaining five participants, chosen using purposeful sampling, are the subjects of the case studies that follow.

Lisa was a freshman majoring in nursing. Her participation in whole-class discussions, according to my field notes, was minimal. She appeared confident but hesitant to contribute. In conference dialogue with Ms. Smith, Lisa said that she attended a single-sex catholic high school in a large southeastern city, and this educational experience became a part of two of the three papers she wrote during Ms. Smith's class.

Hunter was a freshman and the consummate southern male student. He revealed in an interview that his vehicle of choice was a pickup truck and that he planned to spend the summer vacation repairing heavy equipment for

the local tractor dealer. Our conversations led me to believe that he spent a good deal of time during the appropriate seasons hunting game of all varieties, and he approached his writing class in much the same way. He moved through the semester's class sessions, conferences, and writing assignments in a very quiet manner as if focusing on a target but proceeding toward it slowly and deliberately. Hunter was a good old boy who wanted to do what was necessary to complete the class, but he wasn't banking on a Rhodes Scholarship. These characterizations were also informed by my previous experience with Hunter, a former student from my days teaching high school English.

Ellen was a freshman and a player on the university's women's basketball team. She was also an international student for whom American English was almost a second language. A native of Australia, Ellen was very conscious of the differences between the two languages. Ellen said in one of interviews that she really wanted to do everything possible to make an *A* in the class. This type of comment was pervasive in our interviews and in her interactions with Ms. Smith, and Ellen appeared to be the most motivated and aggressive of the three participating students.

No rewards or inducements to participate were offered to potential volunteers. Participants were treated in strict accordance with federal, state, and institutional research ethics and laws.

Data Collection

Data collection began in January 2003 and concluded in May 2003. While the focus of my research was the conference interactions, I gathered data from other relevant sources to enhance my ability to offer rich descriptions of the conference interactions. I drew from each of these data sources while writing the case studies. I gathered data using systematic procedures, including classroom observations, interviews, conference observations, collection of artifacts, and other non-intrusive measures. During classroom observations I collected data through the use of field notes. During conference observations and interviews I collected data through the use of field notes and audio recordings.

Classroom Observations

I observed every class session to create a description of the class as a context for the study and to collect field notes outlining the general feedback provided to the class as a whole. I met with the instructor after most class sessions to review class issues such as the calendar of lesson plans and due dates. We also discussed class that day and how she thought the lesson had been received. This debriefing served as a way of reviewing and extending my field notes.

Field Notes

During each classroom observation, I made handwritten field notes through which I tried to capture and render "a description of people, objects,

places, events, activities, and conversations" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 107). These field notes included diagrams of the physical classroom space and student choice of seating, perceptions of classroom tone and mood, important sections of conversations between students and teacher as well as those between students, and important concepts and ideas such as Ms. Smith's emphasis on audience, context, and self-presentation. In addition to recording specific information about participating students, I made an effort to record observations about nonparticipating students to explore possible distinctions between those who chose to volunteer and those who did not.

During each conference observation, I made handwritten field notes to capture important phrases, body language, distractions to conference momentum, and my own perception of the successes and failures of the conference. These field notes were well-suited to framing the recorded conference dialogue and its eventual transcription, and the ideas recorded while observing the writing conferences made it possible to create three-dimensional mental images of conferences during subsequent analysis.

Interviews

Though the final analysis included primarily writing conference transcripts, I used interview sessions with each participant from the very beginning to establish a personal relationship and provide an opportunity to debrief participants and inquire about their experiences during writing conferences. The interviews proved fruitful in the analysis process as well

because, as in the case with Lisa, background information provided during the interviews helped explain why or why not scaffolding was a prevalent type of interaction during individual conferences.

I met individually with each of the twelve student participants for a scheduled interview during each of three writing cycles that resulted in a different essay. The interview was conducted after the final draft of each writing assignment had been graded by the instructor and returned to the student. The structure and purpose of this interview was the construction of individual profiles that "examine literacy in particular local settings" (Daniell, 1999, p. 405). The questions that guided these interviews are appended, but the semi-structured nature of the interviews is best described as a guided conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), because the participants were encouraged to talk within areas of interest, and their responses were used to facilitate further probing into specific topics. The interviews with all twelve of the participants were taped and analyzed. The tapes of the five case studies were also transcribed for closer analysis. During each of the interviews, I also made field notes of responses and reactions I thought noteworthy. After each of the interviews, I immediately made note of my initial thoughts and reactions to what I had heard, knowing that these memos or reflective field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) would be enhanced by the transcription and analysis process but certain that notes would also inform that process.

In addition to face-to-face interviews, I used email question and answer sessions with students to get ideas. I had intended to use that means of interaction from the very beginning but the participants initiated its use. From the beginning, participants made it clear that email was a medium with which they were comfortable. I sent an initial email to make sure that all of the participants had access to a computer and email, and all of them responded in a timely fashion and suggested that email was the best way to communicate with them. I used email as each draft was due to remind the participants to send me a copy. This method was helpful in coordinating interviews and conferences as well. I initially retained a hard copy and an electronic copy of all emails. I later culled from my data those emails that did not relate directly to the focus of the project.

The participating teacher also relied on email for the majority of her non-classroom communication with the participants. Near the beginning of the semester, a participant involved in athletics and traveling with the team sent an email to the instructor concerning a draft of the paper that was due during her absence. The resulting conversation, spread out over three days and a half dozen emails, was probably one of the more fruitful among the first round of conferences. Encouraged by that, I incorporated email into the interview process for a couple of students on the second round of interviews and used an email format exclusively on the third round. Since the participating teacher used email quite a bit, there was communication about

student writing in those emails. Those emails in which writing was discussed or feedback was offered were kept in both hard copy and electronic form and were considered data sources. Those emails in which feedback was not provided and writing not specifically discussed were culled from the data. The culled emails dealt mostly with administrative issues such as the scheduling of conferences and answering procedural questions about class deadlines and due dates.

Conference Observations

I observed each writing conference conducted between Ms. Smith and the participating students. While only one conference was required for each writing assignment, many of the participating students chose to engage Ms. Smith in conferences between the multiple drafts of each writing assignment. The writing conferences were typically held in the university's English Center, a quiet space with comfortable chairs and few distractions. I observed the conferences from a close proximity, and I was often included tangentially in the conversation.

Audio Recordings

I used a digital recorder to audiotape each conference and each interview. The digital recorder was very small and unobtrusive. This feature was important to minimize any potential disruption to the conference or interview. The recordings were later transcribed and compared with field

notes for detailed analysis. In this manner, the recordings became a primary data source.

Transcription of Audio Recordings

I transcribed all digital audio recordings as soon as possible after each interview or conference observation. I chose to personally transcribe all the audio recordings because it allowed me to become intimately familiar with the data. This choice also allowed me to compare the recorded and transcribed interactions against my own field notes of the same interactions. This provided an important crosscheck before and during data analysis.

For the initial transcripts, I transcribed the interactions as closely as possible to verbatim. These transcriptions included all conversations between teacher and student, regardless of the nature or content of that conversation. As this process continued, and as my initial analysis of the transcripts began, I chose to transcribe only those portions of the conversations where I felt teacher and student were "on task." At the same time, however, and I recognized the importance of the remaining verbal interaction to the developing social relationship between teacher and student, and I continued to note the presence of this interaction, using the term "chatter," to denote that type of verbal interaction.

Once the transcriptions were complete, I reviewed the digital recordings against those transcriptions, and also against my field notes, to

ensure that all pertinent interaction was transcribed in as much detail as possible.

Artifacts

Ms. Smith required that each draft be turned in with the final draft for each of the four writing assignments. Some of the twelve participants wrote as few as two drafts and some as many as nine. At the end of each of the four writing assignments, on the day the papers were to be returned to the students, I photocopied the collected set of drafts for each of the twelve participants to capture Ms. Smith's written comments on each of the drafts. In addition, I collected from each of the twelve participants an unmarked copy of each draft. These were collected electronically as email attachments. The marked drafts were then made available to each of the participants during our face-to-face interviews. The participants seldom referred to those drafts during the interviews. The participants did, however, refer accurately to the instructor's written comments. My assumption is that, because of the short length of the papers (2-4 pages) and the short period of time they had been working on them (2-3 weeks), students remembered exact words and phrases. The nature of the class also allowed similar topics to be carried over across multiple rhetorical assignments. The first assignment, an evaluation-of-sources paper was, in some cases, the beginning of and background for assignment two, a position paper, and some participating students even worked the same topic into the third assignment, a problem-solution paper.

So, for some, there was a level of familiarity with the facts and arguments in their papers that required no prompting.

Changes in Data Collection

During the data collection process, I made changes to the type of data collected as well as the manner in which some data were collected. For example, interview questions evolved as the semester progressed, and interview questions would often be influenced by general classroom discourse, previous interview responses, and my observations of student-teacher interaction in writing conferences. This is especially true for the final interview session, which allowed me the opportunity to tie up loose ends and explore issues with individual students that had surfaced through the semester.

Data Analysis

General Processes

As a beginning researcher, I followed Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) suggestion to "leave the more formal analysis until most of the data are in" (p. 158). After data collection was complete, data analysis was guided by three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Bishop, 1999; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Initially, I transcribed the audio recordings of writing conferences and interviews and checked these transcriptions against my field notes. The field notes added context to the transcriptions, for example, by offering insights

into possible connections between whole-class discussion topics and conference discussion topics.

A common topic for both transcriptions and field notes, and what emerged as a focus of Ms. Smith's teaching, was an emphasis on the concepts of audience, context, and self-presentation. The strong presence of these concepts in both classroom observation field notes and conference transcripts provided a context for Ms. Smith's opening questions such as "Who's your audience?" Throughout this crosschecking and all other analysis processes, I wrote memos to document my thoughts, reflections, and questions. One of these memos, for example, resulted from a student's revelation in a conference that a source he was using for his paper exploring the impact of the SUV was a website that asked the question "What would Jesus drive?" Curious about how this particular source might reflect his approach to the other papers he had to write for the class, I wrote a memo detailing my exploration of the website, my characterization of what appeared to be a diligent Christian perspective on most issues, and my prediction that his problem-solution essay might be interesting to read. The memo also included my own reflections on how my beliefs, my experiences, and maybe even my cynicism influenced my interpretation of his choice of sources and my eagerness to read his subsequent essays. These memos formed supplements to my field notes.

The freshman composition course under investigation required four writing assignments through the course of the semester. These writing assignments provided natural breaks in the data collection and analysis process. As each writing assignment concluded, I reviewed the conference tapes, post-conference notes, interview tapes, and written teacher comments for each of the participants, noted any trends, and returned to the memos from the previous sets of data to note any recurring elements. No data are included which might identify the participants. Names have been changed to conceal the participants' identities.

Initial Data Matrices

I developed and constructed data matrices (see Appendix C) for each writing conference to characterize key comments and responses that I felt best represented or typified the interactions within the conferences. To construct the data matrices, I read and re-read each conference transcript to reduce and display the data toward recognition of patterns emergent from the data. I underlined phrases and words that seemed important and noted my thoughts and ideas in the margins. One of the margin notes, for example, cited a pattern in Hunter's responses to Ms. Smith. Hunter replied most often with "Yes ma'am," and this pattern of affirmative response characterized his conferences to a small extent. From these selected phrases and margin notes, I chose the comments and responses that seemed to best characterize the conference as a whole. Using Microsoft Excel, I created a

spreadsheet that displayed these characteristic teacher comments alongside student responses and a separate spreadsheet that displayed characteristic student comments beside the corresponding teacher responses. Initially, these comments and responses were delineated only by whether I felt the tone of either the comment or the response was positive or negative. Positive responses were characterized by statements focusing on the strengths of the student's writing or efforts. An example from Ellen's third conference is Ms. Smith's positive statement, "Again, I'm so impressed that this has become so specific. That's something else I think that makes this paper really strong." Negative comments were characterized by statements reflecting weaknesses or areas needing improvement in the student's writing or efforts. An example from Lisa's first conference is Ms. Smith's negative statement, "For your position paper, I'm going to strongly suggest that your audience be people who do not agree with you so you've got somewhere to go with it."

The data matrices served several purposes, not the least of which was the reduction of the data under consideration to a manageable size, one sheet of legal-size paper, to facilitate a viewing of the data in one location (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additionally, however, the matrices allowed me to view teacher comments and student responses, as well as student comments and teacher responses, from a macro level, taking the conference as a whole and trying to characterize it in order to more effectively analyze it. Simple headings delineating comments and responses were used to separate

conversational turns so that patterns in comments or responses through an entire conference, viewed on a single page, might emerge.

The result was a collection of 27 data matrices from which a list of patterns emerged. These emerging patterns from the data formed an initial list of patterns (see Appendix D) that I then tested against the data matrices. These patterns included student requests for and teacher provisions of directive instruction, student perspectives on the purposes of a conference, characteristics of teacher-student interaction, instances of language conflicts and missed opportunities by the teacher or student to keep the conference on track , and possible connections between conference dialogue and student action.

To more completely understand the implications of these patterns and to supplement the initial code list of emerging patterns and themes, I revisited and outlined the relevant literature for this study, looking specifically for patterns and themes that the literature suggested or determined should or should not be present. This intensive review of the literature resulted in a supplemental code list (see Appendix E) that included specific characteristics of the novice-expert relationship, and other role-related behaviors, features typical of an effective conference, and the developmental implications of authority.

I wrote memos throughout this process, including the development of the data matrices, to capture my thoughts and ideas as they emerged from

this macro perspective. These memos record my thoughts on procedures, including what appeared to emerge as the greater efficiency of email as a conference medium. Additionally, these journal entries were case specific, focused on individual cases compared to the initial and supplemental code lists, including my thoughts on specific student comments that may not have characterized the conference but stood out nonetheless. An example of this was Ms. Smith's comment,

> This is in the early stage, and I would hate for you to walk away and make the changes that you thought we had talked about and it not be what I thought we had said. Because you know, we don't exactly talk the same language.

Hunter responded with his characteristic response, "Yes, ma'am," but the exchange did not necessarily characterize the entire conference. My memo, included as part of Appendix F, explores the significance of the comment. The memos also included, however, general observations and patterns that were noted across cases, such as the tendency for students to respond with limited, affirmative utterances but also to request and rely on directive instruction from Ms. Smith. An example of these memos is included as Appendix F.

As checkpoints for my research, I used reflexive questions (Glesne, 1999) similar to the following in the analysis process: Who and what is and is not being seen in the setting? Where is my attention focused during data

collection and/or analysis, and how does that focus affect the end result? Are there any contradictory pieces of data? Are there other sources of data that have not been consulted? These reflexive questions informed the emerging code list by illuminating themes or issues that defined code families or networks. They also forced me to question my own initial conclusions. I was convinced in the early stages of data analysis that all of the participants were engaged in some degree of consumerist behavior in the conference interaction with Ms. Smith. Contradictory pieces of data emerged, however, when I asked myself what else might be happening. Features of interaction consistent with other role dyads, mostly novice-expert, began to emerge.

Formalizing the Code List

These features of interaction formed my initial coding categories for analyzing the entire data set. Once the code list was assembled, I created code families, or networks of related codes, and articulated defining characteristics of each code. I then tested the code list by using Atlas.ti, qualitative research software, to code one conference transcript for each participating student. Through this process codes were eliminated from the code list, merged with other codes, or added to the code list to account for unforeseen patterns or characteristics within the data. A memo I wrote during this process illustrates my actions at this point.

"Participation/Contribution was merged with proactive student participation. Participation/Contribution only had one coded entry, and it became apparent

that Proactive Student Participation was more in line with what I was seeing." Similar memos reflect the merging and elimination of codes to refine the code list to a manageable size. The result was a final code list which was used to analyze the entire data set. The code list is attached as Appendix G and an excerpt from a sample coded transcript is attached as Appendix H.

The focus of the analysis to this point was to identify patterns in teacher-student interaction that emerged from the data. The patterns that emerged from the data suggested that the conference interactions between Ms. Smith and each of the participants included features from each of the role dyads. There was evidence that Ms. Smith, at different points in the conferences, enacted the role of "reader," "expert," and "provider." Likewise, each of the students responded in patterned ways associated with the corresponding roles of "writer," "novice," and "consumer." While features and behaviors associated with each of these role dyads were evident in each of the transcripts, no role dyad characterized an entire conference.

As expected, based on the literature, one pattern that emerged was a type of scaffolding characteristic of the novice-expert role dyad. Interactions characterized by what appeared to be scaffolding included teacher elicitation, student responses beyond a monosyllabic, affirmative utterance, and the use of current student competence as a starting point from which to begin instructional dialogue. I revisited my review of the literature on scaffolding to develop codes for specific features of scaffolding. This review first resulted

in a list of features of scaffolding (see Appendix I) that included what I considered to be general characteristics, essential elements, and specific features of scaffolding. The list of features prompted more focused analysis to identify instances of scaffolding that were readily discernible from other types of teacher-student interaction. To conduct this analysis, I re-examined all of the interactions from the larger data set that I had coded, using Atlas.ti, as either "novice-expert" or "scaffolding." I compared the coded interactions with the list of features of scaffolding to determine if a more specific definition of scaffolding would strengthen or weaken my claim the each interaction included scaffolding.

In most cases, my claim was weakened or eliminated, so I began with clean, uncoded transcripts and re-coded for scaffolding using the list of features as a rudimentary code list. Dialogue, verbal interaction involving an exchange of ideas or views, is an integral component of scaffolding as I discerned from this list of features. An uncommon occurrence within the conference transcriptions I analyzed, dialogue served as the primary unit of analysis for focused coding of the data for full and partial incidences of scaffolding.

To gather as many possible instances of scaffolding for the analysis, I used a broad definition of dialogue that included any conversational turns within any of the conferences that could be characterized by substantive participation by the student and Ms. Smith. I considered substantive student

participation any contributions to the conference conversation that extended beyond simple affirmative utterances. Excerpts in the conferences characterized by dialogue between Ms. Smith and each of the participants were then analyzed for evidence of each of the remaining features of scaffolding, moving from the general characteristics of scaffolding to the specific features of scaffolding. Because there were few incidences, I was able to return to each interaction and systematically look for each feature. I noted on a printed copy of the list of features (Appendix I) the presence or absence of each feature within each transcribed interaction and then reviewed the checklist of features that were present. This analysis resulted in a list of student-teacher interactions that potentially included scaffolding (see Appendix J). The interactions between Ms. Smith and each of the participants that form the list of potential scaffolded interactions was characterized by the presence of many of the features of scaffolding, both general and specific. A transcribed interaction did not emerge that could be characterized as illustrating all of the features of scaffolding on my list.

Peer Review and Final Analysis

With detailed analysis complete and a list of potential scaffolded interactions in hand, I conducted a peer review session by presenting my findings – at that point in the process – to a group of 10 fellow doctoral students and two qualitative researchers familiar with the literature on scaffolding. During the peer review process, I provided each peer reviewer a

copy of the list of features of scaffolding. I then used a PowerPoint presentation to introduce excerpts of transcribed interactions (see Appendix J) that potentially included scaffolding. In some instances I asked peer reviewers to identify the features of scaffolding they considered to be present in the selected excerpt. For the majority of the excerpts, I identified the features that I thought to be present and asked the peer reviewers to provide disconfirmatory analyses. The peer review process allowed me to refine my code definitions, most remarkably by applying a more stringent definition of dialogue that required that the student contribution to the exchange of ideas should have some impact on the conversation and the writing instruction. The peer review process also led me to significantly reduce – from 23 to 8 – the number of conference interactions that potentially included instances of scaffolding. This reduction resulted largely from the refinement of my initial broad definition of dialogue to a more focused definition based a peer reviewer's comment that substantive student dialogue should have some effect on the conference's ability to advance the student's competence in academic writing. The interactions that were removed from the final analysis were characterized by short student requests for directive instruction or interim evaluation of their essays in progress.

Following the peer review, I created new data matrices (see Appendix K) using Microsoft Excel to visibly display for comparison the actual instances of scaffolding discerned from transcribed conferences together with

the possible features of scaffolding presented in the literature. The initial manifestation of this final set of data matrices aligned specific features of scaffolding – derived from and delineated by sources within the literature on scaffolding that the list of features of scaffolding comprised – against each transcribed interaction thought to include scaffolding based on the feedback from the peer review. The display offered by the data matrices provided, among other things, the opportunity to visually compare the features of scaffolding described as possible in the foundational and empirical literature and the transcripts of actual conferences. To facilitate comparison of the actual transcripts with specific features by category, the matrices were configured as shown in Appendix K, aligning the features along the horizontal axis by category. This comparison, feature by feature, category by category, formed the final analysis of the data.

Final Descriptive Report

The final analysis of data resulted in material for a descriptive report. Using comparative case study guidelines (multi-case design) (Merriam, 1998), the report uses the analysis of data collected from the interactions between Ms. Smith and Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen and presents findings elaborating on the two frames of the study. The first of these frames compares the features of scaffolding considered possible by the literature and the actual instances and features of scaffolding discerned from transcribed writing conferences. The second frame considers the other patterns of interaction that emerged

from the data. To organize the case studies, I adopted one of two common patterns suggested by Merriam: integrated descriptions and vignettes with commentary (p. 243). Where possible, I allow the data to frame the vignettes. This is especially true for the case study of Ellen, which includes a narrated interaction that interpolates my analysis with an actual conference transcription, integrating descriptions and commentary with the actual transcript.

In designing the case studies, I used selected features of Stake's Outline of a Case Study Report (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 244). The selected features included the identification of issues as well as the purpose and method of study; the development of key issues; and the provision of descriptive detail, relevant documents, appropriate quotations, and triangulating data, such as that found in my field notes and interview transcripts. These features served as a heuristic to guide the composition of each case study, though each case study was constructed independently and was not intended to bear structural similarity to the others.

