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Engage Me: Using New Literacies to Create
Third Space Classrooms that Engage Student Writers

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Abstract

Adolescents use a wide variety of literacy practices in their daily lives. Preservice teachers in this study looked for ways to motivate their students to write by asking them about their in-school and out-of-school writing practices. This survey shows a gap between what motivates students to write for school and why they write out of school. The results suggest that English teachers can forge a "third space" in which out-of-school literacy practices are integrated into the curriculum. This survey provides insights for improving writing pedagogy in regards to students' expressed desire to communicate, express themselves, and to be involved.

Keywords: new literacies, third space, secondary education, writing

Introduction: Shifting Spaces

A quick search of *Google* or *YouTube* will reveal the omnipresent video commentary on the information age and the rapidly shifting world.[1,2] Videos, such as *Welsh's A Vision of Students Today*[3] and Nesbitt's *A Vision of K-12 Students Today*[4], demonstrate the changing expectations of both college and high school students who share in the belief that "technology can save us" right before divulging that they "Facebook through their classes" and offer images of bored youth who are begging to be engaged.[5,6] These videos use statistics to represent worldviews and characteristics of populations to create an element of shock-value when contrasted with life as we know it. Since research shows that technology in the classroom can be a powerful way to challenge students to think in order to "shape and explain their world." [7] English teachers are increasingly investigating ways to integrate powerful tools into their writing instruction.[8,9] While tools such as MS Word and MS PowerPoint have come to be considered traditional technologies that are simply extensions of the conventional typewriter, the next generation of technology, Web 2.0 consists of tools that allow students to find and publish to authentic audiences, communicate with experts and enthusiasts, collaborate with geographically-distant peers, and to make their place in the world, are yet to be widely-accepted as educationally-beneficial. Students engage in these practices in part to define who they are in relation to the world around them. However, despite their academic value, they are too rarely used in English Language Arts classrooms.

Adolescent years mark declining motivation for some students to read or write for school assignments[10, 11, 12] and many teachers contribute that to the perception that adolescents are apathetic and uninvolved.[13] However, the research is clear that adolescents do read and write for their own authentic purposes.[14] This writing takes on many forms, including texting, blogging, instant messaging, or commenting, publishing, or chatting on social networking sites such as Facebook. To be sure, students are writing, quite a bit in fact, and much of that student writing occurs through an electronic medium. Still, many teachers and students alike do not believe that online writing or text messaging is "real" writing.[15, 16] If adolescents are more motivated to write when they think there is a worthwhile purpose for their expression and when they feel competent and safe in their self-expression and/or written analysis,[17] then why don't educators harness those motivations in a way that can advance their reading and writing pedagogies?

The Council Chronicle[18] recently highlighted 10 people in different walks of life, from a manager at Quiznos to a stay-at-home mom and documented their "words transcribed to a communication medium." [19] Some of these adults confessed to their own disengagement in the writing classroom as adolescents but share

the rewards of the immediacy of feedback that email provides, the ability to "keep in touch" [20] through texting and Facebook, to "stay connected to the outside world" through blogging,[21] and for the formality, record keeping, and precision in memory that writing and workplace forms provide. Adults who recognize the connective power of today's technology are not unlike today's students who live in a flat world. Our students are writing through electronic mediums to connect to the world around them. Thus, when teachers tap into these authentic purposes for writing, students are more motivated to write.[22] Motivation and practice are essential to becoming more effective and efficient writers.

The Researchers

While our research team comprised twenty years of classroom experience, we were still reflective about our own successes and concerns during our time in classrooms. Two of us, as teacher educators and doctoral students, wanted to know if we were preparing our future teachers to appreciate their students' vast array of writing skills. If students were indeed motivated to write through the use of new technologies, we had to encourage student teachers to embrace those technologies in the classroom. The third and fourth authors, now classroom teachers, were student teachers who we supervised as they began their careers in the classroom, combining their technological affinities with their love for the English classroom. Ultimately, we had to know if we were preparing our future teachers to use all of the tools available to them as they worked towards improving student literacy. Working as university supervisors and researchers, the research team received permission to survey students in the classrooms of six pre-service teachers during their student teaching experiences.

Research Focus

The purpose of this research was to model an inquiry process for pre-service teachers. In asking students what motivates them to write, pre-service teachers can then plan instruction to harness both in school and out of school literacies in authentic ways. Specifically, the work investigated the types of writing adolescents LIKE to do in terms of variety of text (i.e., print text, electronic text, multi-modal text). We conceived of this study out of personal concerns and questions after watching Welsh's *A Vision of Students Today*[23] and Nesbitt's *A Vision of K-12 Students Today*[24] and reading Friedman's best seller, *The World is Flat*.[25] We questioned the statistics, were irritated by the apathetic stu-

dents in the video, and wanted to know about students' perspectives of themselves as "digital learners" in the writing classroom. We wanted answers to the following research questions: What motivates students to write in and out of the classroom? How many students write for their own, authentic purposes using new technologies, and how often do they do so? How can pre-service teachers attempt to create 21st century writing classrooms that are responsive to students' reported motivations? Most importantly, we wanted pre-service teachers to recognize the importance of recognizing student voices when working to motivate adolescents to write. Further, as researchers, we wanted to frame our inquiry with data from our students as to not generalize characteristics of adolescents gleaned from the media or even our own memories from our time as adolescents. Literacies are rapidly shifting, so asking our students about their practices is a logical step in classroom practices.

Conceptual Framework
New Literacies

The research team defined New Literacies as "literacy practices that privilege participation over publishing, distributed expertise over centralized expertise…sharing over ownership, experimentation over normalization, innovation and evolution over stability and fixity."[26] Building upon the traditional curricular practices intended to prepare students to work with pen and paper, letters, words, and books, a new literacies framework prepares students to use those same skills in relation to the internet and other forms of technology students bring with them to the modern classroom.[27] The twenty-first century English Language Arts teacher harnesses the philosophy of New Literacies in order to impact students' motivation, language and critical thinking skills, writing skills, and their processes of inquiry and discovery.[28]

Despite technology's extensive benefits, it still poses the same challenges as more traditional forms of communication.[29] One still needs to consider this communication with a critical eye and an understanding of the manner in which said communication is generated and published.[30, 31] Additionally, it is important that teachers are aware of and able to use new literacy practices, such as blogging, instant messaging, website creation, and social networking. New literacies works to integrate these forms of communications into literacy instruction [32] in an effort to bridge the writing students do naturally and the writing schools typically require in the classroom.[33, 34] This connective bridge between

existing writing and school writing is best supported when teachers validate naturally occurring forms of communication.[35] John Dewey (1938) asked teachers to pursue a "sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals [in order to have an] idea of what is actually going on in the minds of those who are learning."[36] To create authentic spaces for learning, teachers must work to integrate preexisting literacy practices that build upon the funds of knowledge students bring with them to the modern day classroom.

Adolescent Motivation to Write

All one needs to do is glance in the direction of a teenager today as he/she vigorously texts message after message, and it is quickly and abundantly clear that writing is a large part of his/her days.[37] Rather than the academically-recognized structured writing that is required in the classroom, text-messages are a spontaneous outpouring of written communication based on the same need for communication[38] that inspired our ancestors so many years ago to pull charcoal from the fire and scribble on the cave wall. This need to communicate through graphic representation is a universal human trait. Adolescents want to write[39] and many of them do write – in texts, blogs, wikis, tweets, instant messages, and countless other forms of written communication.[40, 41] Additionally, non-traditional forms of writing, like text messages, for example, must follow very distinctive guidelines for varying contexts. A sense of audience is essential as is the ability to convey information in a parsimonious yet precise manner. In the English Language Arts classroom, teachers might motivate students to write by harnessing the skills students already have[42] in the digital world in an effort to improve our students' academic writing and, on a grander scale, to situate the writing classroom for future English teachers and their students as a place that respects the students' current literacy practices.[43, 44]

Central to adolescent literacy motivation is the notion of control. Surveying students about their literacy practices not only sends the message to students that their practices matter, it is a successful way to begin to hear student voices. Because adolescents are individually motivated, teachers may discover not only collective authentic purposes for communication, but student-centered personal literacy interests that may surprise teachers. We know that students are motivated by enjoyment, curiosity, and a sense of efficacy.[45, 46] We also know that students are motivated to read and write when teachers tune in to students' prior knowledge and foster connections between what students know and curricular content.[47]

Third Space

Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, & Collazo[48] applied the concept of "third space" in the classroom to content area literacy, and this application can be considered as teacher educators work with technology to bridge the gap between the world of adults and the world of adolescents. Third space is an amalgamation of worlds, including out-of-school (first space) and in-school (second space) that are combined to create a third space in which the funds of knowledge in the first and second spaces inform and build upon each other in an effort to advance student learning. While Third Space Theory[49, 50, 51] and the notion of Hybridity[52] is contextualized as a way to forge a place that conflates out-of-school experiences, marginalized places and discourses (first space) within school culture, or privileged places and discourses (second space), this theoretical framework is ripe to apply to new literacies studies in the classroom. The coining of the term "digital natives,"[53] while problematic, encouraged people to consider the "otherness" that teachers and adults have with their own adolescent children, especially in the space that technology affords. We contend that adolescent space, like the first space of the home, is a marginalized but still authentic space where specific discourses, like slang and texting, emerge (Appendix 1).

While some of these discourses and applications remain marginalized, many work their way into mainstreamed culture over time while others do not. Part of our research explores these adolescent writing practices with the understanding that teachers, when recognizing the technological discourses present for some students' first-space lives, can then choose to integrate these practices into their instruction in order to welcome and motivate students to write. By tapping into the writing behaviors students already posses, teachers can engage students in more meaningful, and thus more productive, writing lessons, all of which have proven to be valuable assets in successful writing instruction.

Action Research in Teacher Education

Perhaps the most effective way to encourage pre-service teachers to begin a career marked by reflection is to involve them in action research projects of teacher educators. Action research is collaborative enquiry and is marked by participation and reflection54.

Richly discussed as to its impact in the field, teacher educator action research has been shown to affect the reflective practices of pre-service teachers involved[55]. The two teacher educators in this study conceived of the questions, methodology, and implemented the survey. Two pre-service teachers in different cohorts were asked to be involved in the data analysis processes after graduation from the program because of their unique perspectives in their commitment to using technology in the English classroom. Action research, as participatory and collaborative, became transformative for both the teacher educators and the practicing teachers in that it can evolve discussion to inclusion to eventual change[56]

Method
Procedure

As teacher educators, we wanted to know what motivated the students of our pre-service teachers in a diverse area in order to share this data with our pre-service teachers. We decided to ask the districts that participated with our university field experience and student teaching experiences to allow us access to the classrooms of our student teachers. This modeling of student involvement was meant to inform us as teacher educators and was meant to educate the pre-service teachers as well, particularly since many came in to the program with preconceived notions of students who were intrinsically motivated to read and write. As teacher educators, we conceived of this survey and invited pre-service teachers to join us in the data analysis. This survey was different than national studies that show internet and cell phone use among the nation's teen populations[57] because the focus was on how pre-service teachers who espouse new literacies theories affect the literacy practices of the adolescents in their individual classrooms. Still, national survey data informed the pre-service teachers and the teacher educators in that this national data suggest that teens are "not always as technically savvy as we collectively believe them to be."[58] While this national random sample survey conducted from the Pew Research center counters some of the media hype about students and their literacies, the practice of determining whether the individual students of our pre-service teachers were more likely to be engaged in new literacies outside of the classroom than others helped us to determine that we needed to ask students about their literacy practices, especially after being taught by pre-service teachers committed to technology use in the classroom.