Cross-Case Analysis

After constructing case studies for Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen, I conducted a cross-case analysis to explore themes that potentially cut across cases. To facilitate the cross-case analysis, I utilized a variation of one of Miles and Huberman's (1994) methods of "stacking comparable cases" (p. 176). To accomplish the analysis, I returned to the final matrices (see Appendix K)

that I constructed to examine the features of scaffolding by category. I then systematically examined the presence or absence of each feature across all of the cases. The first level of analysis relied solely on the matrices. For example, recruiting is included within the category of features through which teachers engage the novice's interest and participation in a task. My analysis, reflected in the matrix for that category, found evidence of recruiting in seven of the eight transcribed interactions studied. To better understand the distinctions between the recruiting that characterized those interactions, I returned to each interaction and compared the evidence of recruiting across the eight cases. I conducted this same level of review for each feature within each category, comparing features across cases. I used the single-page representation of the data, as before, to look for patterns across cases, and I returned to the transcribed interactions to ground my findings in the data. The resulting cross-cases analysis forms the opening section of Chapter Five.

Trustworthiness

My experiences as a writing teacher at the secondary and college level informed this study from inception to interpretation and analysis. I began with the assumption that the roles students and teachers play in writing conferences and the resulting interactions can have dramatic effects on the conference itself. The literature on student-teacher interactions initially led me to believe that most students assumed a consumer perspective, and my

own teaching experience substantiated that notion to some extent, as did my past work experience in the for-profit sector where efficiency and productivity are rewarded. The realist in me was skeptical that scaffolding would emerge as the dominant type of interaction during writing conferences. The idealist in me, however, approached this project with the hope of changing my own mind. I hoped to document that these student novices apprenticed themselves readily to a Socratic teacher expert who, in turn, scaffolded the novice's entry into the discourse community and lifelong learning.

This open-ended stance of exploration affected the analysis in two ways. First, I began with no definitive direction. While I speculated that certain role relationships might have existed, the purpose of my research was to uncover points for further, more extensive exploration. Therefore, I let the data lead me in multiple directions until relationships and interactions emerged to find support in the data. Only after that exploratory work did I examine the data for the extent to which scaffolding occurred. Second, the results of this exploration did not produce answers that can be promoted as right or wrong. This is worth stating because my experience in the for-profit sector leads me to pursue a correct answer while my interest as an emerging qualitative researcher completely discounts the presence of such. While this tension might seem to complicate the analysis, I thought it actually sharpened the analysis because it provided a system of checks and balances

within my own perspective, leading me to consciously strive to question the veracity of the inferences I was drawing.

Multiple steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of my analysis. These are listed in detail below.

1. Data were collected from as many related sources and perspectives as possible. This is described in detail above. I tried to capture the transactions between Ms. Smith and the twelve participants from every angle. This depth of data facilitated triangulation (Glesne, 1999; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1998) between sources.
2. I used data management techniques to facilitate the data reduction portion of the analysis. I culled emails, for example, that did not relate specifically to the feedback Ms. Smith was providing. I transcribed only portions of the interview and conference tapes of the original twelve participants. However, the conference and interview tapes of the three case studies were completely transcribed. All data relating to a specific participant were filed in a separate box. Once the three case studies were selected, all data from the remaining participants were placed in a separate room. I purchased a long table so that all of the artifacts related to a case study could be physically viewed at the same time. Once the analysis was complete for that case study, all artifacts were clipped together in order of writing assignment and the manifests that I

created for each artifact were placed on top for easy reference for cross-case analysis.

3. I approached data collection and analysis striving to recognize and set aside premature conclusions. I identified some things based on the literature and my own previous experiences in and out of the classroom to be alert at recognizing as likely premature conclusions in light of my life experience. For example, I expected that students would prefer directive feedback and that their revision strategies would often amount to unreflective compliance with the directives offered by Ms. Smith. I also expected that students would be uninterested in the process of developing their academic writing proficiency except in the context of achieving their course grades. As these expectations became findings, I continued questioning what might be hiding in the data. As a result, I think I did a better job of letting the data guide the analysis.
4. I randomly selected one conference transcript for each case by drawing three numbers. I did it this way because I wanted to sample from each of the three conference periods that occurred with the three writing assignments. After the transcripts were selected, I reviewed the code families and code list to ensure that I would address each area. I wanted to make sure that I allowed enough time and attention to pick up even the subtlest of coding

opportunities. While I didn't put a time limit on each coding session, I anticipated it would take about an hour to code each transcript. Instead, it took about two hours for each one. I used a raw transcript and the Atlas.ti software to code initially by family (reducing the number of codes under consideration) and then by individual codes from the main code list. This is the same procedure I followed when initially coding the data. When coding was complete, I analyzed the reliability using the formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 64), dividing the number of codes in agreement by the total number of codes, resulting in a percentage. The results for Hunter, Lisa, and Ellen were 89%, 86%, and 89% respectively.

Conference	Lines	Codes	Agree	Disagree	Reliability
Hunter 2	205	141	126	15	89%
Lisa 1	263	88	76	12	86%
Ellen 3	217	76	68	8	89%

After I finished analyzing the reliability percentages, I returned to the individual conference transcripts to account for the disagreements and note any trends or patterns among the disagreements. Many of the disagreements were actually omissions, spots where I left off the code, rather than actual disagreements, where I put a different code than I had in previous coding. For example, in four of the disagreements, I did not code for provider, the teacher role behavior that corresponds with the

student role behavior of consumer, in the code-check transcript where I had in the previous coding. Other than that, there were no patterns I could detect in the coding omissions and disagreements I identified.

5. In addition to the peer review process described above, a qualitative researcher familiar with composition instruction reviewed all transcripts and working drafts of this study. That researcher's comments and questions were a part of the design on an ongoing basis.
6. I invited all three of the case-study participants to read and verify my analysis. None of the three accepted the offer. I don't find this too surprising. As a freshman in college, I would have had little interest in reading this as well. I did not extend the same offer to the remaining participants because they have no presence in the final product.

CHAPTER FOUR

SCAFFOLDING: THE POSSIBILE AND THE ACTUAL

Introduction

Miles and Huberman (1994) write that qualitative studies can "explore" new areas in order to "build" or "confirm" theories about those areas (p. 90). In this study, I explore the use of scaffolding during teacher-student writing conferences as part of freshman composition instruction. To explore the use of scaffolding, I compare actual transcribed conferences between teachers and students with what might be considered an ideal conference. The narratives that follow suggest that scaffolding can occur in various forms during writing conferences. These narratives also suggest, however, that the types of interactions other than scaffolding can characterize teacher-student writing conferences. While scaffolding has never been considered the only type of interaction during teacher-student writing conferences, it is considered an important type of interaction for the novice-expert role dyad. The following narratives suggest that scaffolding doesn't occur frequently during writing conferences, suggesting further that role dyads other than the novice-expert dyad might be more prominent than previously characterized.

This chapter begins with an explication of what patterns of interaction, especially scaffolding, one could possibly see in words of a teacher-student conference transcript, based on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. I then compare the writing conferences of each of the three case studies against that possible interaction, describing and explaining how each case both corresponds to and departs from the possible. Each of the case studies begins with a brief sketch of the participant's writing background, continues with an analysis of the participant's experience with scaffolding in each of the writing conferences studied, and concludes with a description of types of interaction other than scaffolding that characterized the participant's teacher-student conferences – including interactions that contrast directly with the features of scaffolding I have extracted from the scholarly literature on that concept.

The cases are ordered purposefully beginning with Lisa, whose conferences included the least amount of scaffolding features, and concluding with Ellen, whose conferences included the most scaffolding features. Pseudonyms are used and, where necessary, details about each participant's life have been modified to protect the anonymity of each participant.

Scaffolding: The Possible Interaction

The literature on scaffolding, as synthesized in Chapter Two, describes teacher-student interaction from four distinct areas or categories of features: engagement, procedures, critical decision points, and qualities or

characteristics of the interaction. There is a recursive and interdependent relationship between these categories. It should also be noted that, for the present study, dialogue serves as the tie that binds the analysis of actual conference transcripts to these categories. Dialogue is presumed to be essential to teacher-student interaction, including scaffolding. For the purposes of the present study, dialogue is essential to differentiate – in the context of transcribed writing conferences – scaffolding from other types of teacher-student interaction. Dialogue, for the present study, indicates engagement, provides context and clarity for discerning scaffolding procedures, and delineates critical decision points discerned from conversational turns. The following section illustrates the features that each of these categories contributes to scaffolding as well as the relationship between them.

For scaffolding to occur the learner must be engaged, and that engagement is often fleeting and unpredictable. The learner, then, must continually be engaged and reengaged for scaffolding, ultimately, to be successful. At the core of the engagement process is elicitation and invitation. Learners are recruited, and they are invited to contribute. Teacher directives are rare, and the teacher does not judge the student writing, choosing instead to use open-ended dialogue to ensure learner participation and engagement. The result, theoretically, is a balance of

power between teacher and learner as well as a shared goal that keeps both teacher and learner engaged.

Once the learner is engaged, the teacher chooses appropriate scaffolding procedures to facilitate the learner's progression toward greater competence. These might include general procedures such as actively diagnosing the needs of the learner, offering explanations, reducing required tasks, providing tailored assistance, or giving feedback. The learner, then, responds by demonstrating comprehension or providing evidence that he or she has internalized the information provided during the scaffolding and is better prepared to complete the task unassisted. More specifically, teacher procedures and student responses can form related sequences (Hung, 1999; Polanyi, 1964) during which the teacher scaffolds and the learner submits, the teacher models and the student mirrors, or the teacher coaches and the student constructs.

As the interaction progresses, teacher and learner will reach critical decision points, crossroads that require the interaction to go in one direction or another. If, for example, the teacher has chosen procedures that prove ineffective, and the learner has either disengaged or appears likely to disengage, the teacher and the learner face a critical decision point. The teacher, attempting to retain or recover the learner's engagement, may take the opportunity to verify and clarify student understanding and participation to that point in the interaction. Once the student is reengaged, alternative

procedures are selected that facilitate forward momentum in the interaction. These might include more effectively balancing teacher attention to the learner's cognitive and affective domains – if, for example, the learner felt an emotional disconnect from the teacher. These procedures might also include marking critical features of the task in order to maintain the direction of the learner.

The teacher may, at this point, choose to use splicing or hinting, procedures that often assuage learner frustration by providing an answer while also engaging the learner by evoking more precise information on similar and subsequent tasks. Likewise, the teacher may choose to use pumping or prompting that focus more on engaging the learner because answers are never specifically provided. The invitational quality of these two features of scaffolding connects critical decision points with engagement. Because of the often tenuous nature of learner engagement, these features also bear the weight of maintaining learner engagement. There is, then, a connection between critical decision points and the features of both the engagement and procedures categories.

The interaction continues in this fashion, recursively moving among the features delineated in the engagement and procedures categories, reaching critical decision points and negotiating those points using features to reengage the learner and introduce procedures presumed to be more effective procedures.

The fourth category, qualities or characteristics of interaction, illustrates the macro or "big picture" possibilities for the scaffolded interaction. It is possible, for example, that analysis of the transcripts of a writing conference would demonstrate that the scaffolding incorporated a predictable structure and that the procedures chosen were appropriate to the learner's current level of competence and likely to move the learner toward greater competence as well as an established goal shared by learner and teacher. The literature suggests that a possible transcript analysis might also show that the learner recognized a sense of ownership in both the task and the scaffolding process, that the teacher and learner worked collaboratively toward a shared goal, their actions affecting each other in reciprocal fashion – the actions of one affect the actions of the other. Analysis of the entire conference could demonstrate positive affective relations between teacher and learner, increasing the likelihood of future interactions.

The occurrence – rather, the capture and analysis – of an actual interaction that successfully incorporates all of the features considered possible by the current literature on scaffolding is unlikely. The case study narratives that follow describe my analysis of actual writing conference interactions, comparing those interactions with the type of interactions considered possible by the literature.

Lisa

Background

Lisa's writing process was tempered by what must have been a relatively structured high school writing program. In describing her reaction to feedback in our second interview, Lisa said "I just kind of was like, when she said that I didn't write the paper right, I kind of was going to try to make this paper to be right and this is how I did a solution paper in high school." In her conference dialogue with Ms. Smith, Lisa discussed some of the experiences that she and Ms. Smith had in common. The most significant of these was that they both had attended single-sex schools at some point in their educational experiences. This point of connection seemed to establish a bond between Lisa and Ms. Smith. Lisa's high school experience was the subject of two of the three essays she wrote for Ms. Smith, and Lisa expressed in our second interview her frustration with the way Ms. Smith responded to her writing compared with the responses of her high school teachers. This statement suggests that Lisa was having some difficulty making the transition from high school writing to college writing. This difficulty was complicated by Lisa's inexperience with writing, but I'm not sure that Lisa's writing conference experiences eased the difficulty to any great extent.

For her first and second writing assignments, Lisa chose to explore the impact of single-sex schooling on girls. In the second assignment, a position paper, Lisa adopted the position that all-girl schools "damage the

development of the girls in their academic life and social life." Writing as a young woman educated in an all-girl school, Lisa's perspective was, perhaps, more telling than she imagined. In the seventh paragraph of the final draft she wrote

> The parent does not realize that the daughter would get a better education at a coed school. The reason being is she will be exposed to the world around her, and not in some kind of bubble. Here the girls will be able to flourish and thrive.

While she was probably describing a much larger sphere of experience, Lisa describes what she perceived was her own limiting high school experience. In our second interview, Lisa referred to the differences between her current efforts and "how they wrote the same essays in high school." I inferred from her limiting high school experience that what I perceived to be her inexperience with writing seemed to have roots in the "bubble" she described in passage above, roots that complicated her interactions with Ms. Smith.

Lisa's high school writing experience must have taught her the importance of structuring an essay. During the semester, Lisa began each of the four writing assignments with an outline "that [she] thought would be the perfect paper." If changes occurred, she often wrote a second outline. Lisa described in her final comments, "Once I came up with my format, I wrote a new outline." Lisa also used notes within each draft to signal where elements of her argument would be developed. For example, in the second draft of the

second assignment, Lisa wrote "Paragraph on how girl schools are not equal to boys therefore letting the boys have a better education" to indicate where the unwritten paragraph would go when finished. Lisa's commitment to a structure, though, was troublesome and hindered the potential effectiveness of her conferences with Ms. Smith.

Lisa seemed clearly to focus on form, and once she had established a form she seemed reluctant to reconsider the details surrounding her argument. In her third conference, for example, Lisa looked to Ms. Smith for confirmation of her method of structuring her argument, despite the fact the original component of her argument had been removed. Consider the following:

Lisa: Is it okay the way I did it?

Smith: What do you mean?

Lisa: Well, because you know how you were saying some problem-solution papers were, you have to write the bad solutions and then your solutions. But I couldn't really find a way to do that with that, so I decided just to take a restaurant and take the new solutions that they needed to do. Because if they don't do all of it, then it kind of ….

Smith: Okay. I have a couple of comments. One, I know that this started with the whole straw thing.

Lisa: Um hum

Smith: It's not here.

Lisa: Yeah….

Smith: And I understand that. So I understand that then you're in the middle of restaurant industry research trying to figure out how [you] can make a paper out of this.

Lisa: Um hum

It seemed that Lisa considered the structure more important than the details that supported it. This might indicate that Lisa was lazy and didn't want to take the time to develop a new structure or a new argument. However, this dependence on established structure might also indicate that Lisa was an inexperienced writer whose writing background had focused on the importance of rhetorical structure, even to the detriment of other components like supporting detail and overall cohesiveness. Ms. Smith's terminal comments on the second and third essays illustrated this dilemma:

Essay Two: Your position is clear and your audience is appropriate. Your support, though, is not very strong in part because of the weak counterargument and lack of specific examples from the research you did. After looking through the sources, I can see where you could have found more support and did, based on the annotations.

Essay Three: A much improved essay. There are still some pretty

confusing passages, but the overall idea is so much clearer!

Lisa didn't make errors in conversation, but she seemed to view her written thoughts as something completely different, almost as if she were nervous that she might get it wrong. In trying to be correct, Lisa's natural flow of language seemed to be disrupted by the requirement of formal written expression. This notion is illustrated by the line she drew between her thoughts and her writing when she wrote, "Once I found the best topic to write about, the writing process is easy to follow." The topic was hers. She found it. Then, however, it was the writing process that was easy to follow, like a prescribed series of steps in pursuit of what Lisa repeatedly called "the perfect paper." For Lisa, though, some of the steps of that process were very challenging.

Lisa's attention to structure and planning was extraordinary, but her attention to – or demonstrated interest in – revision and detail seemed inadequate at times. Since revision and discussion of alternative and possible versions of student texts was a significant characteristic of the writing conferences for the course, her rigidity and almost palpable desire to "stand alone," resulted in conferences that included no discernible examples of scaffolding. Instead, Lisa's conferences illustrated structured interactions on the verge of scaffolding.

Structured Interaction, Hold the Scaffolding

Lisa indicated that her high school writing experience was a very strong influence on her current writing, but she didn't specifically characterize the interactions she had with her high school writing teachers. Based on the relatively minimal contributions Lisa made to conference dialogue in this study and her indication that her high school experience was a strong influence, I speculate that her high school writing experience included few opportunities for her to contribute to the dialogue involved in her interactions with her writing teachers. Perhaps her high school writing teachers did not use conferences to discuss writing with individual students. Alternatively, Lisa might prefer relatively passive participation in the discussion of her own writing. Her background and high school writing experience might reinforce what seemed to be her perceptions of the novice-expert relationship, wherein the teacher does the talking and the student does the listening. If so, this passivity must be reserved for the expert as evaluator, because Lisa spoke freely with me about her writing during her interviews. At any rate, dialogue – essential to the scaffolding process in the present study – was rarely present in Lisa's conferences. The overwhelming tendency was for Lisa to respond with affirmative utterance such as, "Okay" or "Uh huh." This tendency would have made it very difficult for Ms. Smith to engage Lisa in substantive dialogue, if engaging Lisa in dialogue was a primary goal for Ms. Smith.

There is evidence that Ms. Smith attempted to engage Lisa. In three of Lisa's four conferences, to draw Lisa into the conversation, Ms. Smith uses elicitations or questions such as "Okay. Oh yeah, what's your pointed question?" and "And I see here that you want to refute your counter-arguments, because you still don't feel like you've done that?" However, the majority of these elicitations tended to be presented in yes or no questions. Most of the elicitations were related to core features of Ms. Smith's writing instruction: audience, context, and presentation, as in the following excerpt.

Smith: Um, okay so we started with who is your audience? What is your context? How are you going to present yourself? Chapter 3 called that "persona"—cause I mean, you know, that's what I'm talking about which I should've used the same terminology, would've made things a lot easier. Here's something else. I think you started on your position paper.

Lisa: Okay, yeah, probably.

Ms. Smith opens with questions that appear to pursue Lisa's choice of audience, context, and self-presentation. She quickly changes, though, to an assessment of Lisa's overall effort, comparing the current essay to the next writing assignment.

Often, the pace at which Ms. Smith pursued conference dialogue resulted in confusion. In the following excerpt, for example, Lisa asks a

clarifying question and seems interested in discussing the issue in greater depth. The possible conference, at this point, might include pumping or prompting Lisa for more detailed information, guiding her through a questioning process by which she might arrive at appropriate conclusions. The actual conference, however, seems to extinguish Lisa's curiosity with a yes or no question that doesn't appear to be related and results in no responding conversational turn from Lisa.

Lisa: How do you, how do you, like separate that? Cause you know how, like you're trying to see if those articles are valid.

Smith: Uh-huh.

Lisa: Are you trying to see if they are just valid in general, or valid towards your topic? That's where I'm confused with that.

Smith: Okay, the whole deal is, who is your audience? Okay, because that's going to determine how you evaluate it. Do you see how you did your conclusion?

Lisa: Um-huh. Yeah, that's a bad conclusion.

Smith: I don't know, um, I will say that I think your conclusion is the closest that you get to articulating to me your understanding of the assignment and based on this I felt like you understood what the evaluation assignment was.

What I didn't get was a clear sense of who your audience was other than, like, yourself . . . because you already know what you're writing essay number two about. Does that make sense?

Lisa: Um-huh.

The conversation shifts to a discussion of Lisa's conclusion and doesn't return to determining the validity of specific articles, Lisa's original question. Ms. Smith appears to divert the conversation, leaving Lisa with the abstract connection between her choice of audience and the methods she should use in evaluating her sources. The same is true for the engagement method of verifying and clarifying student understanding. Ms. Smith often used "Do you know what I mean?" and "Does that make sense?" to punctuate her explanations of concepts or provisions of feedback. Instead of inviting student response, however, these punctuating comments served more as transitional statements between explanations or directives.

Responses from Lisa that are not monosyllabic typically seek directives or interim evaluation, using phrases such as "Did I do this right?" or "Okay, and the rest of this stuff is more effective?" These requests for teacher directives presented interesting critical decision points, places at which the conference could have proceeded in one direction or another. At all of these crossroads, Ms. Smith chose to provide the requested directives instead of engaging the student in dialogue. As a result, teacher directives were

prevalent throughout Lisa's conferences, exceeding the 5% mark suggested in Lepper, Drake, and O'Donnell-Johnson's (1997) study. Consider the following example, in which Lisa has asked about the organization of her current paper. In addition to cutting Lisa short, Ms. Smith describes the process for "fixing" the paper instead of engaging Lisa in the dialogue to explore appropriate fixes.

Smith: And here's the thing. I'm going to say that this new material is set up in sort of the problem-solution thing. This…

Lisa: Is still not…

Smith: Is still confusing. It hasn't changed terribly much. And, okay so there. And I think it's weird to say this, because last time I was so expand expand; it feels like you could collapse these two paragraphs. Because what you're trying to say is, "Look at this dirty guy. Here's an example of this dirty guy, or this dirty restaurant, and that like these two paragraphs sort of say the same thing again, like cleanliness, food at the right temperature. So I wonder if you couldn't sort of combine these, like, here are the four things this guy did. They happen to be the four things that are bad for everybody. Let's fix it.