The Instrument

The survey was developed based on theoretical assumptions of teaching and motivation held by the authors, two of whom were doctoral students while the other two were graduate students at the time of the survey development. The first variable that was measured was use of different types of technology as shown in Section A of the questionnaire (Appendix 3). The research team developed these forced-choice options based on experiences in the classroom during the semester. The second variable reflected student impression of the effectiveness of the technology integration within the student teaching experience. Section B of the survey was developed to measure student perceptions of themselves as readers. The questions were developed based on theoretical underpinnings and assumptions of the research team. The variables measured in Section C included motivations to write both inside and outside of school, with the dependent variables being both gender and forced-choice motivational choices developed by the research team based upon classroom experience.

Participants

Students in six of our student teachers' classrooms were asked to complete a questionnaire. This mixed-method survey was comprised of quantifiable forced-choice survey items and a write-in component that we analyzed qualitatively to triangulate our data. A convenience sample of 7th – 12th grade students (N = 444) attending six secondary schools in southwest Virginia was obtained. Respondents were 85% white, 7% African-American, 3% Asian, 2% Hispanic, 4% "mixed" or "other," and less than 1% American Indian .The samples came from six schools (total population = 5,271) in southwest Virginia. These five high schools and one middle school served 22% of the population's free or reduced meals[59] and were 86% white. Five of the six student teachers were female; all were white. The survey participants represented a wide variety of the adolescent years. The average age of the respondents was 14.8 years of age. Gender was split evenly, as 214 males and 214 females reported gender.

Questionnaire Characteristics

The survey measure was developed in three phases: drafting items, obtaining feedback on items, and finalizing. The items about writing motivation in and out-of-school consisted of seven items (See Appendix 3) and were part of a larger survey about other

general literacy practices. This survey asks students about their in-school and out-of school writing practices and provides insights for improving writing pedagogy in the classroom. School personnel reviewed the first draft of the survey before final approval.

The full survey was oriented in a landscape style and printed on one 8 ½ x 11 page, double-sided. The above seven items on the survey included three open-response items, three forced-choice items, and one-forced item with a write-in option. The forced-choice items that were collected were triangulated with the open responses to get a better understanding of the adolescent responses.

Administration and Analysis

Student teachers or university supervisors administered the survey to students during a 30-minute time period in April 2008. To counteract the inherent social desirability bias in self-report measures, the data was collected anonymously. Once collected, the data was entered into a database and verified. Basic descriptive analyses and chi-squares using SPSS software were used to test differences between categories of interest (e.g. boys vs. girls, age, ethnicity, motivations to write, and amount of writing). Additionally, we conducted data analysis of the "write-in" portions using constant comparative analysis, a form of analytic induction that facilitates the process of examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data. This analysis was done by the teacher educators and was reviewed myriad times in order to make meaning of the student responses. This inductive method adds rigor and encourages a systematic approach to qualitative analysis.[60]

Results

Reported Motivation and Writing Frequency

Grades were the overwhelming (72%) motivation for students to write for school assignments (Table 1). Girls were more likely to report that they like to write, and a significant percentage of boys reported an alliterate (choosing not to write despite being able) attitude toward academic writing, reporting that they do not write for school assignments.

In contrast to in-school writing practices where students are motivated to write for the extrinsic motivation of grades, out-of-school writing practices are reported to be distinctively different. Outside-of-school motivation tells us much more about adolescents today. 49% report writing to communicate, and an encouraging 23.4% write for self-expression (Table 2). Again,

girls reported being significantly more motivated to write for purposes regarding self-expression or to explore emotions, but a consistent number of boys and girls reported the need to communicate through writing.

Most respondents (44%) reported writing 1-5 hours a week for school assignments, and another 35% reported writing less than one hour each week. This statistic is distressing as we know that students need to write to improve their writing skills,[61] and students can develop thinking skills as they write.[62] Reported out-of-school literacy practices are still of concern, as 57% of students reported writing less than one hour each week for their own purposes, and another 26% reported writing 1-5 hours each week.

Motivation Inside and Outside of School

In addition to the above seven items, we asked students to write-in information to further our analysis and to triangulate our findings. The questionnaire asked students of pre-service teachers to list what they like to write (Appendix 3). The overwhelming answer to question #31 was "texting," followed by Facebook, and instant messaging. While a few students listed poetry, creative writing and journaling, the majority of student writing outside of school reported involved social communication. Few students were specific as the prompt asks; the only specific website or blog names listed were Facebook, MySpace, and one reference to a NASCAR site. This data show that the students are writing, often to earn grades in sanctioned second spaces, and to communicate and express themselves in the more authentic first space. The next open-ended question asked students what they primarily write for school (Appendix 3).