Lisa: Okay. I can do that.

The possible interaction described in the literature allows for a multitude of scaffolding procedures, both teacher procedures and student responses. In the actual interactions, as discussed above, student responses were minimal and, more often than not, those responses requested teacher directives. As for Ms. Smith's use of procedures, few scaffolding procedures were initiated other than offering explanations and modeling solutions, both in a directive fashion, without engaging the student in the process.

Dialogue, verbal interaction characterized by an exchange of ideas or opinions, is a critical feature to scaffolding, but it is also a critical feature to the writing conference in general. Despite a typically steady flow of conversation in each conference, lasting between 10 and 20 minutes, Lisa's contributions to the conversations were minimal. Four out of every five of Lisa's comments across all of her conferences were monosyllabic affirmative utterances such as "Yeah" or "Uh huh." The remaining one comment in five typically appeared at the beginning stages of the conference dialogue, when Ms. Smith was working to establish an agenda for the conference. Once the agenda was set and conference dialogue was underway, Lisa stopped contributing. This lack of substantive dialogue indicates that Lisa chose not to engage following the initial stages of the conferences and Ms. Smith filled the void with teacher directives. This possibility is supported by the prominence of teacher directives in the last two-thirds of Lisa's conferences

and Lisa's minimal contribution to the dialogue beyond the first stage of the conference.

Missed Opportunities at Critical Decision Points

The relative lack of dialogue between Lisa and Ms. Smith highlighted a pattern of missed opportunities. The limited amount of substantive student response was typically met with reinforcement of an agenda, typically Ms. Smith's, or a missed opportunity to engage Lisa at a critical decision point. Though it is difficult to discern where the breakdown takes place – is Lisa hesitant to engage or does Ms. Smith fail to employ sufficient strategies to engage Lisa? – the missed opportunities are characterized by more than what might appear to be simple oversight. Contrary to the features of engagement in the possible interaction, Ms. Smith seems, at times, to not only judge Lisa's writing prematurely but to extinguish her attempts to engage. Consider the following example:

Lisa: Alright. Is it okay the way I did it…

Smith: What do you mean?

Lisa: Well, because you know how you were saying some problem-solution papers were, you have to write the bad solutions and then your solutions. But I couldn't really find a way to do that with that, so I decided just to take a restaurant and take the new solutions that they needed to do. Because if they don't do all of it, then it kind of ….

Smith: Okay. I have a couple of comments. One, I know that this started with the whole straw thing.

Lisa: Um hum

Smith: It's not here.

Lisa: Yeah….

Smith: And I understand that. So I understand that then you're in the middle of restaurant industry research trying to figure out how I can make a paper out of this.

Lisa: Um hum

Smith: Okay. What, so the problem is unclean restaurants? Or is the problem this one dirty Indian restaurant that you keep talking about?

Lisa: Yeah.

Smith: Well, I find it really upsetting that that's the one example. But maybe that's because I don't know where Derby is. Like where is the Derby Evening Telegraph from, and...There's something that I don't understand about that. I guess it's the way you call him out and said he should do this and that and the other. Would it be the same for all restaurants? Because, like right here, I'm reading about this one case this guy did all of these really gross things, using this restaurant. I don't, I guess this is

what I would say. I don't see it as a perfect example. It's a perfect example of what?

Lisa: Okay

As this excerpt shows, Ms. Smith had opportunities to engage Lisa in dialogue. Instead of taking up Lisa's comment about how she structured her argument, Ms. Smith chooses to speculate on Lisa's process so far in the reasoning behind her argument, using language such as "I know that this started with the whole straw thing" and "So I understand that then you're in the middle of restaurant industry research trying to figure out how I can make a paper out of this." This assessment may have been completely accurate, but Lisa's involvement in that assessment was reduced to monosyllabic affirmative utterances. As a result, Lisa's initial confidence about the progress she had made in her writing is squelched by Ms. Smith's synthesis of her efforts. By the end of this excerpt, Lisa is resigned to take whatever step is recommended by Ms. Smith. There is a crossroads at the end of Lisa's second conversational turn, and Ms. Smith chooses to respond with a "couple of comments" as opposed to open-ended questions. Questions similar to "What do you mean?" that she used in her first turn might have drawn more information from Lisa and continued her sense of engagement that stems, if nothing else, from her discussion of her writing.

Ms. Smith established a pattern of what appeared to be instances of extinguishing student engagement. Many factors probably contribute to this

pattern, and these will be discussed in greater length in a subsequent chapter. It is worth mentioning here, however, that the time constraints associated with a writing conference might preclude many of the open-ended questioning strategies of the engagement category. Lisa seemed hesitant to engage and Ms. Smith, sensing that time was not an unlimited commodity, might have returned to what is often perceived as a traditional, projection-based teaching model. Such a model would be characterized by many of the features included in the procedures category of scaffolding, however there would be no student engagement. The possible influence of time constraint alone makes it difficult to discern whether the missed opportunities were indicative of a passive student or teacher error.

Affective Relations and Effective Interactions

Exploring the influence of issues like time constraints was aided by observation of the interaction from a macro perspective. This perspective was facilitated by consideration and comparison of the qualities or characteristics of the interaction category of features, those considered possible by the literature and those discerned from the actual interaction. For Lisa, the combination of limited response and what appears to have been a subtle usurping of her authority narrowed her sense of ownership considerably, almost eliminating any sense of collaboration between Lisa and Ms. Smith. From the conferences themselves it is difficult to determine if general instruction – there were no scaffolded interactions to analyze – was

appropriate to Lisa's abilities and goals. On the positive side, however, the structure of the conferences themselves, if not the scaffolding, probably met Lisa's expectations, and the extensive use of teacher directive – similar to the structure she had grown accustomed to in high school – was probably, at some level, comforting.

Those qualities and structure, however, also negatively influenced the affective relations between Lisa and Ms. Smith, creating a tension and confusion that Lisa seemed unable to resolve, even late into the semester. The following excerpt from our third interview illustrates the extent to which affective relations influenced Lisa's interactions with Ms. Smith as well as her writing.

Researcher: So, did you make all the changes that you…

Lisa: I did all the changes that they wanted me to do, but I could've done a little better job than I did.

Researcher: Okay. Something is begging me to ask more about that, but I won't.

Lisa: I just didn't…I was tired. I was disgusted by the last paper, so I….

Researcher: Why were you disgusted by the last paper?

Lisa: Because when she read over it I asked her if my paragraphs were what she wanted, and she kind of generalized and said, "Yeah, you did a good job." But

> when I got my paper back she said that I was kind of going toward a problem-solution paper or something like that, and I was like, "Well, I kind of asked you if I did my paragraphs, my body paragraphs right, and you told me yeah." So, I was just kind of like, whatever.

Lisa's sense of resignation is palpable, and the negative affective relations illustrated in this passage seem likely to discourage Lisa from future engagement with Ms. Smith.

The negative affective relations between these two ran deeper than this one interview might indicate. Implications for missed opportunities at critical decision points emerged from points in the transcripts when Ms. Smith appeared to attempt to balance her attention to Lisa's cognitive and affective domains. As a part of my analysis, I coded for shared common experiences between Ms. Smith and her students, those comments made in conference conversation – such as "I did the same thing when I was in high school," "I love that magazine, too," and "That book is one of my favorites, as well" – that establish or renew a personal connection between the two. Ms. Smith had extensive shared common experience with Lisa, including similar growing up experiences and attendance at single-sex high schools. These connections were often used, perhaps in an imbalanced fashion, as attempts to engage Lisa more effectively in dialogue, and Lisa appeared to have assumed a stronger personal connection to Mrs. Smith. As a result, Lisa

might have been confused – as indicated in the above interview excerpt – by the return of Ms. Smith as evaluator.

Another quality or characteristic of interaction that is also important to critical decision points is marking critical features of a task, also considered a procedural feature, and important to the interactions between Lisa and Ms. Smith in a couple of ways. First, the majority of Ms. Smith's feedback during the conferences was of a local or grammatical nature. She focused, though not entirely, on sentence- and paragraph-level revision. In so doing, Ms. Smith might have given Lisa reason to believe that she valued form over content, though this distinction is not necessarily as black-and-white as I am describing it. The data suggest that Ms. Smith's attention to this type of feedback is dominant, demonstrating that pointing out those types of critical features was important to Ms. Smith. If this resulted in confusion, Ms. Smith's focus on directive feedback might have made it difficult to recover to a more inviting stance to engage Lisa in the conversation and process.

Despite the lack of discernible scaffolding, compared with features thought possible by current literature, the interactions between Lisa and Ms. Smith demonstrated the possible presence of other types of interaction outside the scope of scaffolding as I have defined. Interestingly, the characteristics and features of these other types of interaction must be very similar to scaffolding, at least sharing some qualities or features. For Lisa

and Ms. Smith, the deciding factor seems to have been the inability to maneuver and negotiate critical decision points in a manner that would facilitate the recursive utilization of features of scaffolding thought possible by current literature.

Hunter

Background

While watching Hunter in this setting of classes and conferences and based on his interactions with Ms. Smith and other students, I envisioned that he suffered from something I came to call academic lethargy. He always seemed to be a step behind. For example, Hunter arrived at a second conference – scheduled because he'd arrived ill-prepared for the first – having left his backpack and paper at his parents' home over the weekend. He recounted from memory the changes he'd made and his revision agenda for the final draft, due the next day. Ms. Smith suggested an extension on the due date, stating "You're saying all the right things. Sounds like you got a good handle on it but you're not quite as far along maybe as other people." At this point, on the eve of the due date, Hunter's essay was half the required length and in another city. Extensions were offered to most of the students in the class on an individual, case by case basis. The offer was extended to Hunter during all three writing assignments. Only the final exam was required on its original due date. Ms. Smith's appeared to be trying to balance her attention to Hunter's cognitive and affective domains, as well as

control his frustration, by continuing to offer both extensions and directive instruction on how he might develop the next draft. Analysis of Hunter's subsequent drafts revealed that he used Ms. Smith's directives extensively, almost exclusively, in constructing drafts of his writing that followed his conferences with Ms. Smith. This pattern of behaviors suggests Hunter's emerging reliance on Ms. Smith's directive feedback to comply with that feedback in constructing his essays.

In addition to being a step behind, Hunter was always awaiting explicit instructions and motivation. This motivation was both extrinsic and intrinsic. The extrinsic motivation clearly included the grade. During our initial interview, conducted a couple of hours after the first papers were returned to the class, Hunter said that he "had not had time to look at [Ms. Smith's] comments, but had looked at the grade." The comments were few and would have required little more than a cursory glance, but Hunter chose only to look at the grade. In our third interview, when asked why he chose to make certain changes between drafts, Hunter replied, "I decided to make these changes because I thought the more in depth and specific I was the better my grade would be."

The intrinsic motivation, though, went beyond the grade. In a naïve sort of way, Hunter did not want to disappoint the teacher, and this created an interesting tension in him. He didn't really want to do the work, but he didn't want to disappoint anyone, either. He demonstrated this, in part, by

his own recognition of his "need to work harder [and] schedule more conferences sooner in the process." As he was telling me this in our initial interview, his body language almost suggested guilt and the look in his eyes mirrored his words, "I know I didn't work very hard on this paper, but I'm going to work harder on the next one." And, in fact, he did. He said in our next interview, "I spent more time on it than I did last time." He also scheduled more conferences for each of the subsequent writing assignments. There was, for Hunter, a personal sense of honor that motivated him to work harder after his initial essays proved unsuccessful. That he spent more time on the essay, scheduled more conferences, and seemed to connect his writing with his personal sense of honor seemed to suggest positive affective relations with Ms. Smith. I also noted in my field notes of early conferences that Hunter – true to his roots – seemed to respond to Ms. Smith frequently and happily with the colloquial expression, "Yes, ma'am." My final analysis concluded that my use of *frequently* as an adverb describing his use of that expression was an understatement. More than 75% of Hunter's responses were simply "Yes, ma'am."

The writing was also very personal to Hunter. The strongest criticism of his early drafts of his first writing assignment was that they were too personal. The essays were more about his interest in the Marine Corps than his assessment of the sources he used to research the Marine Corps. When asked about the topic, Hunter said, "I chose to write about the Marine Corps

which I feel very strong[ly] about. I knew it would be an easy subject to write about because I have looked so much into it due to my decision to join." It was natural for him, then, to write about his feelings about the Marine Corps, completely missing the mark on the rhetorical situation required by the assignment. Missing the point of the assignment caused confusion in early conferences. His final paper suffered a similar weakness. Instead of evaluating the progress in his writing process, stepping out of the picture and really looking at the process to account for its evolution, Hunter described each step of the process and how he felt about the progress.

I remember admiring Hunter's decision to explore the Marines Corps, though I didn't envy him the massive transition I felt he would need to undergo. Discipline seemed a foreign concept to Hunter, but a significant saving grace was his ability to follow directions. By the end of my analysis of his conferences, and the comparison of those conferences with his completed essays, I wondered if Hunter would have successfully completed freshman composition without Ms. Smith, whose directive instructions – conference by conference – seemed to allow Hunter to construct his essays one conference at a time. To complete the military metaphor, I imagined Ms. Smith as Hunter's recruiter and drill sergeant, engaging Hunter in the little dialogue he could muster and providing him with explicit procedures for completing the task. Crucial to this successful campaign, Hunter and Ms. Smith negotiated critical decision points, for the most part, with alacrity. Hunter's

conferences with Ms. Smith included more dialogue than those conferences of the two other students in this study. My analysis of Hunter's conferences revealed more evidence of features of scaffolding thought possible by the literature. Yet, as a whole, something was missing from Hunter's conferences that would allow me to firmly characterize the interactions as scaffolding. This quandary resulted in an additional code, "almost scaffolding," that allowed me to examine interactions between Hunter and Ms. Smith that included many or all of the features of scaffolding but lacked a cohesive assemblage of those features.

Recruiting without Scaffolding

Recruiting is a critical feature within the engagement category of scaffolding. Ms. Smith successfully recruited Hunter early in each conference, inviting Hunter to contribute clues and also using a structured agenda to establish a shared goal for each conference. The following excerpt illustrates this recruitment. Ms. Smith sets the stage by asking Hunter to talk about a significant question that arose during his revision process and, though she's interrupted by a revelation, she follows up to address that question and allows Hunter some room to explore the question. This excerpt is atypical because Ms. Smith's elicitation – however weak – is met with substantive student response. Unfortunately, the following excerpt also illustrates Ms. Smith's tendency to follow elicitation with directive instructions.

Smith: My first question to all of your classmates has been what is your question? You know that burning question that I asked you to bring in? Can I look at the essay while we talk?

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: And this is the most up to date that you've changed after your peer reviewers talked about it?

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: Okay. Now it's funny because now the answers to your questions are totally presenting themselves to me. Yes, I do think, you had asked questions on the email about should I talk more about one than the other. I totally think that the one you're in favor of, which is diesel over gas, you would spend more time talking about…tell me what your question is, sorry, and then maybe we'll cover some of those others that I've forgotten.

Hunter: It's pretty much the same one. How biased should I be towards one or the other?

Smith: Well, since you're trying to persuade your audience to believe you, you're probably going to be more biased, talk more about the diesel than the gas. However, you will bring up the gas engines when you compare them, and in

your counter-arguments. So how biased? … the only thing I think you want to be really careful of that you don't alienate those of us who already drive gasoline vehicles over diesel vehicles. You know? So that would be my…

Hunter: That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to say, like, in my opinion, I'd rather have a diesel vehicle than a gas, and I'm not really doubting gas. I'm just saying which I'm more in favor of.

Smith: And you have to have well-reasoned arguments for that, so that it's not just because I like it or because what my friend drives one but rather because of the reasons that you talk about.

Hunter: That makes sense right there.

Analyzing this excerpt, I saw a fledgling sense of collaboration. Hunter seemed engaged and Ms. Smith offered an explanation that made sense to Hunter. Unfortunately, the interaction falls short of scaffolding because there was no evidence that Hunter comprehended or internalized anything as a result of the conversation. And while Hunter's enthusiasm intimated ownership and collaboration, his closing remark – typical of Hunter's remarks – could just as easily have been teacher-pleasing discourse.

A second example of "almost scaffolding" illustrates Ms. Smith's use of the features of verifying and clarifying – in Ms. Smith's initial conversational turn – as well as inviting Hunter to contribute clues and pumping him for more information in her third conversational turn.

Hunter: One problem, the only problem that I'm really having is, for my sources, I have one source about an alternative fuel, which is fine. That source works. Then I have a source from Chevron, and I mean it's really, a great source. It's got everything I need on it. And it's basically repeating what other sources are saying. So how should I, if I quote something, it's just the same thing, say Chevron says that and then someone else says that? Which one should I use, because I have so many citations from Chevron?

Smith: Let me say what I think you're saying. Okay, if I have more than one source from Chevron that all says the same thing, well you still just credit Chevron. Okay? Is that what you're saying? They're all from Chevron and they all say the same thing?

Hunter: No ma'am. I'm saying there's one from Chevron that says something. And then there is one from, say, the government and it also says the same thing.

Smith: Okay

Hunter: Which one should I use, being I have, I've used so many from Chevron, and I need to use the one from the government so I will have enough sources in my paper, different sources?

Smith: Because there's not a requirement for the essay, but if you wanted to use the government one, I think that's fine. Who do you trust more?

Hunter: I guess the government. The Chevron seemed to be so actually, it seems to be so clear to the average person that it makes sense. And…

Smith: I don't see why you can't use them both. I mean, this is something that…you and I had talked about this, in the evaluation of sources. I wouldn't use this one because it just says what the other one says. If two sources say something, it's more believable than if just one source says it. So you should indicate that both of them agree. Here's why I say that. I don't trust, I might not trust Chevron as much because they're trying to sell me fuel, both diesel and gas. But either way they're trying to make a buck. Supposedly, the government is not trying to make money off of this, okay? They're just trying to

maybe look out for me or whatever. So, if I heard it in both sources, it would make me believe the Chevron source more. I think it's a very good strategy to do as some of the writers we've read in our *RCWW*, have done which is to say according to Chevron…the government concurs in their report when they claim…you know what I mean? I would do it that way. Like concur, agree, you know those are just some things, I can't come up with any better ones right now. So I feel like it's the rhetorically accurate verbs that would really strengthen incorporation of quotations and of sources.

Hunter: That sounds good.

The above excerpt also illustrates Ms. Smith's tendency to offer explanations – often lengthy and typically punctuated with directive instructions. In this example, she also used that lengthy explanation to model a possible solution. In a scaffolding interaction considered possible by current literature, this combination of features would have appeared similar to conceptual or procedural scaffolding, as Ms. Smith guided Hunter in what to consider – whether or not you can trust a source – as well as how to use available rhetorical features of each of the articles in crafting his own argument. Hunter, however, didn't consummate the potential scaffolding, choosing

instead to offer what appeared to be another example of teacher pleasing discourse.

Patterned Behaviors that Hindered Scaffolding

These initial examples illustrate Hunter's apparent willingness to engage and Ms. Smith's ability to attempt different features of engagement and follow them with appropriate scaffolding procedures. My initial analysis led me to believe that Hunter, in his academic lethargy, preferred to be a passive participant in conference interactions. As I looked closer however, I discovered three patterns that kept Ms. Smith and Hunter from bringing their scaffolding to full fruition.

The first of these involves Ms. Smith's use of the verifying and clarifying feature. As with the excerpt featured above, Ms. Smith frequently used verifying and clarifying at strategic points in the conference. Under closer examination, however, I began to see that, quite often, Ms. Smith used this feature to verify and clarify her understanding more than Hunter's. Consider the following excerpt:

> Smith: The way you have these lined up, I'm almost expecting to see one paragraph on are they more efficient, one paragraph on do they last longer, one paragraph on the manliness, and one paragraph on maybe which factor it is that makes people choose. I'm not sure about that. But definitely, it seems to me that you're setting up the

structure of your paper which is, I'm going to talk about efficiency, this, and this…is that what's going to happen?

Hunter: Yes ma'am. That's what I'm trying to do, and it's not quite like that, but…

Again, clear understandings are essential to all interactions and it is important at times to pause for clarification. For scaffolding, however, this feature within the engagement category is intended to do just that, engage the learner. As the excerpt above illustrates, verification of the teacher's understanding is important, but it doesn't necessarily correlate with the learner's understanding.

A second pattern that emerged from the data was Ms. Smith's tendency to recruit Hunter in the process, but not in the process of writing. Ms. Smith's recruitment, under closer scrutiny, appeared to focus on deadlines and other procedural issues related to the class. That is to say, her elicitations and her strongest attempts at open-ended questions – and, as a result, much of Hunter's substantive contribution to conference dialogue – were frequently related to the class more than the writing. Consider the following example:

Smith: That's a good plan. Okay. Now if you don't mind I'd like to read the essay and see how we're doing. What do you think you're going to do about the fact that this is not very close to the required length?

Hunter: Like you were saying, read a magazine and incorporate their style and I can stretch it out longer because it's mainly, it feels to me, it's kind of to the point.

Smith: Uh huh.

This finding is not meant to suggest that elicitations or open-ended questions shouldn't be a vital part of conference dialogue or that Ms. Smith failed to recruit Hunter into dialogue about his writing. This finding simply illustrates that, in a patterned way, Ms. Smith's attempts to engage Hunter were not clearly focused on his writing. Her elicitations were, more often than not with Hunter, aimed at procedural issues like deadlines and the required length of each essay.