When asked in an open-ended question to consider what students write mostly for school, five primary codes emerged: papers, essays, reports, journals, and tests, none of which need any explanation. Of the 308 reported assignments, a mere 9% offered students a semblance of control over their writing. For analysis purposes, we considered journaling to offer students this control as opposed to papers, teacher assigned essay topics, reports, and tests.. Assignments that were coded to reflect this semblance of control consisted of journaling, student-choice essays, or creative responses to text like letters to literary characters. The next open-ended question asked what students wrote for pleasure outside of school.

Table 1: Motivation to write for school assignments

	All Ages			Totals
Frequency	422			
Percentage				
	Male	Female	Sig	
<u>Grades</u> Frequency	160	156	~	319
Percentage	37.3%	36.4%		72%
<u>I like to write</u> Frequency	22	54***	< .000	79
Percentage	5.1%	12.6%		17.8%
<u>I want to learn</u> Frequency	12	16	~	28
Percentage	2.8%	3.7%		6.3%
<u>Avoiding Punishment</u> Frequency	27	27	~	58
Percentage	6.3%	6.3%		13.1%
<u>I don't write for school</u> Frequency	8**	1	.018	11
Percentage	1.9%	.2%		2.5%
TOTAL				

~ = no significance; *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 2: Motivation to write out of school (Not for school assignments)

Gender	Male	Female	Significance	428
Grades	33*	16**	.01	49
	7.7%	3.7%		11.4%
Self-Expression	34	66***	> .000	100
	7.9%	15.4%		23.4%
Private journal to work out my feelings	8	34***	> .000	42
	1.9%	7,9%		9.8%
Public blog to share my thoughts	7	15	~	22
	1.6%	3.5%		5.1%
Friends / Social	35	38	~	73
	8.2%	8.9%		17.1%
To Communicate	104	107	~	211
	24.3%	25%		49.3%

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

When asked about "pleasure writing" that occurs outside of school, 230 responses were offered that could easily be coded as "internet" or "technology" usage, but we believed a more nuanced consideration was necessary as each of these activities involves its own skills and intents. Technology was merely the tool and not the motivation. Each of the types of writing that fell under this theme is audience-specific, thus the choice of writing is greatly impacted by the intent of the author. Consequently, we believe that these nine predominant responses can be considered within the following four codes that emerged from the constant-comparative method of data analysis: direct communication, indirect communication, self-expression, and community engagement. These codes emerged through a continual revisiting of the student written responses by the two teacher educators.

Direct communication. The researchers consider any writing done in a live setting where participants are responding in "real time" to be direct forms of communication. Much like a conversation between two friends, grammar rules are relaxed and give way to what is commonly referred to as text-speak. Common forms of direct communication include texting, instant messaging on social networking and other sites, and at times, emailing. The purpose of such writing is to give and receive information in the quickest way possible, getting as much out of each word as feasible.

Indirect communication. We defined indirect communication as written text meant to elicit a specific response, but within the timeframe of the respondent, in that they are not necessarily expected to offer an immediate response. This type of communication is more akin to traditional letter writing in that an immediate response is not expected, thus more detailed information must be included in the initial contact to help clarify the message. Blogging, posting to Facebook and MySpace, and emailing can all fall into these categories. It is important to remember that there are no absolute clear delineations here and that styles (email for example) are likely to overlap depending on the needs of the author of the message. Indirect communication involves writing to a specific party about a specific topic but understanding that a response may take some time and even require clarification. Therefore, indirect communication requires the author to include more details at the outset to guide the reader in the right direction. The distinctions between direct communication, which before web 2.0 technology would have been considered speaking only, and indirect communication is an interesting one, specifically in light of theoretical discussions within the language arts community about the value of different forms of communication.

Self Expression. A third form of writing students engaged in for "pleasure" took the form of self-expression. In this category, we considered a wide range of activities, including journaling, blogging, writing poetry, as well as setting up and maintaining a page on MySpace or Facebook.

Community Engagement. Lastly, we consider the manner in which students engage in their communities, both the communities they are placed in by society (student, son, daughter, adolescent, etc.) as well as those communities that students self-select affiliation, such as teams, clubs, extracurricular activities, and hobbies. The final question in the write-in section of the questionnaire (Figure 8) elicited a greater variety of student responses and required a more nuanced reporting of results within the expectations of the qualitative data analysis tradition.

Of the 444 students who completed the survey, 352 of them answered the final question: "What would you like your English teachers to know about what motivates you to read and write?" There were several students who answered "nothing" or "I don't know," but there were a significant number of students (173 or 49%) whose answers fell into three very specific categories. When considering what it was that they wanted their English teachers to know about what motivates them to read or write, three themes emerged from the data: "make it interesting, make it relatable to me, and make it fun."

Item #40 of the survey offered students an opportunity to express their answers in their own words and to clarify any feeling they felt were not covered in the multiple-choice sections of the survey. At first glance the students' assertions appear to be wide ranging in scope; from seeing writing as a way to reach deeper into one's mind, or the way that "weird things" make a certain student write to his or her friend. However, as our analysis continued it was quickly apparent that the vast majority of answers all pointed to one specific concern: personal engagement. Whether it was one student expressing his or her preference for "assignments that are unique, creative, and interesting" or a belief that "writing is a way to reach deeper into your mind," the fact was that students wanted to write in a way that was personally meaningful. The sentiments of one particular student successfully captured the feel-

ings expressed by the majority of the students when s/he said: "allow me time and allow me to write what I please." Simply enough the students were all saying the same thing: engage me. As we analyzed the data, it quickly became apparent that these students were asking to be engaged with the material. The majority of students made a reference to the importance of an education that reaches out and engages them.