The third, and perhaps the most prevalent pattern, was Ms. Smith's tendency to shift prematurely from her efforts to engage Hunter to directive instructions. In the following excerpt, Ms. Smith uses questioning techniques to prompt Hunter for more detailed information. Following his initial response, Ms. Smith provides praise, extending the invitation for Hunter to engage further. At a critical decision point, however, Ms. Smith chooses to provide the solution explicitly rather than to scaffold Hunter's emerging understanding of clarity and specificity in writing for a particular audience.

Smith: Age-old question…how old? What makes you say age-old? How long has this really been a distinction?

Hunter: Well, for about thirty years, really since they started coming out.

Smith: Okay. Not only is that more specific and more true and it lets your audience know what you're saying more clearly, it's got more words. So instead of age-old, it's "for the past thirty years. Do you know what I mean?

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: I think I would be clear about that. If you've done the research that lets you know when diesel trucks or cars or whichever one was first happened, you could use that kind of information here.

Ms. Smith is modeling effective solutions for Hunter to use in expressing his arguments more effectively. Hunter appears to be potentially ill-prepared to face the next "age-old question." He is never offered the opportunity to demonstrate comprehension or understanding, though his understanding is, by proxy, verified and clarified using the expression "Do you know what I mean?" Hunter characteristically replies, "Yes ma'am."

Hunter's Disciplined Compliance

Ms. Smith's tendency to frequently offer directives in lieu of scaffolding appeared to be, from Hunter's perspective, a positive characteristic of their conferences together. Still, the directives were often couched in the features of scaffolding, specifically those features within the procedures category,

making the interactions difficult to differentiate. Ms. Smith, for example, initiated at least 90% of the interactions, though these were met with rare student responses, excluding phrases such as "That looks good right there," and "That sounds right," both of which indicate compliance more than demonstrating comprehension or internalization. Ms. Smith also frequently modeled potential solutions, offered explanations, and actively diagnosed Hunter's needs – though these needs were often connected to deadlines, extensions, and other procedural issues related to the class.

Ms. Smith also attempted to maintain Hunter's direction, a procedural feature that frequently occurs at critical decision points. In this first example, Ms. Smith recaps – similar to verifying and clarifying – the conference agenda to keep Hunter's attention focused on the agenda.

> Smith: Okay. To recap. I think the thing that you want to work on most in this essay is adding more arguments, more support for your other arguments, which it's like, you've already got it set up in a general framework, but I need some specifics. And yes, use those sources to back you up and argue against, okay? And then, all of this proofreading stuff that I've recommended. We'll work on that more, we can talk more in depth on that on Monday, because by then I'm expecting to see a draft that is probably ready to be turned in for a grade, but if you don't

mind I'd like to give you that extension just, you know what I mean?

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: To make sure. Because this way I'll get to see your written revision agenda and see how closely I'm communicating with you. I recommend that you jot some of this down like right now before you go.

Hunter, however, gives no indication of engagement, offers very limited conversation, and offers no illustration that Ms. Smith is maintaining the direction of his learning in any capacity. The result is an important feature of interaction – verifying and clarifying – that enhances the interaction between Ms. Smith and Hunter, without their having to employ other essential features of scaffolding.

Similarly, in the following excerpt Ms. Smith maintains Hunter's focus and direction on the class deadlines and his ability to meet them. Ms. Smith specifically addresses his needs – an extension on the deadline – in her third conversational turn and attempts to balance her attention to Hunter's cognitive and affective domains – perhaps shifting the balance in favor of the affective domain – while she seems to delicately point out to Hunter that the "weight of the paper" isn't what it ought to be.

Smith: Okay. Any other questions you…okay, so they would like you to be more biased, your peer review group? And you

feel that you've accomplished that. There's something that I'm noticing right off the bat. And it's the weight of the paper. It doesn't weigh very much because it's not very long. And I don't see a list of works cited yet.

Hunter: Yes ma'am. I have it. I don't have it written down.

Smith: Okay, that's cool. I'm not dissing you. I'm just trying to figure out if you're going to be able to finish this by the due date.

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: Okay, you think so? Because if not, this is when we talk about it and when we decide what kind of extension you might need or whatever. Like I've already negotiated with one of our classmates. Her essay is going to be due on Wednesday, but she's at the SEC Tournament right now, you know what I mean? So, it was impossible for us to meet and whatnot.

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: So if after our talk today and you get to revising and you think, "You know, I really need/want somebody else to look at this essay, there are two options. One, you get in touch with me, now I'm out of town on Saturday, so it would have to be Friday, and I mean I'm in the book. I'm

not hiding. You could get in touch with me and we can negotiate for a Tuesday or Wednesday due date perhaps. And the reason we would do that, by the way, is not just so that you have more time, but so that we would have an opportunity to meet on Monday. Do you know what I mean?

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

Smith: Okay…which wouldn't have to be disclosed to the class or anybody else. You know, whatever. Two is that you, after we talk and you do a revision that you show somebody in the English Center and you come and have an appointment in here. I don't know if you've ever met in here, but…

Hunter: Yes ma'am.

The procedures are in place and Ms. Smith, who initiates this excerpt of the conference with an open-ended question, quickly skips over the engagement stage – as might have been indicated by Hunter's substantive contribution to the conference conversation – and proceeds to diagnose the needs of the learner. Again, though, these needs are related more to the class deadlines than Hunter's writing process.

The excerpt above is typical. My analysis revealed that Ms. Smith frequently initiated conferences with elicitations, invitations, and clarifying

strategies. These were presumably intended to engage Hunter in the conference interaction, if not scaffolding specifically. Ms. Smith, however, frequently shifted to strategies or procedures associated with directing the engaged learner without ensuring that Hunter was fully engaged in the process. To her credit, this would have been difficult for Ms. Smith to accomplish with any frequency, as Hunter rarely uttered phrases other than "Yes, ma'am." In the gap between the engagement and procedures are critical decision points. Hunter and Ms. Smith encountered a number of these in their conference interactions. More often than not, these critical decision points resulted in missed opportunities. These were opportunities during the conference when Hunter's engagement in the process could have been reaffirmed or renegotiated that were missed typically because an incorrect action was taken to reengage Hunter or because no action was taken. One type of missed opportunity emerged from interactions I coded as "language conflicts." These interactions were characterized by disjointed conversations, instances where Ms. Smith and Hunter seemed almost to be participants in separate conversations. Consider the following example, especially Ms. Smith's concluding turn:

Smith: I just wrote it on here. Okay, what specifically did I want to look at? Do you remember?

Hunter: There were several small errors, and then commas, let's see…I changed most of the stuff. I did add some more quotes.

Smith: Okay

Hunter: I did make it longer, one of the main things. I started a new paragraph, and it should be the second to last paragraph, which is the new one. And that's going to come in as one of the three things I said.

Smith: Yeah. Okay.

Hunter: And I need to work on…

Smith: Edit, select all. Select it all. And then do a hanging indent. You select it all and you know how to do a hanging indent?

Hunter, engaged in a rare moment of reflection on his own writing, begins to reveal what he thinks he needs to work on and Ms. Smith takes the opportunity to offer keystroke advice. At first glance I thought this excerpt, once transcribed and coded, must have been taken completely out of context, but a return to my original audio recording confirmed the transcription. And while it is a representative sample of excerpts I coded as "language conflict," it is not an isolated excerpt. When I reconsidered this coding category for its implications for critical decision points, this quotation sprang immediately to mind. It is indicative of missed opportunities, especially for Hunter, because

Ms. Smith, at critical decision points with Hunter, perhaps frustrated by Hunter's hesitance to talk, often shifted to directives. As in the excerpt above, Ms. Smith lost sight of the target and pulled the trigger for Hunter.

Fortunately, not all critical decision points resulted in missed opportunities. There was evidence, as in the following excerpt, of successful negotiation of critical decision points, including Ms. Smith's use of pumping – in her second and third conversational turns – as well as verifying and clarifying in her fourth turn.

Hunter: Yes ma'am. Being my solution is already in place, it's like evolving in place, should I try to find another solution or just keep working on the one I have, because my solution is to use, maintain the engine and use lower sulphur fuels, which will cut back hopefully on the emissions.

Smith: Um hum

Hunter: On the sulphur emissions, which is real volatile. They're already starting to do that.

Smith: Who is?

Hunter: The government and fuel people, like Chevron and stuff…

Smith: Okay. Has it been mandated by the government already?

Hunter: It's getting there. I think by 2004, if I'm reading it correctly…

Smith: Okay. So then you kind of wonder if the problem's already been solved. In a way you wonder why you're working on it. So I do think you want to make sure that you can help your audience to capitalize on it, like what can your audience do?

Hunter: Yes ma'am. Continue working for it. Because it's not in place yet.

Smith: Okay.

The open-ended question that closes Ms. Smith's next-to-last turn also indicates that she continued to engage and invite Hunter, and this is one of the few excerpts where Hunter matches or exceeds the number of words contributed to the conversation – admittedly a poor measurement – by Ms. Smith.

In negotiating critical decision points, Ms. Smith relied heavily, it seemed, on two procedural features: attention to affective relations and controlling frustration. Watching her negotiations with Hunter, I often wondered if I, as a male teacher, would have handled Hunter differently than Ms. Smith did. She seemed to offer greater leniency toward Hunter then she did some of the female participants. For example, Hunter was encouraged to make use of extensions more than the other two students; Ms. Smith appeared to forgive Hunter's inability to complete a draft more readily than she did the other two students; and Hunter was invited to return for

additional conferences on the same essay draft more frequently than were the other two students. I recognize the possibility that, from Ms. Smith's perspective, the other students may not have needed the accommodations she extended to Hunter. I also recognize that this supposition of greater leniency for Hunter is similar to my speculations that I, father of two daughters, would potentially be less lenient with a male child, and I understand that these speculations are baseless and essentially ludicrous. Nevertheless, these and other suppositions accompanied me, as the researcher, to the analysis task. As a result, I questioned if, in her efforts to balance her attention to both the affective and cognitive domains, Ms. Smith focused on the affective side. Consider the following excerpt, a follow-up conference resulting from Hunter's ill- prepared arrival at a previous conference:

Hunter: I ran over my paper and found more sources that I could use which being I left them in my book bag in Montgomery, I wasn't able to actually do everything I wanted to do.

Smith: Well are you going to be able to do it by Wednesday? Should we like talk tomorrow instead, then? When you've actually got it finished?

Hunter: I will definitely be able to have it done by Wednesday. Because right now I have 3 ½ pages and…

Smith: Well that's one more than you've had before, isn't it?

Hunter: Yes ma'am. I know exactly where I'm going to go with it.

Smith: Okay

Hunter: And I feel good about it right now.

Smith: Good.

This excerpt illustrates what I perceived to be skewed attention to the affective. In the final analysis, I focused on the potential influence, on their interaction, of Ms. Smith's apparent imbalanced attention to Hunter's affective and cognitive domains. I concluded that, while this feature influenced their interaction in subtle ways at critical decision points, its influence created a strong connection between Hunter and Ms. Smith.

Positive Affect and Predictable Structure

Ms. Smith's attempts to balance her attention to Hunter's affective and cognitive domains influenced the affective relations between them. Often these balancing attempts assumed an air of self-deprecation. When, for example, Ms. Smith was describing some positive attributes of Hunter's writing, she said, "Two, you're observing the length requirement, and you know your teacher's a real jerk about that, so…." Other times, typically at critical decision points, Ms. Smith mixed self-deprecation with the procedural feature of controlling the learner's frustration, as in the following excerpt:

Smith: That's a run-on sentence. There are three sentences there.

Hunter: I thought maybe it was.

Smith: Okay. Just so you know. And, again, so what? I just finished reading all this stuff for class today and it was full of run-on sentences. Like professional writers don't have to deal with this, but I can guarantee that you're going to deal with it in Great Books, so we might as well take care of it.

Positive affective relations facilitated a strong connection, and Hunter seemed to rely on Ms. Smith to take care of it at each conference. Their conference interactions assumed a predictable structure, typically beginning with a brief invitation or elicitation, quickly shifting among directives that would assist Hunter in his efforts to "fix" his essays, and closing with a recap of suggestions for subsequent drafts. As a result, one of the general qualities or characteristics of their interactions was the feeling that Hunter relied heavily on Ms. Smith's feedback and wrote the essays through the conference process, incorporating her suggestions from each conference into the next draft. This resulted in my supposition that, in a manner completely unrelated to scaffolding or any remotely positive pedagogical perspective, Hunter attributed to their interactions a strange sense of collaboration, an attribution I'm certain he never shared with Ms. Smith. Unfortunately, this would-be collaboration denied Hunter any real sense of ownership and didn't facilitate the progression or growth required for the interaction to be considered appropriate. In the end, a core issue was the downfall of this

would-be Marine, as Hunter's interactions with Ms. Smith lacked dialogue sufficient to support designation as scaffolding.

Ellen

Background

In an early interview Ellen described her early educational experience as "learning English differently" involving a "different vocabulary" and something she would have to adjust to. In a later interview, Ellen stated that she was "still a little bit shady with grammar and making sure that [she sounded] like [she was] writing in the American style." Perhaps one of the greatest characterizations of Ellen's writing style came from Ms. Smith after class one day when she revealed that Ellen was "fond of adjectives." As mentioned below, word choice was a challenge for Ellen throughout the semester.

A very conscientious student, Ellen began, as she put it, "harassing" Ms. Smith from the very beginning to make sure that she was making the necessary progress on each draft of each writing assignment. Because the data for this research was gathered during spring semester and basketball season runs through the early parts of spring semester, Ellen's travel schedule with the team often complicated her efforts to get the feedback she wanted from Ms. Smith. She turned to the English Center for help with "grammar and stuff," and she "found [that experience] to be very helpful. Electronic mail proved a useful tool for her, and Ellen's early conference work

was done through email. To supplement Ms. Smith's conference commentary, though, Ellen turned "to other people to check over once [she had] made corrections and make sure that it was along the right lines."

And Ellen's work was generally along the right lines, in large part because she had an exemplary work ethic when it came to writing and revising. In describing her writing process for this class, Ellen said, "Before handing in each of my papers, I would have completed at least five revised drafts and have changed my introduction and conclusion several times." While this would appear to be more of the teacher-pleasing discourse that characterized most of the other fourth writing assignments, my analysis of Ellen's work revealed that she had done as she had described. Her attention to detail was also fascinating. Her motivation was clearly the best possible grade. In describing her revisions for the third writing assignment, Ellen writes that "after finally getting together all quotes and ideas [she] realized that [she] hadn't fulfilled all of the requirements." She went back into the research, retrieved an additional print source and "placed it in accordingly." That was accomplished before the first writing conference and before Ms. Smith saw the very first draft of that assignment.

This level of proactive responsibility for her writing, apparently motivated primarily by the final grade, proved fruitful for Ellen in ways that escaped the other participants. Ms. Smith's feedback for Ellen, including conference interactions, was more global in nature than it was for many of

the other participants. She was able to assist Ellen in refining her arguments, especially in the second and third assignments, because Ellen came to the conferences so thoroughly prepared.

Ellen's increased level of preparedness also contributed to increased dialogue in each of her conferences, a characteristic I exploited for this case study. The increased dialogue in Ellen's conferences provided me with the opportunity to examine, in the context of a single interaction, many of the features of scaffolding from each of the four categories considered possible by current literature. This examination resulted in the line by line, turn by turn, narrated interaction found below. I begin, though, with an overview of Ellen's actual interactions compared with those categories thought possible by current literature. Consider this overview with the understanding that specific examples of many of these features will follow in the narrated interaction.

Overview by Category

Engagement

The conference interactions between Ellen and Ms. Smith were characterized by Ellen's almost continuous engagement with very little effort required of Ms. Smith. Ellen, a very aggressive student and athlete, appeared to be engaged in the conferences from beginning to end. This seemingly natural sense of engagement on Ellen's part resulted in few outstanding examples of specific features associated with the engagement

category. There was the typical initial recruiting, though it was atypically understated. Ms. Smith never formally invited Ellen to contribute clues. The majority of Ms. Smith's few attempts to verify and clarify Ellen's understanding were fashioned from punctuating or transition statements such as "Do you know what I mean?" With Ellen's aggressive demeanor during most conferences, she typically verified and clarified her own understanding. The idea that directives are rare – roughly 5% or less of all teacher statements – didn't prove true in Ellen's actual conferences, a characteristic that seemed to work in Ellen's favor, at least from her perspective. Of all the participants, Ellen seemed to have come the closest to a true balance of power with Ms. Smith, but the two never seemed to share a common goal for the conferences. Ellen seemed primarily interested in the grade, and viewed the goal of each conference to be the acquisition of the necessary revision suggestions that would enable her to revise her essay until she received an A. Ms. Smith, on the other hand, made an effort to fight Ellen's tendency toward consumerism and draw her back into the writing process, deflecting queries about grades and returning the focus to global rhetorical issues where possible. This tension is illustrated in the narrated interaction below. No attempts at metacognitive scaffolding emerged from my analysis.

Procedures

Ms. Smith utilized many of the features described in the procedures category of scaffolding. Contrary to expectations, however, Ms. Smith did not initiate 90% of the conversational turns within the interactions. I attributed this, again, to Ellen's aggressive demeanor. Ms. Smith did, however, offer explanations, model solutions, provide tailored assistance, and give feedback. There was less evidence of Ms. Smith reducing the required elements of specific tasks or controlling Ellen's frustration. At times, in fact, Ms. Smith seemed to compound Ellen's frustration by not providing the directive feedback she seemed to want. There was no evidence of either conceptual or procedural scaffolding, as much of the guidance was offered to Ellen as directive instruction. As for the structured sequence of features, Ms. Smith modeled solutions, but did not engage in discernible scaffolding or coaching as defined within those sequences. Likewise, Ellen's responses did not include any discernible submitting, mirroring, or constructing. Additionally, my analysis produced no evidence of Ellen demonstrating comprehension or internalization.

Critical Decision Points

My analysis led me to characterize the dialogue between Ms. Smith and Ellen as driven. There were few pauses and even fewer crossroads. Both Ellen and Ms. Smith seemed to enter each conference with an agenda, and then each tried desperately to keep up with the other. This characteristic

contributed to my assumption that, of the three students, Ellen achieved the greatest balance of power with Ms. Smith. They approached each conference almost as colleagues would approach a collective writing assignment. As a result, critical decision points were few. It seemed unnecessary for Ms. Smith to attempt to maintain the direction of Ellen's learning; she was very self-directed. Since critical decision points were few and Ellen's engagement seemed all but certain throughout each conference, Ms. Smith made limited use of pumping, prompting, splicing, or hinting. Ellen, however, seemed to pump and prompt Ms. Smith for more detailed information concerning specific strategies that would increase her chances of receiving a good grade.

Qualities or Characteristics of Interaction

Ellen, more than any other participant, assumed ownership of her own writing and pursued what could be perceived as a collaborative relationship with Ms. Smith, though the goals of that collaborative effort would differ by participant. Affective relations between Ellen and Ms. Smith seemed positive at all times, and Ellen's interest in subsequent conferences never wavered. The conference interactions achieved a predictable structure. They typically began with an elicitation or open-ended question, continued with the establishment of an agenda for the conference followed by a review of Ellen's current draft driven by that agenda, and concluded with a recap and specific revision suggestions.

Narrated Interaction as Case Study:

The Possible and the Actual

In the following section, I narrate a significant portion of Ellen's third conference to illustrate the interdependence of the four categories of scaffolding features. I chose this portion and this conference for two reasons. First, this portion of the conference contains substantive dialogue. Dialogue is an essential component to scaffolding. The likelihood of discerning scaffolding is increased when analyzing writing conferences characterized by substantive dialogue. Second, this conference highlights the tension that emerged from my analysis of the different goals Ms. Smith and Ellen harbored for the writing conference process. The initial conversational turns of this conference illustrate Ellen's motivation – the grade. In the latter stages of this portion, the focus of the conference returns to Ms. Smith's goal – the improvement of Ellen's writing. I make this distinction not to suggest that Ellen was not interested in improving her writing. On the contrary, Ellen seemed very interested in improving her writing. Her primary motivation for improving that writing, though, seemed to be the grade.

To distinguish my narration from the conference transcript, the narration is presented in a different typestyle and is left justified with no indentation. Other than my narration, the conference transcript portion is presented with no alteration.

The Narrated Interaction

Smith: Here we go _____, welcome to your conference on 4.14.03. What, do you have any questions?

Ms. Smith begins the conference with an elicitation, though this is part of the predictable structure that characterizes most of Ms. Smith's conference interactions.

Ellen: About my paper, yes. I definitely need to fix up a lot of this, um, transition statements and my conclusion and my introduction, um, aren't what they need to be.

Ellen is engaged in the conference from the very beginning. She enters the conference with a specific agenda, and initially appears to be primarily interested in "fixing up" her writing. Additionally, the self-deprecating tone signals specific items on Ellen's agenda as well as a potential issue for Ms. Smith's attempt to balance the cognitive and the affective.

Smith: Okay

Ms. Smith, in her interactions with Ellen, uses more monosyllabic affirmative utterances – Okay, Uh-huh, Yes – than she did with any other participant. This utterance, though a blind transcription wouldn't confirm it, might also be an example of pumping or prompting, as if Ms. Smith punctuates the utterance with "Tell me more." This interaction has yet to reach a critical decision point, so the presence of pumping or prompting less likely but still possible.

Ellen: The last paper, I really, this time I really want to do whatever I can to get an A, so tell me what I need to do.

Ellen reveals the true character of her agenda. She is still engaged in the interaction, and she initiates the move from the engagement stage to the procedures stage.

> Smith: Read the grading criteria and match it up with what I've said on your first and second essays and then come talk to me about what you feel like you did or didn't, weren't able to do.

In response to Ellen's bid, Ms. Smith offers an explanation of what Ellen would need to do. Ms. Smith does so without committing to the grade. Her response is directive in nature, but it resembles several features within the procedures category of scaffolding, including offering explanations, reducing the number of required tasks, and giving feedback. The directive nature of the response, however, keeps this interaction from crossing the scaffolding threshold, despite Ellen's engagement.

> Ellen: With the last paper you had written stuff about just keep on the same track and work on your transition statements and stuff

Ellen, still engaged, offers a response that potentially falls within the procedures category of scaffolding. In recalling the previous feedback, Ellen sets the stage for demonstrating comprehension or internalization of that previous feedback. At this stage, though, she is merely remembering what Ms. Smith wrote on her last paper and offering that memory up as support for her argument. This interaction remains on the brink of scaffolding. The learner is engaged, procedures have

been instituted, the learner appears poised to demonstrate comprehension, but the participants don't appear to share a common goal. Each of the categories of scaffolding is represented, but not to any clear extent.

Smith: Um hum

If, in fact, three of the four categories of scaffolding are represented as described above, and if there is some disagreement on the goal of the conference, a critical decision point may have been reached. If so, as with an earlier utterance, Ms. Smith could potentially be using this utterance as a way of pumping or prompting Ellen for more detailed information, offering her an opportunity to not only recount previous feedback but to demonstrate comprehension of that feedback through the revisions in her current draft.

Ellen: So I read through that, but there wasn't any, um, there wasn't that much stuff that you had actually written in there, so I didn't…

The potential for scaffolding appears to be deteriorating. Ellen seems to continue to argue that Ms. Smith's feedback on the previous paper was insufficient to guide her on the current draft. There is also a sense that Ellen's engagement in interaction is threatened, rather than enhanced, by Ms. Smith's simple utterance above.

Smith: Okay

Again, possible pumping or prompting, an argument supported by the fact that Ellen continues to provide more detailed information. An alternate interpretation at this point is that Ms. Smith has surmised the essence of Ellen's goal for the

conference and doesn't happen to share it. A critical decision point continues to build. At some point, the tension surrounding the goal of the conference will have to be resolved.

Ellen: Just mainly focus on the transition statements. Obviously, this paper's going to be different, but…

Ellen continues her argument. As Ms. Smith's responses fail to address Ellen's concerns, her engagement in the process seems to be waning. The second sentence in the above passage bears the tone of resignation.

Smith: Yeah, well and part of it is that because I don't have an infinite memory. Bring me those drafts of your first and second essays and all my comments and we can go through them, but what I want you to do first, I mean if this is what you want, to go through them and match them up with the grading criteria in the guidelines and show me where you haven't met the A criteria, and then we can talk about how you can. Do you know what I mean? You need to understand where you are and then we can talk about the possibility of being somewhere else.

Ms. Smith, apparently frustrated by Ellen's continued pursuit of this goal, offers an explanation, directive in nature, in hopes of resolving the tension and establishing shared goal. Her explanation could be interpreted as modeling a solution, even reducing the required number of steps to a level manageable by

Ellen. These features share characteristics. Ms. Smith also seems to verify and clarify using the punctuating phrase "Do you know what I mean?" Ms. Smith's explanation, though, is very directive, using language like "What I want you to do first," "Bring me in those drafts," and "You need to understand." At this critical decision point, Ms. Smith seems to maneuver the conversation as if to disengage Ellen from her current goal, even if it means disengagement temporarily from the interaction.

Ellen: Okay.

Ellen, perhaps sensing a potential breach in affective relations, concedes.

Smith: You know, and we might end up revisiting your grades along the way, who knows. But do you know what I mean, figure, see what that is. What is it about your transitions that you want to improve?

Perhaps anticipating a similar potential breach, Ms. Smith attempts to repair potential damage to positive and effective relations. She also moves to control Ellen's frustration by revealing a possible light at the end of the tunnel. More importantly, however, Ms. Smith attempts to reengage Ellen by returning to one of her original points, transitions.

Ellen: Um, I think it's mainly just making them flow with the whole essay. So I'm…with this one I'm definitely, like, jumping from one thing to the next, and I've got some paragraphs in there that probably shouldn't have been made paragraphs and things like that. But, um, mainly

I'm trying to get the whole, all the things I need to get in there right now, but I haven't polished it.

As if the initial portion of this conference didn't happen, Ellen restates with similar self-deprecating language her goal of improving transitions in her current draft. Her tone indicates that, once again, she is engaged in the interaction.

Smith: Okay, I see some blanks, so I love that.

I'm not certain what Ms. Smith means by blanks, but the tone of this response indicates the return to silent positive affect. There is no move, however, to initiate any specific procedures, so scaffolding is not present to this point in this interaction.

Ellen: Yeah, and I have to…

It appears that Ellen is gearing up for a reflective inventory of her current draft, perhaps in anticipation of revision suggestions. This transcript leads me to believe that Ellen's reflective inventory is interrupted. If, instead, the ellipses represent a pause, a critical decision point emerges. Ms. Smith, in that case, can choose to prompt Ellen for more detailed information about what she has to do, reinforcing her engagement and providing Ms. Smith with the opportunity to, perhaps, diagnose Ellen's needs as a learner.

Smith: But I mean I like the way you're arguing, is what I'm saying.

Ms. Smith appears to preempt Ellen at a critical decision point. Positive affect is affirmed, but no scaffolding procedures emerge.

Ellen: Okay. I don't have any like print sources right now. I have an internet and the rest is professional communication, because that was the best thing to use. So I'm not sure, like, I have lots of information but I don't know like how it's going to be relevant for me to include it.

If Ellen originally intended to say that she needed to find additional print sources, then no interruption has occurred. As for maintaining the direction of the learner, I'm left to wonder what happened to transition statements. Interestingly, Ellen raises two new questions in this turn. The first of these concerns, print sources, is a requirement for this particular essay that Ellen seems to lack. The larger question, though, seems to address the potential relevance of the sources she has gathered.

Smith: Well, where did this come from with auburntigers.com, because you know often, like let's say the day of the big game or whatever, the article will go on the auburntigers.com about the game, but then it's word for word what we see in *The Plainsman* the next week. You know what I'm saying, so in that way it becomes a print source.

In what might be considered offering an explanation or modeling a potential solution, Ms. Smith addresses the first of Ellen's two concerns from the previous

turn. This explanation – stretched as it may be – provides a set of possible procedures that could elevate the interaction, at this point, to scaffolding. Ellen is engaged in the interaction, procedures are in place, and there seems to be a shared goal – understanding the process that transforms Internet articles to print sources.

Ellen: Oh, okay

At this, the logical close of this portion of the interaction, there remains no evidence that the interaction has moved Ellen toward greater competence in academic writing, and the interaction has provided no outlet for Ellen to demonstrate comprehension. Her final utterance affirms the successful completion of the task, but she played no part in the completion of the task.

The Narrated Interaction: A Debriefing

I adopted the narrated interaction as a part of this case study in hopes of exploiting the increased and relatively balanced dialogue in this portion of Ellen's third conference. While some of the features of scaffolding were prevalent in Ellen's conferences with Ms. Smith, distinguishing scaffolding from other types of interaction – achievable through the discernment of consistent presence of the features of scaffolding – was difficult because Ms. Smith typically did most of the talking. The narrated interaction allowed me to present the findings of my analysis in a case study that examined potential scaffolded interaction in the context of continuous dialogue. I was intrigued to discover that the actual writing of the case study in this manner enhanced

my analysis of the data. It forced me to recognize the relationship between the four categories and required that I substantiate each supposition of scaffolding in the context of that relationship.

I adopted the narrated interaction, therefore, in hopes of discerning evidence of scaffolding in Ellen's conferences that had previously eluded me. No such evidence was found.

A cross-case analysis is presented in the introductory section of Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare the features of scaffolding discernible in the transcriptions of actual conferences with the features of scaffolding considered possible in the current literature. The literature suggests that scaffolding is an important type of dyadic interaction and that the novice-expert dyad is considered prominent in the writing conference community. A thorough reading of this literature led me to believe that scaffolding would, in fact, be a vital part of conference interactions and readily discernible in conference transcriptions. Reflections on my own teaching and what I considered scaffolding looked like in my own practice affirmed my assumption that scaffolding would emerge as a prominent pedagogical tool I examined as a part of this study. The features used to characterize scaffolding in the current literature seemed to suggest that scaffolding was a likely component of the writing conference. The results of this study, however, were different.

While all of the conferences provided evidence that some of the features considered possible in the current literature were discernible in the transcripts of actual writing conferences, I was surprised to find that no interactions emerged that could truly be classified as scaffolded interactions – as I defined it for this study. Eight of the interactions within these conferences incorporated many if not all of the features considered possible by the literature. These findings were based on scaffolding as I defined it based on current literature, and an alternative definition of scaffolding might have produced different results. For example, it seemed that the interactions were, at times, on the verge of scaffolding but unable to take the final step and complete the requirements of the scaffolded interaction. The teacher, for example, engaged the student, chose appropriate procedures to scaffold student competence on a particular task, made good decisions at critical decision points, to reengage the student, but the interaction closed without the student demonstrating any increased competence or getting any indication that the scaffolding had any effect at all. These were all required elements of scaffolding as I defined it based on current literature, and these features were consistent with what I envisioned scaffolding would and should look like in the conference.

It was confusing to me, then, when no scaffolding was discernible in the actual conferences. The purpose of this chapter is to explore possible implications for these findings. This chapter is organized to compare the

findings initially across cases, then with the literature on scaffolding and writing conferences, and finally with the literature on adult development in academic writing. Implications of this study for each of those areas will then be discussed, followed by suggestions for future research in this area.

The Findings: A Cross-Case Analysis

After I completed the case studies, I returned to each as a reader. It became readily apparent early in my review of the case studies that the interactions between Ms. Smith and each of the three participants were very different, and I began to consider those differences and how they might have affected my ability to discern scaffolding from those interactions. Each of the writing conference interactions began with a similar structure. Ms. Smith would attempt to establish an agenda for the conference based on previous drafts, general classroom discourse, and any questions the student brought to the conference. In this manner, Ms. Smith typically began the conference with an elicitation, an invitation for the student to engage in the process. The first third of each conference was characterized by efforts to engage the student, establish an agenda, withhold judgment, and develop a strategy – procedures – for moving the student toward greater competence in academic writing. All of these characteristics are consistent with the features of scaffolding, and it seemed likely at the beginning of each conference that scaffolding would play an important part in that conference. For different

reasons, however, interactions with each of the three participants concluded without scaffolding being brought to full fruition.

Hunter, for example, seemed to suffer from an inability to talk about his writing at any great length. He offered very few responses but appeared to remain engaged – in the interaction, at least. He also welcomed the initiation of procedures associated with scaffolding, especially the directive type. Decisions at critical points were made almost exclusively by Ms. Smith, and Hunter appeared to depend on her guidance during each conference to produce the next draft. This was visible in the changes Hunter made to subsequent drafts based on the directive feedback and he gathered in previous conferences. Despite these changes, however, Hunter never seemed to demonstrate any sense of comprehension of what the changes entailed. He seemed to make the changes because Ms. Smith suggested he make them, and he confirmed this accounting of his revision strategy in our interviews together.

Lisa, in similar fashion, offered few responses. She did not, however, remain consistently engaged. Her fluctuating engagement resulted in a high number of crucial decision points during conferences. Lisa also seemed to have difficulty bridging the gap between her high school writing experience and Ms. Smith's class, her introduction to college writing. Accustomed to formulaic high school writing instruction, where presumably she felt she had little authority or ownership in the process, Lisa seemed to suffer when Ms.

Smith attempted to stretch her beyond the five-paragraph essay. Lisa also seemed dependent on Ms. Smith's directive feedback, and Lisa's engagement in the conference process was altered by what she considered inconsistency in Ms. Smith's feedback. Lisa revealed her perspective in one of our interviews. Her view was that Ms. Smith, in evaluating a draft of Lisa's essay, suggested that it "looked good." When the paper was returned, however, Lisa did not receive the grade she had hoped for and revealed, in our interviews together, that Ms. Smith did not identify specific revision suggestions during that initial evaluation, but found some areas that needed improvement when she graded the paper. This inconsistency led Lisa, from her perspective, to withdraw from the conference process, though she continued to attend conferences and make the changes Ms. Smith suggested on each draft.

Ellen remained actively engaged in the interaction. She initiated transitions from the engagement stage to the procedures stage and appeared eager to utilize the directive features of that category. While quantity of dialogue was not a real issue for Ellen – she never seemed hesitant to talk – the focus of her efforts consistently leaned toward the grade she would receive on the paper and in the class. Ms. Smith, at times, appeared to struggle to realign Ellen's focus. Nevertheless, Ms. Smith also offered a generous amount of directive instruction to Ellen. Despite Ellen's seemingly voracious appetite for directive instruction, however, she never demonstrated that she internalized or even comprehended any of that instruction. She did,

however, demonstrate that she could almost flawlessly execute the revision strategies suggested by Ms. Smith.

After considering these distinctions, I discerned that the differences revealed a pattern common to all three participants. My inability to discern scaffolding among the conferences of all three participants was driven by these three components: dialogue, decisions, and demonstration.

Dialogue

Shor and Friere (1987) describe dialogue as "the moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make it and remake it. It is the quintessential human act, the social moment wherein we establish ties, and where we have authentic recognition of the other" (p. 98). Essential to scaffolding, substantive dialogue was in short supply during the conferences of all three participants. On a relative scale, Ms. Smith did most of the talking during most of the conferences. Some of this talk – modeling solutions, offering explanations, and similar strategies – was characteristic of the type of dialogue involved in scaffolding. However, the participants rarely displayed any hint of engagement during most of Ms. Smith's talking. Hunter and Lisa responded most often with monosyllabic, affirmative utterances. Even Ellen's relatively extensive dialogue in the third conference offered little evidence that Ellen was reflecting on her reality, as described by Shor and Friere. More than anything else, each participant's contribution to the dialogue in each conference seemed more like a version of

teacher-pleasing discourse, the type of talk that each participant assumed they were supposed to contribute in their role as student novice.

As a result of the shortage of student contribution to dialogue, Ms. Smith often reverted to a more traditional instruction role, filling the void with directives. This finding corresponds with Ulichney and Watson-Gegeo's (1989) finding that, during slow periods of conversation, teachers tend to revert to the model of teaching as presenting information that shifts power in favor of the teacher.

Decisions

The features of scaffolding considered possible by current literature can be synthesized into four distinct categories: features used to engage the novice's interest, procedures and activities used to guide and direct the engaged student, critical decision points, and qualities or characteristics of interaction. The relationships among these categories, while fluid, are characterized by pauses or crossroads, critical decision points at which teachers must attempt to reengage students or alternative procedures must be selected to replace those that have proven to be ineffective. Decisions made at these junctures are critical to successful scaffolding. Wrong decisions are not necessarily terminal to the scaffolding process, as it is recursive in nature. The participants continually return to the well of engagement in hopes of drawing forth a next procedure that will achieve successful scaffolding.

Lisa seemed to be bound by her high school writing experience, and this experience conflicted with the new expectations of college writing. This conflict resulted in her fluctuating engagement and her inability to reconcile the differences between the elements of her high school experience – writing, evaluation, teaching methods, and personalities – and the same elements at the college level. Inevitably, breaches would occur, but often Lisa found her indecision to be crippling at critical decision points.

The experience was different for Hunter, whose decisions at critical points were fewer and farther between. Where Lisa displayed passive aggressive tendencies, Hunter was more passive in his approach, resigned to the reception of teacher directives and subsequent revision. There was very little conflict. Hunter remained consistently engaged, Ms. Smith selected directive procedures for Hunter to comply with, and Hunter complied.

Ellen seemed capable of making big decisions very quickly. On two occasions in separate conferences, after Ms. Smith had introduced problem areas with Ellen's current draft, Ellen's immediate response was to suggest she rewrite the essay completely. On both occasions, Ms. Smith was able to provide less drastic directives. There were, in Ellen's conferences, few critical decision points, and these were negotiated quickly with little to no loss of momentum in the conference.

Demonstration

Essential to scaffolding is the idea that, at some point, the student or learner must demonstrate comprehension, confirming that the scaffolding process is moving the student along the continuum of competence on specific tasks. This was perhaps the weakest link in my search for scaffolding. Across all the conference transcripts, it was difficult to discern forward progress with any of the participants. All three participants demonstrated the ability to assimilate Ms. Smith's direct instruction into subsequent drafts. Hunter even demonstrated the ability to construct an essay based on the revision strategies suggested by Ms. Smith in what became a series of conferences. He seemed to write his essay as they talked about it. At no point, however, did Hunter demonstrate greater competence in a specific task related to academic writing as a result of the procedures Ms. Smith chose for the conferences. The same was true for Lisa and Ellen.

In order for scaffolding to occur, the learner must be engaged, specific procedures must be used to increase the learner's competence in specific tasks, decisions must be made at critical points to ensure the learner's engagement and the effective use of appropriate strategies, and the learner must demonstrate that this cycle of interaction has, in some way, affected his or her ability to perform the same or a similar task with greater competence and less assistance in the future. Where these requirements are not entirely met, scaffolding does not occur. There remains, however, an interaction

between a teacher and a learner. The following section characterizes some of those interactions that occurred between Ms. Smith and the collective participants in patterned ways.

General Features of the Interactions

One of the more significant roadblocks to scaffolding in the interactions I studied was Ms. Smith's tendency to shift to directive instructions without necessarily engaging the students. Though this tendency didn't seem to bother the students – all three seemed to want directives from her – it limited the amount of involvement the students actually had in the conferences. There was also, however, the tendency on the part of each of the participants to fashion their questions as requests for an interim evaluation of their draft or an explicit bid for directive instruction. Interim evaluations were requested with phrases such as "Did I do this the right way?" and "Is this the way you would have done this?" Explicit requests for directive instruction included phrases such as "Tell me what I need to fix to get an A." These examples seem extreme, but they are representative, and they illustrate a type of exchange – the understanding that the actions of one person in an interaction are exchanged with the other without the necessity of negotiation of meaning – that runs counter to the more collaborative nature of scaffolding. The exchange relationship characterized by this type of request for and provision of directive instruction limits the potential for the learner to move beyond demonstrating the ability to assimilate instructions and act

upon them. These tendencies also illustrate recognition on the part of the learner participants of the evaluation authority vested in the teacher.

The prominence of directive instruction in these interactions might also have been related to another of Ms. Smith's tendencies that emerged in a patterned way in the conferences I examined. Ms. Smith made a practice of introducing multiple issues for student consideration within a very short period of time during a conference. This trait ran counter to the feature of scaffolding – maintaining the direction of the learner – that is characteristic of critical decision points. Ms. Smith's introduction of a rapid series of issues during a conference often left a wake of unresolved issues, resulting in subsequent critical decision points where the student was less likely to completely engage in the process because he or she was two or three issues behind. This tendency also resulted in numerous instances – coded as language conflicts during the analysis process – where the student and Ms. Smith seemed almost to be engaged in separate conversations. The simplest explanation for this tendency is the restricted amount of time afforded a teacher and student during a writing conference. There was a lot to talk about and only a little time. I don't suggest that Ms. Smith was irresponsible in her practice of introducing multiple ideas within a relatively short period time. I only suggest that her writing conferences were characterized by that practice and that such a practice was not conducive to the successful execution of scaffolding within the conference.

The following section examines specific elements of writing conference that are considered conducive to scaffolding compared with features discerned from the actual conference transcripts.

Scaffolding and the Writing Conference

One result of the peer review process I underwent during my analysis of the data was a suggestion that the authority invested in the teacher, the power of the grade, might have had a stifling effect on the dialogue. I found that Ellen recognized the power of the grade and voluntarily assumed a subordinate role. While Ellen was prone to push her grade-conscious agenda, overtly asking Ms. Smith to provide the revision strategies necessary for her to make an A, Ellen was also smart enough to know, as in the narrated interaction, when she had pushed far enough. At that point in that conference, Ellen would rapidly assume a subordinate role, the role of the novice in interaction with an expert.

Ellen's return to the novice role was a coping strategy (Ulichney & Watson-Gegeo, 1989), similar to Lisa's tendency to completely withdraw from the conference (Nickel, 2001). This withdrawal, stemming from a misunderstanding between Lisa and Ms. Smith regarding interim evaluation of one of her essays, resulted in reduced dialogue and engagement in the conference.

The shifting of power characterized by the removal of teacher support as student competence increases (Hung, 1999; Polanyi, 1964), critical to

successful scaffolding, was not discernible in any of the conferences. Among the many possible explanations for this void are the time constraints of a conference – usually 10 to 20 minutes at the most – and even the length of the study. Perhaps a single semester is an insufficient amount of time for significant shifts in competence to emerge in freshman composition students.

Time, however, is not considered the only restricting element. Newkirk (1995) used performative theory to re-conceptualize the college writing conference. His conclusion was that the scaffolding metaphor was too limiting because it "cannot illuminate the cross purposes, the resistances, the concealed feelings and attitudes – the unsaid and unsayable – that are surely a part of the writing conference" (p. 195). This is especially true considering scaffolding is an important type of role-related, dyadic interaction. Ellen, however, pushes a grade-related agenda that wouldn't typically characterize a scaffolded novice-expert interaction, unless the purpose of the scaffolding was to instruct the novice in how to negotiate good grades. When Ms. Smith demonstrates frustration with Ellen's line of argument, Ellen retreats to the novice role. Newkirk's findings suggest that scaffolding is too inflexible to accommodate the shifting in roles – as Ellen shifts from consumer to novice – that are inherent to a writing conference. The transcripts I analyzed revealed Ms. Smith and the participants enacting a variety of roles in what Sperling (1990) suggests are dramas of composing characterized by negotiation and mutual manipulation. My inability to discern scaffolding

during those transcribed interactions corresponds with Newkirk's finding that the scaffolding metaphor is too limiting to completely characterize teacher-student interactions during writing conferences.