Discussion

Limitations

This is a convenience sample, therefore, it has limitations. Although our sample size is large, a more telling picture may have emerged if we had surveyed all students from our student teachers' classrooms. However, because that total number would have approached 1,500, we agreed that it would not have been feasible. A second option, to conduct a systemized random sample, was also not feasible as obtaining a list of names from six different schools spread between three school systems would have affected our Internal Review Board exemption process; thus, gaining entry into these systems would have been prohibited. We wanted to ask the secondary students who had been taught by our pre-service teachers about the new literacies pedagogies they experienced. We administered the survey in the classrooms during the final week of each pre-service teacher's experience. We do also see the nature of the adolescent as another limitation of this survey. Because this was anonymous, there was no way for us to tell how seriously our participants took the survey. According to our review of the data, it was clear that at least five of the surveys included nonsense or rebellious answers, but we felt that most of the survey results were filled out with students' best intentions. We did feel that estimating weekly behaviors (reading and writing) is a difficult task for adolescents because their practices vary from week to week, and adolescents' weekend literacy practices differ from their weekday practices. As a result, it was at times difficult to determine the accuracy of their perceptions.

Additionally, reflection upon the survey shows that we listed instant messaging services as AIM, a brand name that was popular with students at the time. As is always the case in new literacies research, determining the language to use to connect with students' current understandings can be a challenge. Twitter, for example, was not even mentioned on our survey and that too could be replaced with other branded sites within the next few years. We feel that the survey, if given again, should be revised in another way as well.

It is possible that students, despite our best efforts to give examples, had difficulty recognizing out of school writing and typing as writing. The responses show that a significant number of respondents reported seeing grades as a motivation for writing out-of-school assignments not assigned by the teacher. While we recognize that non-academic writing can influence grades indirectly, it is more likely that students misread our survey (despite the written clarification) to mean assigned homework, given the triangulated qualitative data and the consistency of other responses.

Student Motivation

Adolescents use a wide variety of literacy practices as they go about their daily lives. When pre-service teachers look for ways to motivate their students, many consider why students write for the classroom and why they write for their personal purposes. While this effort to forge a "third space" in which out-of-school literacy practices are integrated into the curriculum is supported by many, there are still those who feel that personal and professional literacy practices should not be intertwined. This study supports the potential for improving student writing by creating that third space in the writing classroom. In this study, set within the context of student teachers that were being challenged to consider the tensions inherent in motivating students to write, the research team asked students what motivated them to write. The data were collected the final week of pre-service teachers' student teaching experience, and informed both the university supervisors and the pre-service teachers. Students reported being motivated by grades, a result that is troubling if not surprising. It is not that we are concerned that students are motivated by a currency, in this case grades, that matters to them, it is more that this currency is a teacher devised system and it does not reflect authentic, intrinsic motivation. Because the disparity between boy's motivation and girls' motivation is extreme, we hesitate to fail to address it in this paper, especially as our research questions did not ask about gender or age differences. We collected the demographic data in order to reflect upon possible emerging data, and feel that this data is compelling enough to encourage future scholarship and research in this area. It became clear that the girls in the study reported a greater likelihood to use technology to write about their feelings and to express themselves to others. The pre-service teachers corroborated these findings with anecdotes from their classrooms. They found many exceptions to these gen-

eralizations and were hesitant to consider gender specific assignments, but suggested that when students are given a choice in their forms of expression that they are more motivated to use technology in ways that are most comfortable for each individual student.

When the data on in-school motivation is compared to students' out of school motivation, the results show a significant chasm between the two types of writing. The student participants had been taught for six to ten weeks by pre-service teachers who had been prepared in an English Education program that had worked to prepare them to see classroom possibilities through a New Literacies lens, one in which authenticity, collaboration, and innovation were valued. Still, the percentage of students who reported writing to communicate within assigned writing tasks in the classrooms of these student teachers was surprisingly low. Students did report writing outside of school to communicate. Recognizing that writing for most students is an academic exercise, we should take solace in the knowledge that students are reporting their engagement in writing for their own authentic purposes, even if it is outside of the classroom. Teacher education programs that encourage student teachers to be involved in the process of inquiry in asking students what motivates them to write as this research does, are just a first step to the valuing of students' out of school writing motivations. The logical next step is in using this data to conflate first space writing with traditional classroom writing in a classroom third space.

The data results showed emerging codes in response to the write-in data for the research question "What motivates students to write outside-of-school?" These four codes were direct communication, indirect communication, self-expression, and community involvement. Direct communication technologies include instant messaging. This desire for instant feedback troubles some English teachers who may wish to encourage patience and reflection. Indirect communication such as email does not provide the immediate response of direct communication but students report being motivated to write within these spaces.

Wall posts on social networking sites can be considered self-expression; students are experimenting with identity and perhaps trying to find a place in their adolescent world. Poetry and journaling are other ways that students report being motivated to express themselves. As teachers move from creative to academic writing, some of the motivation may be getting lost. As with each of these codes, a student's writing for community engagement is very audience-specific and requires the student have a command of a common vocabulary and understand the shared beliefs. Time spent "commenting" on YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, or responding to posts on blogs, Ning networks, and wikis requires a sophisticated understanding of the shared rules of that environment. As students engage in such writing they are practicing and improving those necessary skills.