My initial reading of the current literature suggested that much of the responsibility for scaffolding, whether it succeeds or fails, rests with the teacher. According to the spirit of that literature, the teacher, who typically initiates 90% of the interaction (Lepper et al., 1997), bears the majority of the responsibility for engaging the student, choosing the strategies, negotiating critical decision points, and requiring that the student demonstrate comprehension before moving on to the next task. If the conferences I studied contained no scaffolding, then many of the previous empirical studies of scaffolding indicate that responsibility for the lack of scaffolding in this setting is attributable to the writing teacher, Ms. Smith. Dyadic interaction, however, involves two people, and both presumably share some responsibility for the success or failure of types of interaction such as scaffolding. The following section considers the developmental histories that Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen may have brought to their writing conferences during freshman composition and the impact of those histories on their interactions with Ms. Smith.

Adult Development in Academic Writing

A second result of the peer review was a suggestion that I consider the literature on adult development as a vehicle for exploring the passivity of

freshman composition students. As the case studies revealed, Lisa and Hunter were quite passive; both relied heavily on Ms. Smith's directive instructions and offered little in the way of dialogue that contributed substantively to the interactions. Ellen, easily the most proactive of the three participants, assumed a passive stance on issues other than the grade she hoped to receive on the essays and in the class. For all three participants, Ms. Smith seemed to exercise complete authority. Ms. Smith was right, and Lisa's job – Hunter's and Ellen's as well – was to determine the right way to "fix" her paper as required by Ms. Smith. For scaffolding to succeed, authority must be delegated to a certain extent – though this is not entirely possible – to enable the student to feel comfortable in pushing the limits and exploring new territory. Lisa and Hunter didn't seem interested in exploring new territory as academic writers, and Ellen seemed interested only if a good grade was waiting at the end of the journey. Scaffolding, then, didn't seem to match any of these students' mental models for their activities in the setting of this writing class.

At the reviewer's suggestion, I consulted Perry's (1970) longitudinal study of development in undergraduates. In developing his elaborate developmental scheme, Perry described as the most difficult moment for college students the transition from the conception of knowledge as quantitative or concrete – a black-and-white perspective characteristic of the freshman student – to the qualitative assessment of contextual observations

and relationships – increased relativity – that often accompanies the exploration and liberation of the upperclassmen. Perry describes an equally important transition in the way students perceive teachers before compared to after this developmental change. To the freshman student, the teacher represents an authority figure, who should present facts clearly and correct infractions. By the end of the college experience, according to Perry, the student is more likely to view the teacher as supportive of sustained exploration and synthesis.

Freshman composition, obviously, is at the beginning of the college experience, the time characterized by student perception of teacher as authority. Scaffolding is often contextual and relative, to use Perry's (1970) terms. Tasks and students vary, and each requires a variety of engagement initiatives, scaffolding procedures, and negotiation strategies at critical decision points. While predictable structure is a characteristic of scaffolding, the ultimate goal of scaffolding is to guide a learner beyond his or her previous expertise into greater competence on specific tasks. To engage freshman students, then, in mental exercises that go beyond transmission of material provided by the teacher is challenging. Even the modeling of potential solutions might be too abstract for freshmen students to fully comprehend.

For Ms. Smith the challenge of moving Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen beyond passive attentiveness through scaffolding appears to have been

insurmountable. From her students' perspective, Ms. Smith required the "right" paper and conferences were designed to allow Ms. Smith to correct or "fix" the mistakes in their current drafts to improve their chances of getting a good grade, if not their competence on specific tasks in academic writing. This finding corresponds with Baxter Magolda's (1992) finding in her study of gender-related patterns in intellectual development of college students that students generally harbor an early belief that authority is omnipotent. These firm distinctions change through the years of the college experience, and upperclassmen come to view learning as a relational and contextual activity.

Lisa and Hunter appeared to be firmly planted in the early developmental stages of their college experience. The issues addressed in the writing conference interactions existed, for them, in black-and-white, right and wrong terms. The same was true, to a certain extent, for Ellen. She, too, was interested in writing the correct essay and especially in the good grade that rewards such efforts. For Ellen, though, there was a hint of the upperclassman perspective to come. She engaged in more extensive dialogue with Ms. Smith, argued more consistently for her own rhetorical points than did her peers, and approached the conference interaction with Ms. Smith more as a colleague than Lisa and Hunter did. Still, all three participants exhibited passivity – a reluctance to fully engage in any interaction that was not grade-driven – that contributed to the inability of qualitative analysis to

discern scaffolding – as defined in current literature – from the transcripts of their conference interactions.

Implications of the Study

My inability to discern scaffolding – as defined in the present study – in the conference interactions under study has implications for three areas of writing conference scholarship: the perceived prominence of the novice-expert role dyad as a vehicle for assimilating students into an academic discourse community; the possibility that other types of interaction more aptly characterize the student-teacher writing conference; and how the absence of scaffolding affects students' and teachers' ability to negotiate authority, meaning, and other components considered essential to the effectiveness of writing conferences and the development of students as academic writers. The following section explores these three areas in greater detail.

The Novice-Expert Role Dyad

Through the present study I concluded that scaffolding – as defined by current literature – did not occur in the writing conferences under study, though features from each category were found to be present in the student-teacher interactions during the writing conferences. The defining characteristics that were not present included substantive dialogue and demonstration that Hunter, Lisa, and Ellen advanced their competence as academic writers as a result of the conference interactions with Ms. Smith. Scaffolding is considered an important type of interaction for the

novice-expert role dyad, and the absence of scaffolding weakens the assumption that Hunter, Lisa, and Ellen were enacting the role of student novices apprenticing themselves to Ms. Smith as teacher expert.

One purpose of freshman composition is to assimilate students into a discourse community of academic writing and to facilitate their entry into a more specific academic writing associated with their major areas of study. Important to this purpose of assimilation is the idea that student novices apprentice themselves to teacher experts. The lack of scaffolding in the present study, however, brings into question the idea that the novice-expert relationship – often characterized by the presence of scaffolding – is important to assimilating college students into discourse communities. The connection, or disconnection, between the novice-expert dyad and discourse communities is important in two ways. First, if Ms. Smith's ability to assimilate Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen into a discourse community is weakened by a lack of scaffolding and subsequent diminishment of the novice-expert role dyad during writing conferences, what assurances are there that these students are being introduced to and assimilated into academic discourse communities? Second, if no assimilation is taking place because of a lack of scaffolding and novice-expert interaction during writing conferences, but instruction continues and Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen continue to move successfully from lower division writing courses to upper division, content-specific courses related to their major areas of study, evidence emerges that

questions the importance of freshman composition to students' overall development in academic writing.

Other Types of Interaction

The lack of scaffolding in the present study suggests that other types of dyadic interaction characterize portions of the transcribed writing conferences between Ms. Smith and Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen. Ms. Smith demonstrated a tendency to revert to a traditional model of teaching as providing directive instruction, and the participating students' demonstrated a willingness and ability to comply with Ms. Smith's directives. All three students fashioned some of their questions to Ms. Smith in the form of directive requests for interim evaluations or instructions, and Ms. Smith, more often than not, complied with their requests. Lisa, Hunter, and Ellen's tendencies reflect the student pragmatism that is often associated with the student-as-consumer metaphor. Ms. Smith's tendencies reflect many of the characteristics associated with the teacher-as-provider metaphor. Again, the time constraints and perceived purposes of the conference might contribute to making what could be false assumptions. If the consumer-provider metaphor emerges as the dominant descriptor of the interactions between Ms. Smith and the participants, the greatest implication is, perhaps, the loss of the impetus for negotiation that is crucial to learning and development during writing conferences.

Mechanisms for Negotiating during a Conference

The lack of scaffolding in the present study suggests that one mechanism that Ms. Smith and her students could have used to negotiate meaning and authority was absent. The prevalence of teacher directives during conferences suggests that, contrary to social constructionist theory, meaning was not being negotiated as much as it was being dispensed by Ms. Smith during the conferences. If this disadvantaged Lisa, Hunter, or Ellen, they seemed comfortable in their requests for and unquestioning compliance with Ms. Smith's directives. Perhaps, as Perry (1970) and Baxter-Magolda (1992) suggest, college freshmen are not developmentally equipped to negotiate meaning with an authority. For Ellen, though, who appears to be on the verge of the next developmental stage, the absence of mechanisms, like scaffolding, that promote negotiation reaffirm her reliance on teacher directives. The consumer-provider role dyad, in that scenario, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

- Do you work much online?
- Do you offer much formal grammar instruction?
- What sort of things do you initially look for in a student's paper?
- Do you do a lot of small group work?
- How many writing assignments are there in ENGL 1120?
- How many drafts do you envision for each of those essays?
- How have you noticed your feedback in the pat being used in subsequent writing?
- Do you value global comments more than local or local more than global? Why?
- What guides your practice, other than the department guidelines?
- Have you found that the more specific your comments are the better?
- Is teacher control of student texts an issue for you? What steps do you take to avoid that?
- Ho do you tie the grading criteria into the class?
- How do you provide formative feedback without mentioning the grade?
- To what extent do you make it clear to the students that you value formative feedback and that they should too?
- Have you used the portfolio method?

APPENDIX B

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS 1, 2 AND 3

Interview 1

- Do you consider yourself to be a good writer?
- How have teachers tried to help you with your writing in the past?
- What methods seemed to work the best?
- Where do you think your strengths are in writing?
- Weaknesses?
- Do you write letters to friends, long emails, or often have a chance to write outside of school?
- When you get a paper back, what do you look for first?
- How important are the comments teachers write on your paper?
- What sorts of comments have teachers typically written on your papers in the past?
- Have these comments made sense to you? Have they been easy to understand?
- Have these comments been tied to a textbook or class activity that helped you make sense of the expectations they described?
- Have you found the comments helpful in revising and editing? In future writing assignments?

Interview 2

- Briefly describe your steps in writing and revising this paper.
- What changes did you make between drafts? Why?
- What changes did you not make? Why?
- How did you decide to make these changes?
- Did you refer to previous essays or commentary while writing or revising this

  paper?
- Did any specific comment made previously in class or conference come to mind while you were writing or revising?

Interview 3

- Briefly describe your steps in writing and revising this paper.
- What changes did you make between drafts? Why?
- How did you decide to make these changes?
- Did you refer to previous essays or commentary while writing or revising this paper?
- Did any specific comment made previously in class or conference come to mind while you were writing or revising?
- What sorts of ideas did you get from the peer reviews of your work and how did those ideas affect your revision process?
- How have you made use of the English Center over the course of the semester?

APPENDIX C

INITIAL DATA MATRICES

Ellen Conference One Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	I made the changes we discussed and then took the paper to the English Center	no response
		I wanted you to give me feedback on the following things	no response
		I don't want points taken off for this, so let me know if I need to change to MLA	no problem
		Sorry for bugging you but I really appreciate your help	no response
	Neg?	Were the transition statements worked on successful in supporting my thesis or do I still need to work on them?	they are much improved and in keeping with the informal speech context
		If you have time, please let me know if I need to still revise this situation.	nothing glared at me, but I'm also not in proofreading-editing mode
		Can you give me an indication of how much more time I should put into this or if there is anything that I am leaving out that will decrease my grade	I don't see anything missing, but there's always room for improvement in everyone's writing. In this essay specifically, there are some instances where the word choice might be improved
		Is the length an issue, it is five pages plus one reference list	that's just right

Teacher Comment/Student Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
		no teacher initiated comments. Conference conducted through e-mail	

Ellen Conference Two Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	positive	they sort of had question marks, so I've gone through and I've tried to tidy it up a little bit	OK, good, because they are really your audience
		I'm still not positive that I have an appropriate position statement. It's more my thesis statement, if that's OK	as long as it says what your position is
		is that too long? I was going to ask about that.	a colon would be fine here, too, and a comma is OK. I didn't mean to scare you away from the….
		so that's OK, too?	um hum
		I was trying to prove one for you, but it wasn't working	that's OK. Hey, I'm glad you do that, though, because you know, you do know.
		well that's what I got from the peer review. That's how they made it seem.	OK, there you go, proving me wrong again.
		should it be like this? However, this statement… Or not?	which ever won you want. Both of them are OK.
		should I give the attendance figure of….	yes, if you have it.
	negative	basically I want to know whether this is, is all of this information I have been here is relevant to supporting topic…	OK, what did your peer reviewers have to say, and more specifically were they able to find your position statement
		but would you be mad if I used a colon?	no, I'm just not good at them.
		do I need to do this?	you're doing a quote. Yes you do.
		change it completely?	No, but you still don't have a list of works,…
		I was getting confused with when I should've put a new paragraph in, so I thought I would just…	I think it's a good time, but I would introduce it with your own words, to give the transition between this line and this line
		so I shouldn't say this?	no, no I think it's good, but I think it's part of your argument.
		I shouldn't use in addition or something?	No, this is the first time I've seen it, or maybe the second
		that's why I thought….	here's what I'm going to claim. I'm going to claim that….
		what do you mean?	well, it's just that you say….

Teacher Comment/Student Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	OK, what did your peer reviewers had to say and more specifically were they able to find your position statement?	um, they sort of had question marks, so I've gone through and I've tried to tidy it up a little bit
		do you care if I go ahead and start reading	yeah, that's fine
		I don't think you, I mean should you change it, no I don't think so. If you like that.	I just felt like I was going on too much and not… OK
	Neg	yes, as long as it says what your position is.	yes, I didn't know whether you are meant to have two
		I would claim that this is an independent clause, and if so, the only appropriate patterns that we could use our this one, or this one…	um hum
		but a colon would actually work there too	but would you be mad if I used a colon?
		I don't know if we would always agree, I mean I'm going to agree, but you might want to point out that that comes from an Auburn source, is awfully biased	oh no, this is like said everywhere, it's in a lot of the different books. That was just the one that I took it out of.
		OK, um, nice transition…the transitions that I don't see are up here, and they are linking to your topic sentence to the main point of the whole paper.	my last one, I asked somebody what you would do and they were just like is its saying according to, or something you didn't need to, but…
		you just put personal, see., and you have personal communication back there. That's fine.	but for speech, I think we used a different thing, so I was looking at those notes that I had.
		same deal here. I think I would have a topic sentence before I had a quote	yeah. I was getting confused with when I should have put a new paragraph in, so I thought I would just…
		I think it's a good time, but I would introduce it with your own words, to give the transition between this line in and this line	OK
		… It's this period. I don't see how that's necessary. And I do know that this period goes out here even in APA.	oh, okay
		no, I think it is more intense, but again, and you're right, but again remind us. I'm just taking up the sermon a notch. Do you know that mean?	um hum
		yes, I don't think so. Not really. I mean, I'm just answering your question.	so you're right. I was trying to prove one for you, but it wasn't working.

Ellen Conference Three Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	positive	I really want to do whatever I can to get an A, so tell me what I need to do.	read the grading criteria and match it up with what I've said on your first and second essays and then come and talk to me about what you feel like you did or didn't, weren't able to do.
		what are you talking about?	well, I really thought, especially after your last essay, that I would see very little that was new in this paper...
		so I can go through the athletic department to find out that kind of information.	um hum.
	negative	I definitely need to fix up a lot of this, um, transition statements and my conclusion and my introduction aren't what they need to be.	OK
		there wasn't that much stuff that you had actually written in there, so I didn't…	OK
		obviously, this paper's going to be different, but…	yeah, well and part of it is that because I don't have an infinite memory.
		mainly I'm trying to get the whole, all the things that need to get in there right now, but I haven't polished it.	okay, I see some blanks, so I love that.
		OK. And I just need one?	um hum, unless you have a compelling reason, again, you know, to not have one.
		so, like I could find something, but whether or not it's going to be relevant…	sorry, I'm just reading it. Anything else?
		I could leave that part out.	I don't know, I might leave it out. Or, come up with another reason why.
		but not directly from football?	well, right, unless you have done the research here and maybe you have, and then you're going to give me the specifics.
		OK. So, pretty much ignore the rest of the paper, then.	no. I just, if you were to tell them….
		yeah, that's what I wanted to show. I'll put all of that stuff in there.	okay, but do you know what I mean…

Teacher Comment/Student Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	positive	but I mean I like the way you're arguing, is what I'm saying	OK… I have lots of information but don't know like how it's going to be relevant for me to include it.
		and why wouldn't you be using the media guide again?	well, just because I'm talking about crowd attendance, there wasn't really that much on crowd attendance in there.
		good call. You knew it affected you, but I like that.	um hum.
		see how you knew this already.	yeah. I feel like I'm saying too much.
		I guess that's what I was thinking.	oh, okay.
		but I like the way that now we're saying it's not that it would….	well there was no other way it was going to benefit the crowd, really, that I could think of, so…
		again, I'm so impressed that this has become so specific. That's something else I think that makes this paper really strong.	I was angry at the beginning when we had this, and we had to go and play there, but I was like, no, this is good for my paper.
	negative	you need to understand where you are and then we can talk about the possibility of being somewhere else	OK
		but it… It's a very confusing sentence. I'm going to write that… It's an issue of parallelism and it's an issue of a correlative conjunction.	oh.
		OK, parallelism:…the second thing is really picky and snobby little English thing…	no response
		do you see how that is awesome for the team but not real great for your argument?	I could leave that part out.
		I don't know that would take it out, but…	just work on it…
		sorry to be so surprised, but I didn't know how you were going to do that.	what are you talking about?
		I don't see any parenthetical citation, so I don't know what good research you might have done there...	but apparently they have helped, like…
		it's the athletic department as a whole,…	oh, okay.
		but it comes from the athletic department as a whole. So you might want to bill it that way.	but not directly from football?
		well, right, unless, have you done the research year and maybe you have, and then you're going to give me the specifics	okay, I can do that.
		if you can show that their money comes through the athletic department…	OK.
		how does the record in the last three years compared to…	yeah, that's what I wanted to show. I'll put all of that stuff in there
		I do see a few holes, like where you left blanks.	OK. I will attend to the football section and a conclusion, and I can e-mail you again?

Lisa Conference One Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	Um Yeah, that's a bad conclusion.	I don't know, um, I will say that I think your conclusion is the closest that you get to articulating to me your understanding of the assignment and based on this I felt like you understood what the evaluation assignment was.
		I like the parent audience better.	Why?
		I was interested in like, this topic because I went to an all girl's school, you know.	I didn't think about it that way.
		Cause that's where I was kind of going with it	That would be, actually, a very interesting . . .
		But I don't need them for this paper, though?	Uh-uh. You may have already found some…
	Neg	Okay. But, um, like,	Tell me.
		Right here, like…I did that okay?	Um-huh…I mean, it's fine. I just think that you could use more…
		Um, about, like my credibility, I can use, like, I in there? Cause . . .	Yeah….But you don't have to.…
		But I don't need them for this paper, though?	But it is gonna, it's gonna color the way you come off of this too,

Teacher Comment/Student Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	Here's something else. I think you started on your position paper.	Okay, yeah, probably.
		See what I mean.	Um-huh.
	Neg	Do you see how you did your conclusion?	Um-huh. Yeah, that's a bad conclusion.
		So you might consider how you could define people who want to support this view.	Okay.
		Might want to back off just a little bit and claim that, um, these would be good, bad, whatever articles to read you say in the end that all of these are good for supporting your topic.	Okay, okay.
		here's one other way to go with it and when we get to your position paper I'm really gonna strongly recommend this.	Um, oh yeah.
		For your position paper, I'm gonna strongly suggest that your audience be people who do not agree with you so you've got somewhere to go with it.	Um-huh.
		So that might be the things you could add for that audience. Cause here are the questions I think you should ask yourself when you go to sit down to revise this essay.	Um-huh.
		plus it's going to give you more credibility, I think, because you know what you are talking about.	Uh-huh.
		Then you ask—you've already got, um, a pretty well-developed draft, I think, then you want to ask, go through your paper and ask yourself the question, uh, is all of this important to them?	Um-huh.
		But for this specific thing, you may just want to start with the topic.	Okay.
		But here is the place we can go ahead and say who you are talking to.	Yeah.
		I think you're gonna want to do a little more external evaluation, maybe talk about who the authors are.	Okay.
		just adding MLA documentation and list of works cited is going to help, I think, with credibility.	Um-huh. Yeah, I'm gonna do that.
		So, rather than going general like you've done, although it was great, again it was gratifying as a teacher to see that you understood the assignment.	Um-huh.
		For the position paper, you've got to find sources that deny your point so that you can argue against that	Okay.
		So you're probably gonna need to do research on that other end before essay two.	Right.

Lisa Conference Two Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Neg	I wasn't sure I should do that.	Oh you should, yeah. Because if you just let them stand, it's going to be like the other person wins.
		I didn't write this very well	Yeah. It seems to be a big part of your argument, and I don't know how you're going to prove that without totally insulting the school system.
		So I just have to fix those things…	Um hum. And I want you to write up a revision agenda based on what we talked about. So you might want to take a minute right now to jot down what you think we talked about. You know what I mean, so you don't forget.

Teacher Comment/Student Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	Oh yeah, what's your pointed question? Is there one really?	Just if it sounds okay
	Neg	Not very pointed	No, um.
		And I see here that you want to refute your counter-arguments, because you still don't feel like you've done that?	No, I didn't do that yet. I wasn't sure I should do that.
		sending a girl to an all-girls school, because she…	okay
		and then the independent woman would, you know, if you went plural on all of them, then this would be as independent women.	Okay. Because I was reading it before I came and I was like, "Oh I need to do all of that…"
		But do you see how every sentence to me is confusing?	Um hum
		Either call it all girls or all girl	Okay, yeah I have been…
		with the absence of boys at school, girls attend…girls tend I think, do you know what I mean?	Um hum
		I think that's a typo. I think that's presence.	Yeah
		I'm going to make a suggestion. Girls attending a coed school will…	Okay
		You see why?	Um hum
		You really want your quotes to fit in grammatically with the sentence.	Okay
		So what you're going to have to do is refute my arguments because	Yeah
		It really, really sounds like you're arguing for the other side in this paragraph. So, I would refute it very strongly.	{No Response}
		Here's my major concern: it's very repetitious.	Yeah
		So I think what might make it stronger is to be way more specific, so	See, because one of the ladies read it in the English Center, and she said to go, narrow it into high school girls or something like that.
		It seems like the beginning of a problem-solution paper, too, but	And I need to write that other paragraph

Lisa Conference Three Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Neg	I didn't finish my paper just because I didn't think I was writing it right	Okay
		Alright. Is it okay the way I did it…	What do you mean?
		But I couldn't really find a way to do that with that, so I decided just to take a restaurant and take the new solutions that they needed to do.	Okay. I have a couple of comments. One, I know that this started with the whole straw thing.

Teacher Comment/Student Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	So we have a very good idea. And if we don't, shame on us.	Um hum.
		I agree. Try finding the health codes.	Yeah…I went to ask Lisa in the library about that, to help me find, but she was like I don't know if that's posted anywhere or not. But…
		Because that makes sense to me, the way you're saying look, try this.	Yeah
		So, I think it would be easier to do a customer, but	Uh huh.
		Because, yes, your first question was am I doing it right? Well, yes in parts, yes. In other parts, no but then it's not like no, you're not doing it right. It's just that you're doing it for a different audience.	Yeah
	Neg	So maybe you have more solutions in addition to that, but we don't want to ignore the fact that	Uh huh.
		What about the health department?	Okay
		What do you mean?	Well, because you know how you were saying some problem-solution papers were, you have to write the bad solutions and then your solutions. But I couldn't really find a way to do that with that, so I decided just to take a restaurant and take the new solutions that they needed to do. Because if they don't do all of it, then it kind of ….
		So I understand that then you're in the middle of restaurant industry research trying to figure out how I can make a paper out of this.	Um hum
		It's a perfect example of a restaurant that does everything wrong.	Yeah
		So, another thing is, I wonder who are you talking to?	Um hum
		I think that your best way to be successful in this paper is to narrow it down. Pick one or the other.	{No Response}
		So, what I would do is pick one audience, clearly define your solution.	Yeah
		So I think you're on your way, but I wouldn't even, like I would call this… a rough rough draft	Yes, start like the whole thing…
	Neutral	So you might want to, I don't know, you may want to strike a bargain with me similar to what someone else in your class has struck	Yeah
		So how about this. If I get an update from you	Um hum

Lisa Conference 3A Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	So that's, like, more effective?	Oh yeah, and the new material is way more effective.
		Okay, and the rest of the stuff is more effective?	Yeah. It looks like that's going to be great. I mean, do you know what I mean, if it follows the same pattern. I can't say for sure, but…
	Neg	Audience…	I have context, I did get your email and it sounded like it was going to be way more focused, because what I have about last time is that it was way not focused.
		I put a little paragraph in that kind of directs it and then kind of started my paragraph with a problem and then ended it with a solution. So I just wanted…I didn't finish it because I didn't know…	And I have also that context was an issue, so did you decide?

Teacher Comment/Student Response

ID	Type	Comment	Response
	Pos	Okay, let me look back in my notes and see what we talked about in the past. Do you want to remind me? Can you remind me?	Audience…
	Neg	…convenience is still misspelled.	
		…when a customer dines, they…remember we already talked about this. One customer can't be a they.	I didn't check the customers, I checked the owners, not that one yet.
		I think I would do these opposite; one owner and many customers.	
		I mean if you wrote really simple sentences, it would be easier for your subjects and verbs to agree.	Yeah
		Some of these are the same ones that I marked on the last draft, so you'll find it already.	Yeah
		Okay, we never knew that blood was a problem…	It's like, that's what it said in this description. They asked when they clean or something like that…I guess that when they clean the kitchen they have, I guess they get cut.
		But it doesn't make sense here.	Okay
		Is this a common problem? And this is just, almost straight out of that last draft, so it's still confusing a little to me, this blood part.	Right
		And here's the thing. I'm going to say that this new material is set up in sort of the problem-solution thing. This…	Is still not…
		So I wonder if you couldn't sort of combine these...Let's fix it.	Okay. I can do that.
		Does that sound right to you?	Yeah. So that's, like, more effective?
		And again, it wasn't that all of this was unnecessary before. It's just not as organized as the new section.	Yeah

Hunter Conference Two Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

Type	Comment		Response
positive	Motor Trend, things like that.		Say, I knew you'd know, because I don't. That's a great one.
	I thought maybe it was.		OK. Just so you know. And, again, so what?
	The price of the actual engine itself, compared to the price of the other.		See, I see little places like this where every time I have a question, you could be filling this in with words.
	There is actually an article in there about this… I could use that as a quote.		You can use it as a quote, or there's something else.
Neg	It doesn't really, and away, drag around.		So you want to… I guess at the same time I don't want there to be so much filler.
	I was going to talk about other factors.		OK. Those other factors, though, in your list at the beginning were at the end of the list.
	… And they ask people's opinions, and I don't really need other people's opinions do I?		Um hum.
	That would be good?		Because if you have other people's opinions who agree with you, then they back up what you're saying...

Teacher Comment/Student Response

Type	Comment		Response
positive	But in this essay you know it's OK. It's OK to be that way.		yes ma'am
	you use it as a model. It isn't cheating.		yes ma'am
	But definitely, it seems to me that you are setting up the structure of your paper which is, I'm going to talk about efficiency, this, and this… Is that what's going to happen?		yes ma'am. That's what I'm trying to do, and it's not quite like that, but…
	I'm glad that you added this, because it is good and also your doing a little counter arguing here.		no response
	OK. I appreciate the way your ending it which is to give us your position but to allow the reader to make his own choice. However before you get to hear I need more….		yes ma'am
Neg	tell me what your question is, sorry, and then maybe we'll cover some of those others that I've forgotten		it's pretty much the same one. How biased should I be towards one or the other?
	there is something that I'm noticing right off the bat. And it's the weight of the paper. It doesn't weigh very much because it's not very long. And I don't see a list of works cited yet.		yes ma'am. I have it. I don't have it written down.
	I am just trying to figure out if you're going to be able to finish this by the due date.		yes ma'am.
	Do you know what I mean?		yes ma'am.
	OK… Which wouldn't have to be disclosed to the class or anybody else.		yes ma'am.
	what do you think you're going to do about the fact that this is not very close to the required length?		Like you were saying, read a magazine and incorporate their style and I can stretch out longer because it's mainly, it feels to me, it's kind of to the point.
	Age-old question.. How old?		Well, for about 30 years, really since they started coming out.
	So instead of age-old, it's "for the past 30 years." Do you know what I mean?		yes ma'am.
	You know what I mean? That totally makes sense.		yes ma'am.
	That's a run on sentence. There are three sentences there.		I thought maybe it was.
	Because you know, we don't exactly talk the same language.		yes ma'am
	And it's not your… Well, it's just because you're so early in it. And I wouldn't have done too much more before I saw me either.		yes ma'am. I was afraid to because I didn't really know where to go too much with it.
	well, and I think you can trust your peer review group, but at the same time they don't get to use the red pen with the grading…		yes ma'am.
	So what I would like is… And show me that on Monday so I can make sure that we really are on the same page.		yes ma'am

Hunter Conference 2A Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

Type		Comment		Response
positive		Yes ma'am. So I need a transition on how they differ and I need to see if I can find a quote, a source...		It doesn't even need to be a quote, just where did you learn this.
		No. I liked hearing that it's better than it was.		It was good before, I thought. It continues to improve.
Neg		And I need to work on…		Edit, select all. Select it all. And then do a hanging indent.
		There isn't one… [A source]		Then I'm pretty sure we covered this last time….
		That's what I'll try to find, because it was mainly just general knowledge, just from experience.		See, and you may already know that, and that's fine too. But if you can find a source….

Teacher Comment/Student Response

Type		Comment		Response
positive		And this has been read through since...		Yes ma'am.
		OK, what specifically did I want to look at? Do you remember?		There were several small errors, and then commas, let's see… I changed most of the stuff. I did add some more quotes.
		That used to be "ages old," didn't it?		Yes ma'am.
		Alright, and that just backs up the whole efficiency thing.		no response
		Well that's what you're saying.		It's not really, like he'll hate you for it.
		And that might be a good place to put in the manly thing. Do you know what I mean?		Yes ma'am.
		You know what I mean?		Yes ma'am.
		Just tightening it up just a tiny bit more		Yes ma'am.
		Does that make sense? All right. Any other questions?		No. I like hearing that it is better than it was.
Neg		What does that say?		It says new paragraph. Because it really doesn't say too much about what I just talked about. It just says how it works.
		OK. This is just a dependent close, because it starts with because.		Yes ma'am. I meant to, or I had it changed.
		It is much stronger. I'm not sure it's the strongest in your view… You might could just summed all up.		He's saying he has his own opinion, but if somebody else wants it, you know, it's OK with them.
		You Might Want to Put, Say More… Two Sentences Would Be Fine.		Yes ma'am.
		Here's why they would continue to make your paper even stronger… (Long talk)		Yes ma'am. (Short response)
		But then needs to be a sentence that comes out in directly links them.		Yes ma'am. So I need a transition on how they differ and I need to see if I can find a quote, a source
		Sorry, but it's the same deal here…		no response
		And that's going to allow you to get more specific in your conclusion, too… Do you know what I mean? Those of the big issues.		Yes ma'am.
		So I would revisit those in the conclusion which will strengthen it up a little. So we're not even talking about major revisions, I don't think.		Yes ma'am.

Hunter Conference 3 Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Response

Type		Comment		Response
positive		It is people interested in harmful emissions and ways to cut them back		I think you probably do. But you're going to have to dumb it down for us.
		Being my solution is already in place, it's like evolving in place, should I tried to find another solution or just keep working on the one I have...		Um hum.
		And then another thing was…		Is that in there?
		I think if I explain what they do I don't think it really matters. But if I just said the EPA.…		Right. I agree with you. You're saying all the right things, man.
Neg		… But do I need to give a technical reason why diesel emissions are worse than gasoline.		Who is your audience?
		I need to find a source on that, which I was having trouble finding.		OK
		It's getting there, but I guess needs more support.		OK.
		That's hard to find stuff on, but I think I found on other site that's got it, enough information to really write about it.		So you're still researching really? I mean refining and refining…
		Yes ma'am. I find stuff and it won't be clear enough, so…		Are you going to be ready for Monday?
		I just wish I had my meeting on Wednesday again.		I'm sorry. Was it all taken by the time you got the signup sheet?

Teacher Comment/Student Response

Type		Comment		Response
positive		I think you probably do. But you're going to have to dumb it down for us.		That's what I was thinking. Not too technical. Make it a simple.
		What did you decide on?		It's an article for a general automotive magazine…
		OK. Well then if you want to do… Then I will offer you that opportunity.		I would like to do that, just because that would give me extra time and in case I get stuck in a rut…
Neg		What questions might you have brought with you? If any?		Yes ma'am. In my paper I have, it's about these solutions and everything.
		What is your context? Because that will help us to know how technical you need to be.		Yes ma'am.
		… But a magazine like Car and Driver isn't specific enough. I need like a specific name.		Yes ma'am
		So I do think you want to make sure that you can help your audience to capitalize on it, like what can your audience do?		Yes ma'am. To continue working for it. Because it's not in place yet.
		So you're still researching really? I mean refining and refining…		Yes ma'am. I find stuff and it won't be clear enough, so...
		Are you going to be ready for Monday?		I hope so… I've got… Almost 2 1/2 pages and I know a lot more stuff to write.
		Sounds like you got a good handle on it but you're not quite as far along maybe as other people. But you think you get time to deal with it?		Yes ma'am.
		I'm sorry. Was it all taken by the time you got the signup sheet?		Yes ma'am. Oh well.
		Well, that's why I keep asking if you think you're going to finish.		Yes ma'am. If...

Hunter Conference 3A Matrices

Student Comment/Teacher Responses

Type		Comment		Response
positive		Yes ma'am. I know exactly where I'm going to go with it.		OK
		And I feel good about it right now.		Good.
		This paper was very easy to write. How should my conclusion be?		[Long Response]… So it's up to you how specific you want to get. But I like your suggestion of kind of coming… Running back through the high points of your arguments and then sort of letting the audience know what they can do about it now.
Neg		I wasn't able to actually do everything I wanted to do.		Well are you going to be able to do it by Wednesday?
		One problem, the only problem that I'm really having is, for my sources,….		Let me say what I think you're saying.
		Which one should I use….		Because there's not a requirement for the essay, but if you want to use the government one, I think that's fine.

Teacher Comment/Student Response

Type		Comment		Response
positive				
Neg		Should we like talk tomorrow instead, then? When you've actually get it finished?		I will definitely be able to have it done by Wednesday. Because right now I have 3 1/2-pages, and ….
		So I feel like it's the rhetorically accurate verbs that would really strengthen incorporation of quotations and of sources.		That sounds good.

APPENDIX D

INITIAL PATTERNS EMERGING FROM THE DATA

Directive Instruction
Directive teacher comment leading to student compliance (brief response)
High performing student makes directive request leading to teacher compliance
High-performing students in synchronous roles with teacher leads to collegiality
Reader response commentary shifts to directive feedback
Shared personal experiences leading to directive feedback
Less shared personal experience expressed with higher performing students

Student Perspectives on Purpose of Conference
Student comments implying that conference is a fix-it session
Student comments implying that changing the essay focuses on local versus global issues

Characteristics of Teacher-Student Interaction
Teacher initiation leading to student response but no evaluation (IRE)
Student initiation leading to teacher response but no evaluation (IRE)
IR w/E leading to change in writing
IR w/out E leading to change in writing
Negotiation of meaning (dialogic interaction versus IRE)
Length of teacher comment versus length of student response
Number of issues explored by a teacher during a conference
Number of teacher-initiated issues relative to student-initiated issues
Teacher use of "do you understand" to punctuate and divide issues (setting agenda)
Use of peer reviews in conference (uptake)

Language Conflicts and Missed Opportunities
Missed opportunities (premature shift in role)
Student exploring a line of thought that teacher preempts
Teacher exploring a line of thought that student preempts
Teacher or student comment used to recover from missed opportunity
Language conflict in register and reception
Teacher engaging in teacher talk that the student doesn't understand
Student passive acknowledgment of authority
Student use of teacher-pleasing discourse in elaborating responses
Student achievement (real or perceived) leading to differences in conference dialogue

Conference Dialogue and Student Action
T issues directive w/various levels of thought leads to S action w/various levels of thought. (Varies by ability?)
T ref a key class concept leads to S action or inaction (varies by concept? Ability?)
Naming a strength or weakness is actionable feedback

APPENDIX E

INITIAL CODES EMERGING FROM THE LITERATURE

- Developmental Implications of Dyadic Interaction (Bronfenbrenner)
  - Reciprocity
  - Balance of power
  - Affective relation
- Theoretical Foundation: Social Constructionism
  - Reference to discourse community
  - Negotiation of meaning relative to specific discourse community
  - Use of language specific to a particular discourse community
- Theoretical Application: Learning by doing (LPP)
  - Evidence of engagement in increasingly complex tasks
  - Application of previously learned skills without assistance
- Characteristics of Interaction Consistent with Particular Roles
  - Writer-reader
    - Open-ended questions
    - Proactive student participation (without focus on grades)
    - Student contributes more to developing text than teacher does
    - Teacher acts as interested listener
  - Novice-expert
    - Scaffolding
    - Modeling
    - Coaching
    - Extending
    - Challenging
  - Consumer-provider
    - Student affirmative response to teacher directive
    - Student request for explicit directive leads to teacher directive
    - Teacher or student connection between action and grade
- The Effectiveness of Conferences
  - Evidence of discovery on the part of student or teacher
  - Evidence of a different conference based on student achievement or ability
  - Establishment of agenda or predictability to the conference
  - Evidence of authority, implicit or explicit
  - Prolonged student contribution
  - Student questioning authority
- Evidence that Agenda Affects Student and Teacher Perceptions of Role
- Evidence of Teachers' Expectations Taking Precedence over the Students' Intent
- Teacher Assertion of Role to Promote Recovery from Incompatible Roles

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE RESEARCH MEMOS

General Research Journal

3/5/05

Identified two strong patterns within the comment-response matrices

Student response patterns:
Passive acknowledgment (often short)
Types of teacher-pleasing responses
Elaboration by students within those responses (typically teacher-pleasing)

Teacher comment patterns:
Frequency of "do you know what I mean?"
"does that make sense?"
frequency of "you should" type directive comments

Research Memorandum – March 7, 2005

Ellen Conference One

General – conference one was conducted through e-mail, and there was no teacher-initiated commentary available for analysis with conference one. I'm assuming that this still qualifies as verbal interaction.

Student Comment-Teacher Response

Opening questions allude to previous discussions and assume the changes have been recommended to the paper prior to this conference

Student very directive and specific in asking for feedback on a list of very specific items.

Verbal interaction as encountered through e-mail is more succinct, to the point. Essentially seems to make the transaction or interaction more efficient, depending on how you define efficient.

In response to the students first question about whether another transition statements are successful or if they require more work, the teacher doesn't actually answer the question, those she does suggest that the transition statements are much improved.

Student appears to be very interested in direct input that leads to a solid grade. Evidence found in statements like "I don't want points taken off of this, so…." Also consider "if there is anything that I am leading out that will decrease my grade…."

On the latter of the statement above, the teacher respondents in a very positive manner suggesting that she didn't see anything missing. However, she follows this with the qualifier that there is room for improvement in everyone's writing and provides specific examples of word choice improvements.

For many of the student comments, there is no response. This is to be expected when working with e-mail. Oddly, though, these comments are almost as telling as those which involve responses. Specific requests for feedback on specific items they to believe that the student is very focused. The closing comment, "Sorry for bugging you but I really appreciate your help!" Lead to believe that the student is also aware of negotiation skills that facilitate her efforts.

Research Memorandum – March 10, 2005

Hunter Comment Matrix – Conference One

<u>Teacher Comment-Student Response</u>

Yes ma'am is the response to over 75% of the teacher comments.

Hunter seems to hesitate to contradict the instructor, evidenced by statements like "That's what I'm trying to do, and it's not quite like that, but…."

Instructor seems to offer greater leeway to lower achieving students, evidenced by greater flexibility on the due date but also by the statement that Hunter's agreement to the later due date would not have to be disclosed to the classroom by the else.

Hunter seems to recognize opportunities to improve his paper on his own, but doesn't seem to act on them.

Teacher seems to placate under a little bit, perhaps trying to build the relationship, but she leans heavily toward the compassionate end of the spectrum. "And it's not your… Well, it's just because you're so early in it. And I wouldn't have done too much more before us on either." This seems to run counter to her continuing reinforcement of the deadline and her questioning whether or not you get down. She almost seems to be saying that she understands that he didn't come to the meeting prepared and that's OK.

"Because you know, we don't exactly talk the same language." This is a very striking sentence, made evermore so with his schedule response, "Yes ma'am."

In the positive commentary especially, the instructor seems to offer affirmation that is readily accepted by Hunter.

Student Comments-Teacher Responses

Instructor seems to engage in continued relationship building with the response to the positive comments.

Instructor offers an alternative version or use of the quote that Hunter didn't recognize.

Interesting use of phrases to describe the way of paper "drags around" which leads to "filler."

Hunter seems to have been unaware that his position paper needed to express other people's opinions as well as his own, to provide him the opportunity to offer counter-arguments.

APPENDIX G

FINAL CODE LIST USED TO ANALYZE ENTIRE DATA SET

Code: "Changing" the essay

"Any ref to changing the essay, attached or not to a specific aspect of writing (e.g. degree of formality, mechanical issues)."

Code: "Fix-it"

"Any ref to fixing, repairing, or altering the writing with a particular agenda in mind, student's, teacher's, or peer reviewers."

Code: Affective Relation

"Displays positive or negative feelings, informal language in student vernacular, self-deprecating statements outside of the discipline, teacher acknowledges student lapse and writes it off, student or teacher expresses or demonstrates concern for feelings of the other.

Code: Agenda

"Establish an agenda as well as provide a predictable structure to the conference, ref to student or teacher agenda (implicit or explicit)."

Code: Authority

"Questioning authority, ref to authority (implicit or explicit), Balance of power (Bronf), exhibiting a willingness to question teacher directives or suggestions, reference to requirements of the course or the teacher's authority as evaluator"

Code: Coaching

"Continued provision of feedback through the conference, evoking or acknowledging independent, competent action by the student"

Code: Constructing

"Student independently discovers and applies concepts that are important to the academic writing process and community"

Code: Consumer

"Evidence of student connecting actions to a grade OR demonstrating a sense of urgency that might or might not stem from the grade or the expectations of the teacher.
Emphasis on the efficiency of the exchange leading to the desired grade?"

Code: Discourse Community

"Ref to freshman composition as preparation for writing in various academic disciplines"

Code: Expert

Displays behavior characterized by scaffolding, modeling, and coaching.

Code: Idea Unit

"segment of discourse within a conference that coincides with a person's focus of attention or focus of consciousness.

Code: Ideas

"talk characterized by the exploration of global issues rather than local issues and mechanics and procedures"

Code: Issues addressed

"Researcher tracked the number of separate issues raised or addressed in conferences, whether student- or teacher-initiated."

Code: Key class concept

"Issues raised in conference were also part of larger class discussion"

Code: Language conflict

"Teacher talk or student talk that doesn't register with the other, though it may be acknowledged. A disconnect between speaker and listener or the intent of the speakers. Also, a literal conflict between spoken languages (Australian English vs. American English). An instance where student or teacher interrupts the thought process or expression of the other, resulting in an awkward conversational turn."

Code: Logistics or Procedures

"talk characterized by attention to procedural issues such as page length, number of sources, working with citations, due date, scheduling conferences, revision agendas, computer processes, and other deadlines."