Teacher Controlled Assignments

The data analysis revealed that students reported another dissonance, one between what students like to write and what students are asked to write for academic assignments. Students want to write to communicate, but they don't see what they call "papers, essays, and reports" as communication. Students did report that teachers assign journals, which are generally considered to be more student-centered. While academic writing prepares students for future scholarly endeavors, and while we would not consider suggesting that teachers should not assign them, this data suggests that, within a New Literacies and a Third Space lens, teachers can combine the practices of traditional writing with those students are already motivated to engage in. Students report wanting to express themselves. Blogs are one way that teachers can successfully create a reading and writing space that can provide an authentic, worldwide audience for writing that is traditionally called an essay, for example. Students report the desire to communicate through writing. Students could be asked to tweet or text, writing modes both familiar and motivating to students, traditional lecture notes or news from the classroom. Similarly, a third space could even be an email to a local elected official or school administrator. These tools offer students the immediacy of feedback from authentic audiences that students find more motivating than traditional writing assignments and still meet the English Language Arts academic content standards. The intent of this research is not to suggest technology as a substitute for other reading and writing, nor is it how we interpret this data. This data shows that students do more writing, albeit for personal purposes, than many teachers might suspect. This data is encouraging to teachers and researchers to continue to consider ways to meaningfully integrate those practices into the classroom.

This data is also an example of how pre-service teachers can be guided in inquiry processes in their own classrooms. Knowing how much students write

and what motivates them to write may be the impetus needed to integrate new technologies through a New Literacies lens in the classroom in order to create a third space that motivates students to write for their own purposes of communicating and expressing themselves.

Recent calls for research in the field ask for "particular studies of teachers who successfully use new multimedia and who teach new literacies." Moje called for "details of the processes and practices of such pedagogical innovations" that could "guide teachers and teacher educators in efforts to integrate such practices." [63] While this study documents an effort to answer Moje's call, this area of research is emerging and fluid. We may not have documented "successful use," but we have been encouraged by the effort and the reflective process that our pre-service teachers and we as English educators have been negotiating. It is clear that negotiating the technological side of the English classroom is imperative, although it is not without difficulties;[64, 65, 66] however, when pre-service teachers recognize that bridging the divide between students' literacies and the traditional literacies in the English classroom, perhaps their emerging identities as teachers will be shaped by a respect for the technology that will allow future students to collaborate and write for authentic audiences, with the help of computers, cell phones, and other social applications.

Adolescent Space

A discussion of these findings in light of third space and New Literacies is problematic without recognizing the cognitive leap being made between the two theories. Third space theory relates to cultural differences, and has been used to shed light on the differences between a traditional school and a Hispanic home, to give an example. First space is defined as the non-dominant space of the home, and second space as privileged places such as schools. While differences in technological use has coined the terms "native" and "immigrant," the reality is that children who consider themselves digital natives may be already in the privileged dominant space in society and as such may have access to financially prohibitive technology-rich spaces that those of a lower socio-economic status may not have. It would be irresponsible of researchers and teachers to suggest the creation of third space classrooms that do not consider the varied first spaces of individual adolescents. While some students are engaging in electronic communication outside of the classrooms, many other home spaces do not allow for such practices. A

third space writing classroom for all of their students would connect technologically-rich homes and those homes that are rich in other ways, such as having bilingual family members.

If we consider adolescent culture today, in relation to their online literacies and their reading and writing habits, and recognize that schooling is bound to reshape not only the first space of home (in other words, a child's home space will be distinct from his or her parents' and will be shaped by second spaces), then let us consider another space and name it "adolescence space." This "adolescence space" is a temporary space, when teens try on identities and practice literacies that they may or may not fully adopt into adulthood (reference to Appendix 2). During the time that one is an adolescent, formative experiences may occur historically or personally. These may be personal, like a painful heartbreak or a championship game, and others may be historical and specific, like President Kennedy's Inauguration speech or the September 11, 2001 tragedy. These formative experiences are specific to each generation and some take them into adulthood, thus shaping the adolescents' adult character traits and behaviors. Other experiences, that could be called "experimental experiences," like smoking cigarettes at a stadium concert or summer camp, may be experienced but not formative (Appendix 2). It is important to note that an experience may be formative for one and experimental for another.

Teaching Relative to Adolescent Space

In order to make learning relevant, many teachers work to stay in tune to the adolescent space of the specific generation that they teach[67]. They do this by listening to teen music, allowing time in the classroom for non-curricular related discussions, and attending student extracurricular activities. Some teachers make the informed decision not to do this, choosing instead to model their instructional 2nd space after the dominant culture in the belief that students will adapt and eventually thrive in this model. A teacher, in light of current generalizations of digital learners as multi-taskers may make a conscious effort to make the classroom space the one place where students mono-task. We are not passing judgment on this pedagogical stance in this discussion. While one teacher may see the classroom space as the only chance for students to read the literary canon (as students today are reading fewer books and more web pages), another may be equally successful working from a stance that highly incorporates adoles-

cent space. New technologies should not be used simply for the sake of using them. Rather, teachers should view technology as a means to the same end: it is very possible to achieve the same objectives using varied routes. Technology is just one of the pathways that teachers can employ to increase literacy.