Code: Mechanics

"talk characterized by attention to grammar; formal conventions and rhetorical elements such as topic sentences, introductions, and conclusions; spelling; word choice or diction; and other local issues"

Code: Mirroring

"Student imitates strategies and approaches acquired from the teacher.

Cross Ref with Student Participation"

Code: Modeling

"Teacher engages in and describes the desired behavior as preparation for student imitation of that behavior"

Code: Novice

Displays behaviors characterized by mirroring, submitting, or constructing.

Code: Peer reviews

"any ref to peer reviews or peer review process as a part of the class structure or as it relates to the student's individual writing and revising strategies."

Code: Provider

"Evidence of teacher connecting actions to a grade, demonstrating a sense of urgency that might or might not stem from the grade or the expectations of the student. Teacher seems to make directive comments in the interest of efficiency."

Code: Punctuating Comment/Response

"T comments such as "Do you know what I mean?" and "Does that make sense?" that are usually used to mark the end of a specific idea unit within the T comments and allow for a clean transition to the next comment or idea unit."

Code: Reader

"The teacher in the reader role uses open-ended questions and/or non-evaluative and non-directive comments to create the opportunity for the student to diagnose problem areas and suggest possible alternative versions of their text.
*** Merged with: Teacher as interested listener (2005-05-26T11:30:57) ***

Teacher comments are not critical or complimentary of S writing, but merely try to relate to the writing as an interested reader or listener to the writing."

Code: Reciprocity

"Actions/words linked to or caused by actions/words of other conversant"

Code: Role Expectations or Perceptions

"Demonstrated awareness of the expectations or perceived responsibilities of particular roles (maybe only of the teacher role?).
*** Merged with: Assuming a role (2005-05-26T08:08:34) ***

Student or teacher directing the work or conference rather than the writing."

Code: S connects action to grade

"S makes explicit or implicit connection between any given action and the potential grade."

Code: S Directive Request

"S makes a pointed request for specific recommendations from the T."

Code: S Response - compliance

"S response intimates or indicates that S will carry out the directive made by the teacher"

Code: Scaffolding

"The provision of support or structure with specific reference to the student or the writing, using the student's knowledge or experience base to build on the next series of comments or ideas."

Code: Shared personal experience

"Teacher or student shares personal and/or writerly experience."

Code: Shift From Reader Response to Directive

"A shift in teacher perspective from the general, non-evaluative reader response to directive commentary."

Code: Shift From shared personal experience to directive

"Teacher shares personal and/or writerly experiences and shifts to directive"

Code: Student ability and conference

"Indication that T alters the course or content of the conference, relative the conferences with other students, because of the perceived or real ability level of the student within the conference"

Code: Student participation

"Used to code for student participation or apathy that goes beyond the monosyllabic, affirmative response. Student either participates actively in the conference process by asking questions and exploring ideas further without obvious connection between that energy and the grade OR, alternatively, demonstrates a conscious decision not to participate in the conference or execute the suggested revisions.
*** Merged with: Participation-contribution (2005-05-26T06:27:39) ***

Code: Submitting

"Student recognizes the authority of the expert (teacher) with a direct connection to scaffolding (generation or negotiation of new meaning that stems from the interaction?)"

Code: T connects action to grade

"Teacher links actions explicitly or implicitly to the student's grade or makes a reference to the student's potential for achievement on a specific writing assignment or within the class."

Code: T Directing Statement

"T explicitly or implicitly directs the actions of the student in the writing or revising process"

Code: T Directive Response

"T responds to S question by offering explicit or implicit direction."

Code: T Elicitation

"Teacher elicits a comment or response from the student using open ended questions or other strategies.

Code: T identifies strength or weakness

"T identifies strength or weakness of S writing but does not direct the student to any action to repair or repeat the noted characteristic."

Code: T Informing Statement

"Teacher lectures to student during conference (?)"

Code: T shifts to directive comment

"T shifts from a less directive perspective - reader or interested listener - to a more directive role."

Code: Teacher-pleasing discourse

"Student compliments teacher's practice directly or describes having worked really hard on the assignment. Also student self-deprecating discourse rationalizing inactivity or lapses."

Code: Writer

"Student describes his or her thinking or process as a writer and/or discusses the writing with some abstract distance from the writing."

APPENDIX H

SAMPLE EXCERPT FROM CODED TRANSCRIPT

HU: Roles
File: [C:\Documents and Settings\MIles L. DeMott\My Documents\Dissertation\Analysis\Atlas\Roles.hpr5]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 09/18/05 02:29:09 PM

P 7: Ellen Conference 3.doc - 7:46 [What is it about your transiti..] (25:45) (Super)
Codes: [N/E] [Scaffolding]
Memos: [Weak Scaffolding]

What is it about your transitions that you want to improve?

S: Um, I think it's mainly just making them flow with the whole essay. So I'm…with this one I'm definitely, like, jumping from one thing to the next, and I've got some paragraphs in there that probably shouldn't have been made paragraphs and things like that. But, um, mainly I'm trying to get the whole, all the things I need to get in there right now, but I haven't polished it.

T: Okay, I see some blanks, so I love that.

S: Yeah, and I have to…

T: But I mean I like the way you're arguing, is what I'm saying.

S: Okay. I don't have any like print sources right now. I have an internet and the rest is professional communication, because that was the best thing to use. So I'm not sure, like, I have lots of information but I don't know like how it's going to be relevant for me to include it.

T: Well, where did this come from with auburntigers.com, because you know often, like let's say the day of the big game or whatever, the article will go on the auburntigers.com about the game, but then it's word for word what we see in *The Plainsman* the next week. You know what I'm saying, so in that way it becomes a print source.

S: Oh, okay

T: So, I don't know where, do you have your list of works cited?

S: No I don't.

T: Okay. So I don't know where this came from, but if this were one of those, that's a good example. Do you know what I'm saying? That could be, like, a print source.

Memos:
MEMO: Weak Scaffolding (Super, 06/15/05 01:12:44 PM)
Type: Memo

This is admittedly a weak example of potential scaffolding, but the teacher is using previous student experience in pursuit of a print source or the quandary of finding a print source to explain how one type of source or article can become another type of source or article.

APPENDIX I

FEATURES OF SCAFFOLDING

General Characteristics

Characterized by the adult or expert executing the parts of a task that are initially beyond a novice's level of competence, allowing that task to reach a successful completion. (Wood et al., 1976)

Sufficiently supportive, without being overly directive, to enable a child to think for herself

Scaffolding involves striking a balance between what the learner can do herself while providing support for what she is not yet able to do herself (Nystrand et al., 1998)

"Support at the edge of a child's competence," (p. 45) and "explaining, demonstrating, and jointly constructing an idealized version of a performance" (p. 47) (Gaskins et al., 1997)

Maintaining tension between the support offered to a child and the motivation – extrinsic or intrinsic – that holds the learner's interest in the task or challenge. (Roehler & Cantlon, 1997)

Firm and predictable structure - (Lepper et al., 1997)

Best tutors remain firmly in charge of the tutoring sessions - initiating at least 90% of the exchanges that occurred between tutor and tutee

Progression of increasingly difficult problems for solution by the tutee

Effective tutors rarely provide pure or directive instruction
Offering only five percent of their total remarks in the form of directions

Enabling the tutee to demonstrate comprehension before solving a subsequent problem

Pay attention to both cognitive and affective (motivational) factors during a tutoring session

Essential Elements of Scaffolding

Balance of support and challenge
Shared understanding of the task (Hogan, 1997) or intersubjectivity (Rommetveit, 1974)
Extend from the smallest tasks to the largest goals

Assumption that the value added to the interaction goes beyond the completed task Substantive dialogue characterized by student generation of questions and comments.

Teacher did not judge the students thinking, choosing instead to engage the student in dialogue to expand the ideas and move students toward deeper understandings. (Hogan & Pressley, 1997)

Teacher and students acting as conversational partners. (Hogan & Pressley, 1997)

Scaffolding is embedded in learning conversations– those in which teachers co-construct information with the students and gain new knowledge (Roehler & Cantlon, 1997)

(Nystrand et al., 1998) Reciprocal roles in scaffolding

Learning environments are distinguished by the reciprocal, mutually dependent roles of their particular members: what one does has implications for what the other can do

Learning space is shaped by the reciprocal roles of teacher and learner

Textual space is a function of writer-reader interaction

(Langer & Applebee, 1986) Five components of instructional scaffolding

Ownership – the requirement that students share a sense of authority and a sense of purposefulness in the task

Appropriateness – the stipulation that instruction builds on the student's existing skills while helping them complete tasks they couldn't complete on their own

Structure – instruction that produces a normal progression of ideas and strategies resulting in discernible and replicable routines for the student to apply to subsequent tasks

Collaboration – instruction that utilizes and integrates student efforts without teacher evaluation or judgment

Internalization – the ultimate goal of all scaffolding whereby control of the interaction, or subsequent interactions, shifts

Specific Processes or Functions

(Wood et al., 1976) Scaffolding process as a series of six functions:

Recruiting the learner's interest in and adherence to the requirements of the task

Reducing the number of constituent acts required to reach a solution

Maintaining the direction of the learner in pursuit of a particular objective

Marking critical features of the task

Controlling the amount of frustration or stress felt by the learner

Demonstrating or modeling solutions to the task including ideal of the act to be performed and even imitating an attempted solution of the learner in hopes that the learner will imitate it back in a more appropriate form

(Roehler & Cantlon, 1997) Five specific types of activities

Offering explanations - explicit statements adjusted to fit the learners' emerging understandings about what is being learned, why and when it is used, and how it is used

Inviting student participation - opportunities to join in the learning process as it unfolds, to play an active rather than passive part in the learning

Verifying and clarifying student participation - check the students' emerging understandings and pace the instruction accordingly

Modeling of desired behaviors - teachers use strategies like think aloud protocols and question and comment generation to facilitate a gradual shift in the control of the learning in favor of the student as his or her competence increases

Inviting students to contribute clues - learners are encouraged to offer clues about how to complete the task, demonstrating an ability to think about and complete a task with emerging independence

(Hogan & Pressley, 1997) scaffolding involves activities

Pre-engagement – the teacher selects an appropriate task prior to the interaction

Establishing a shared goal

Actively diagnosing the understandings and needs of the learner

Providing tailored assistance

Maintaining pursuit of the goal

Giving feedback

Controlling for frustration and risk

Assisting internalization, independence, and generalization to other contexts

(Graesser et al., 1997)

Sequence of activities designed to encourage a collaborative elaboration of the answer

Pumping – comments that consist of neutral feedback or explicit requests for more information ("uh-huh" and "tell me more")

Prompting – providing students with a rich context and expecting them to fill a missing word or phrase

Splicing – when the tutored detects an error and interjects or splices in a correct answer

Hinting – when the tutor supplies a partially correct answer to evoke more precise information from the student.

APPENDIX J

SAMPLES OF TRANSCRIBED INTERACTIONS THAT RESULTED FROM FOCUSED CODING AND THAT WERE USED IN PEER REVIEW

P 4: Ellen Conference 2.doc - 4:9 [T: That solution, yeah, I have..] (51:61) (Super)

T: That solution, yeah, I have a question too. I would claim that this is an independent clause, and if so, the only appropriate patterns that we could use are this one, or this one, you know what I mean because there are two independent clauses

S: Um hum

T: Or, that's it. Or this one, but that's different. So I would either semicolon it or period or, oh and this is one of those times that I said I would never suggest a colon, but a colon would actually work there too.

S: But would you be mad if I used a colon?

T: No, I'm just not good at them. Do you know what I mean? Like I'm not good at video games, either. Hence I don't play them. Um, okay…

T: That it is, right?

P 4: Ellen Conference 2.doc - 4:72 [The funniest thing you don't h..] (227:241) (Super)

The funniest thing you don't have in here that is something that I think about all the time…the perks are so much better if you go to a woman's game. Like, you're going to get a free basketball or a free…

S: Yeah, but I don't know where I could put all of that stuff in there. And like the fact that there's the cheerleaders and the pit band and the dancers and stuff. Should that be left out or not? There are no cheerleaders in here that we could use. That doesn't matter.

T: Well, I think that's good, though. I mean that's why some people go to the game, any game.

S: That's to the entertainment side of things. That's why I thought….

T: Here's what I'm going to claim. I'm going to claim that because you're talking more on an athletic level that you're using just like quality athletics to draw in your fans. You want sports fans, not people who are just going to seek entertainment. So maybe that's why that's not in there. But, I think that if you stick with this topic for problem / solution, it could be problem: low attendance and that's where you give us the numbers, solution: better advertising of the perks, better, do you see what I mean?

S Um hum.

T: If you stick with it. You do not have to.

S: Okay

P 7: Ellen Conference 3.doc - 7:46 [What is it about your transiti..] (25:45) (Super)

T: What is it about your transitions that you want to improve?

S: Um, I think it's mainly just making them flow with the whole essay. So I'm…with this one I'm definitely, like, jumping from one thing to the next, and I've got some paragraphs in there that probably shouldn't have been made paragraphs and things like that. But, um, mainly I'm trying to get the whole, all the things I need to get in there right now, but I haven't polished it.

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S: Yeah, and I have to…

T: But I mean I like the way you're arguing, is what I'm saying.

S: Okay. I don't have any like print sources right now. I have an internet and the rest is professional communication, because that was the best thing to use. So I'm not sure, like, I have lots of information but I don't know like how it's going to be relevant for me to include it.

T: Well, where did this come from with auburntigers.com, because you know often, like let's say the day of the big game or whatever, the article will go on the auburntigers.com about the game, but then it's word for word what we see in *The Plainsman* the next week. You know what I'm saying, so in that way it becomes a print source.

S: Oh, okay

T: So, I don't know where, do you have your list of works cited?

S: No I don't.

T: Okay. So I don't know where this came from, but if this were one of those, that's a good example. Do you know what I'm saying? That could be, like, a print source.

P 7: Ellen Conference 3.doc - 7:50 [T: Aw, shoot. S: What? T: You ..] (143:167) (Super)

T: Aw, shoot.

S: What?

T: You want it, when you say the football team has helped fund several aspects of Auburn University, I don't see any parenthetical citation, so I don't know what good research you might have done there, because so much of what the team generates stays for the team.

S: But apparently they have helped, like, build the library and stuff like this.

T: Cool, okay here's the interesting thing, though. It's the athletic department as a whole, for example, the entire athletic department through ____, helps fund the English Center so we can stay open evenings because it turned out to be football was like, but we practice all during the day and we're in class all day, and we can't get English tutoring unless you're not open at night. And we're not open at night. Hence, we're going to ____ at English. No, instead, we're open at night now.

S: Oh, okay.

T: Okay, so you're right that it is through concessions and football, I mean a lot of it is because of football moneymaking…

S: Uh huh

T: We have all this money. But it comes from the athletic department as a whole. So you might want to bill it that way. Like, look, everything that benefits the athletic department goes back through the department out to the university. Do you know what I mean?

S: But not directly from football?

T: Well, right, unless, have you done the research here and maybe you have, and then you're going to give me the specifics.

S: Okay, I can do that.

T: Do you know what I mean? I would find out for sure, but what I know is, like, no one ever said the football helps the center stay open. It's athletics, and it's everybody. I mean, we work for the equestrian team, which you may not know, we just started the equestrian team this year, you know?

P12: Hunter Conf 2.doc - 12:5 [S: It's pretty much the same o..] (15:23) (Super)

S: It's pretty much the same one. How biased should I be towards one or the other?

T: Well, since you're trying to persuade your audience to believe you, you're probably going to be more biased, talk more about the diesel than the gas. However, you will bring up the gas engines when you compare them, and in your counter-arguments. So how biased? There's one other thing. One of our classmates is writing about beaver trapping. Okay, totally legitimate topic. But, this is just an example. There was a line in his paper about those people from PETA. Well, it is possible, though not very likely, that someone reading his article about why beaver trapping is important for the conservation of beaver and our wetlands and a lot of things that I never realized are so important, or that the beaver could play such a big role in so many different aspects of our environment in the State of Alabama, but when he says those people in PETA, well what if there was a member of PETA who was also in his reading audience. You know, it might put them off. So the only thing I think you want to be really careful of that you don't alienate those of us who already drive gasoline vehicles over diesel vehicles. You know? So that would be my…

S: That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to say, like, in my opinion, I'd rather have a diesel vehicle than a gas, and I'm not really doubting gas. I'm just saying which I'm more in favor of.

T: And you have to have well-reasoned arguments for that, so that it's not just because I like it or because what my friend drives but rather because of the reasons that you talk about.

S: That makes sense right there.

P20: Lisa Conf 2.doc - 20:33 [S: I didn't write this very we..] (105:117) (Super)

S: I didn't write this very well

T: Yeah. It seems to be a big part of your argument, and I don't know how you're going to prove that without totally insulting the school system.

S: Because, like, Dominican, compared with Judgment, the all-boys school, we would be on an 8-point scale and they would be on a 10-point scale. So they got better scores than we did. Then during the English classes, they would prepare for the ACT and the SAT and we didn't do any of that. It was like completely different.

T: I want to tell you, though, there are more women currently admitted to universities across the country than there are men, indicating that women's schools are not holding women back.

S: This is so weird, because they had like 50 national merits and we had 3, and it's because they did that program, you know?

T: I totally understand, but using that one school in one city, you see what I'm saying? So what you're going to have to do is refute my arguments because I'm one of the members of your audience, so may this is where you talk about in your town, and I got to say, too, now I think that we need to talk to _____ parents, not, but see where are they going to send their kids to school? I mean what's the choice?

S: Yeah

P19: Lisa Conf 1 Trans.doc - 19:70 [S: I like the parent audience ..] (55:71) (Super)

S: I like the parent audience better.

T: Why?

S: Um, probably because, um, see I'm, I was interested in like, this topic because I went to an all girl's school, you know. So it was kind of interesting to see these articles to read that, so, I don't know if it would be like college students, oh, look at what your parents did to you, or, or you know.

T: I didn't think about it that way.

S: Cause that's where I was kind of going with it, cause I was reading and oh…

T: That would be, actually, a very interesting . . .

S: Paper?

T: Audience. I'm not saying write home to your parents.

S: Um-huh.

APPENDIX K

FINAL DATA MATRICES

Conference and Quote Designation	Recruting	Inviting S to Contribute Clues	Verifying and Clarifying	Rare Directive 5%	T does not judge S writing	Shared goal	Balance of Power	Metacognitive
Ellen Conf 2 (4:72)			235	X		●		
Ellen Conf 3 (7:18)	109		117	X				
Ellen Conf 3 (7:46)	25		45	X	X 29	X		
Ellen Conf 3 (7:50)	163	163	159	X	●			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:53)	1	21	21	X		●		
Hunter Conf 2 (12:5)	13			X	X	●		
Hunter Conf 3 (14:35)	033/049			●	X	●		
Hunter Conf 3A (15:22)	19	19	31	●		●		

Occurrences shown as line numbers where possible
● = Occurs but difficult to quantify
Blank = Does not occur
X = Occurance runs counter to expectations

Conference and Quote Designation	Tutor Initiates 90%	Offering Explanations	Demonstrating or Modeling Solutions	Reducing Required Tasks	Controlling Learner Frustration	Actively diagnosing needs of learner	Providing tailored assistance	Giving feedback	Procedural	Conceptual	Scaffolding or Coaching
Ellen Conf 2 (4:72)	●	235	235		231/239	235	235	●			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:18)	●	109	117		113		117	●			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:46)	●	37	37				37	●			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:50)	●	151	159		155			●			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:53)	X		21	009/021	X 021						
Hunter Conf 2 (12:5)	●	17	17	17			17	●			
Hunter Conf 3 (14:35)	●		61		61	61	61	●			
Hunter Conf 3A (15:22)	●	31	31	31	31		31	●			
Occurrences shown as line numbers where possible											
● = Occurs but difficult to quantify											
Blank = Does not occur											
X = Occurance runs counter to expectations											

Conference and Quote Designation		Strategic Scaffolding			
Ellen Conf 2 (4:72)					
Ellen Conf 3 (7:18)					
Ellen Conf 3 (7:46)					
Ellen Conf 3 (7:50)					
Ellen Conf 3 (7:53)					
Hunter Conf 2 (12:5)					
Hunter Conf 3 (14:35)					
Hunter Conf 3A (15:22)					
Occurrences shown as line numbers where possible					
● = Occurs but difficult to quantify					
Blank = Does not occur					
X = Occurance runs counter to expectations					

Qualities or Characteristics of Interaction

Conference and Quote Designation	Appropriateness	Structure	Affective Relations	
Ellen Conf 2 (4:72)	●			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:18)	●			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:46)	37	X		
Ellen Conf 3 (7:50)	155			
Ellen Conf 3 (7:53)	●	X		
Hunter Conf 2 (12:5)				
Hunter Conf 3 (14:35)	●	●		
Hunter Conf 3A (15:22)	31	●		
Occurrences shown as line numbers where possible				
● = Occurs but difficult to quantify				
Blank = Does not occur				
X = Occurance runs counter to expectations				

Features that Cross Categories

Conference and Quote Designation	Ownership	Collaboration	Reciprocity	Pumping	Prompting	Attention to Cognitive and Affective	Maintaining Direction of Learner	Marking Critical Features of Task	Splicing	Hinting
Ellen Conf 2 (4:72)							235	227		
Ellen Conf 3 (7:18)						105		109		
Ellen Conf 3 (7:46)				25		33	45	33	33	
Ellen Conf 3 (7:50)							159		151	
Ellen Conf 3 (7:53)	●	X		5			X		21	
Hunter Conf 2 (12:5)							21	17		
Hunter Conf 3 (14:35)	●	●		●	49		73	49		
Hunter Conf 3A (15:22)	●	●		23				19	31	
Occurrences shown as line numbers where possible										
● = Occurs but difficult to quantify										
Blank = Does not occur										
X = Occurance runs counter to expectations										