Third space theory[68] and Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development encourage us to consider a balanced approach to English instruction.[69] Every student is raised in a culture that is specific to his or her family circumstances. Each of our students, upon reaching school age, will learn to negotiate second space. In our described "adolescence space," students will learn to negotiate slang, curse words, and the internet, among other literacies. Upon adulthood, students will create their own first spaces that conflate some of the characteristics of the first space of their childhood, some of the characteristics of their second spaces (church and schools, for example), and some of their adolescent spaces. These adolescent spaces are unique to each generation as new forms of music, film, technology and trends in popular culture come and go. We contend that English teachers today need to strike a balance in creating third space. Our research shows that our students did not fit the generalizations about digital learners that are offered on YouTube videos. Our students, while blogging, are not harnessing the potential to think, create, analyze and apply as they could. This suggests that pre-service teachers may choose to take the opportunity to empower their students by asking about out-of-school literacy practices in order to harness the motivations that are already inherent in adolescents, and to also guide new practices in order to inspire and prepare their students for new ways to be literate.

And while the digital learners may want to use the www ("whatever, whenever, and wherever"), pre-service teachers need to think critically about how they are fostering critical consumption. When our students plead, "Engage me," we can, but not by doing it for them. Hence, we are all shaped by our youth. We may challenge adolescents to "Ask not that we engage you, ask how you can engage the world," knowing that the Internet has that power to motivate our youth to engage the world. Teachers can challenge students to move this adolescent space to a third space that combines both their personal and academic spaces, and in doing so, will not only be engaged and motivated to write for authentic purposes, but in this real desire to create, communicate, and collaborate, will engage others.
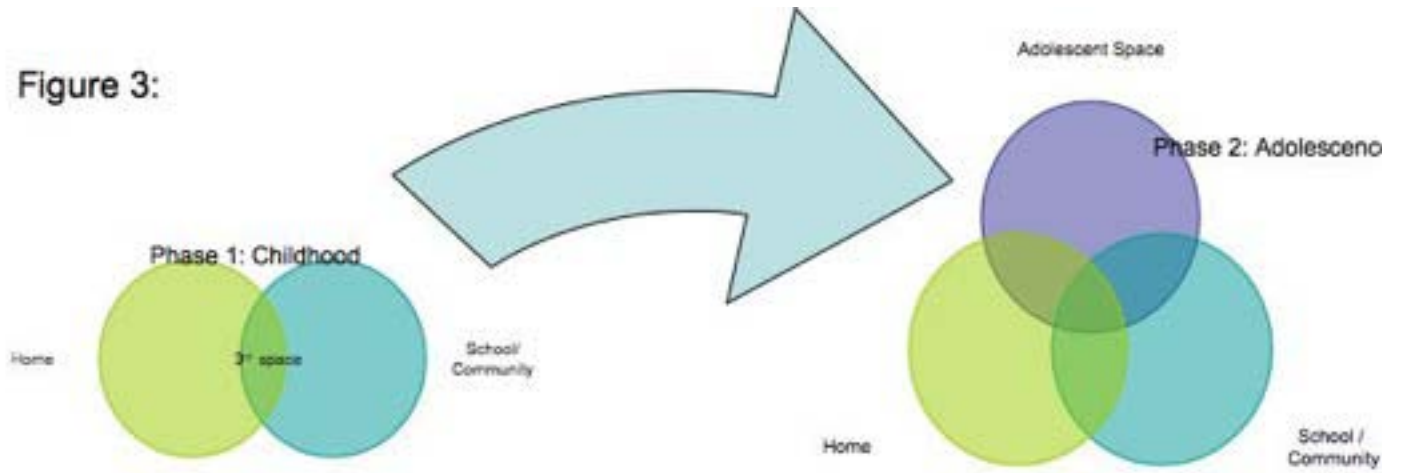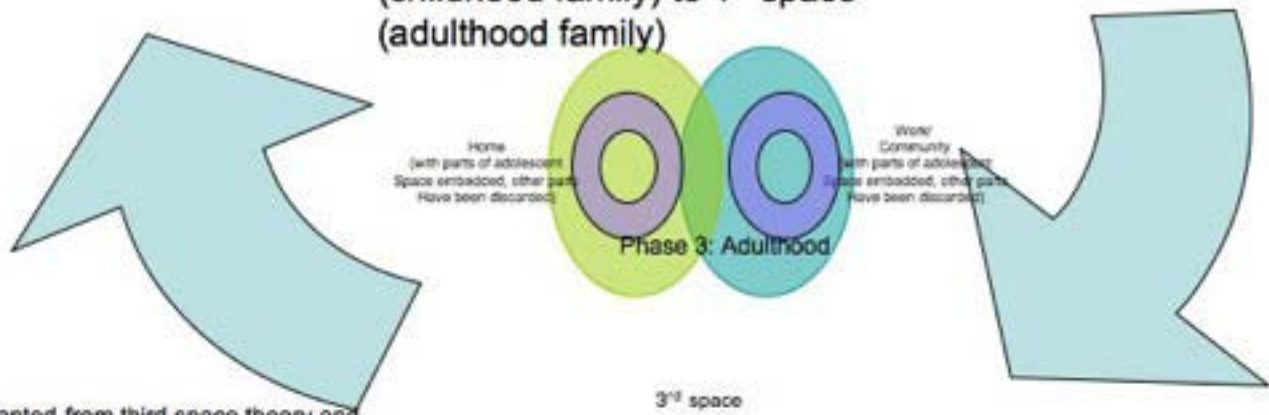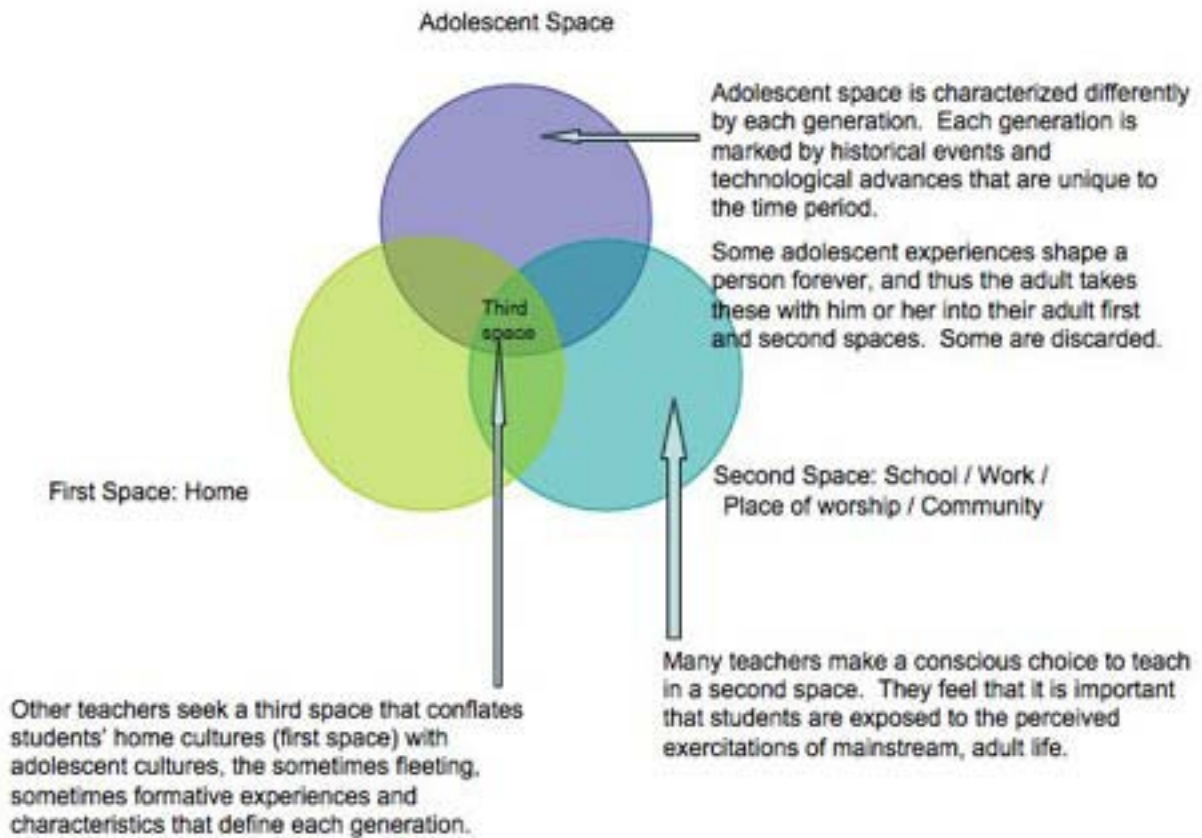
Appendix 1:

Figure 3:

Figure : The progression from 1st space (childhood family) to 1st space (adulthood family)

Adapted from third space theory and funds of knowledge (Moll)

Appendix 2:

Figure 9 : The conflation of funds of knowledge of home, school, and adolescent spaces.

Adolescent Space

Adolescent space is characterized differently by each generation. Each generation is marked by historical events and technological advances that are unique to the time period.

Some adolescent experiences shape a person forever, and thus the adult takes these with him or her into their adult first and second spaces. Some are discarded.

Third space

First Space: Home

Second Space: School / Work / Place of worship / Community

Many teachers make a conscious choice to teach in a second space. They feel that it is important that students are exposed to the perceived exercitations of mainstream, adult life.

Other teachers seek a third space that conflates students' home cultures (first space) with adolescent cultures, the sometimes fleeting, sometimes formative experiences and characteristics that define each generation.

Appendix 3:

To participating students: This survey is completely anonymous and voluntary. Your teachers will not see your responses. You do NOT have to participate. If you would like to participate, please answer the following questions. If not, please turn this survey in blank.

Please consider these questions in relation to your experiences with your student teacher in English this semester.

Never = 1 A few times = 2 Sometimes = 3 Often = 4 Daily = 5 I don't know = 0

How often did your student teacher use the following technologies?

Email?

Blogs?

Wikis?

Chat?

MS Word?

MS PowerPoint?

What motivates you to write for school assignments?

a) Grades

b) I like to write

c) I want to learn

d) Avoiding punishment

e) I don't write for school assignments

Other

_____

What motivates you to write outside of school? (this includes time spent on AIM, blogs, a wiki or any other form of written communication)

a)I know it will improve my grades

b) I like to write to express my self

c) I write in a private journal or blog to work out my feelings

d) I write in a public journal or blog to share my thoughts and to hear others

e) To find out more about my friends / social reasons.

f)To communicate with my friends

Please list what you like to write. Include names of websites, blogs, magazines, and forms (i.e. poetry, stories, emails, text messages, blogs, reviews, reviews/comments on You Tube, etc.) you like to write.

How often do you write each week for school? (Please estimate.)

a) Less than 1 hour

b) 1-5 hours

c) 6-10 hours

d) 11-20 hours

e) More than 20 hours

What do you write PRIMARILY for school?

How often do you write each week for pleasure? (Please estimate.)

a)Less than 1 hour

b) 1-5 hours

c) 6-10 hours

d) 11-20 hours

e) more than 20 hours

What do you write PRIMARILY for pleasure outside of school?

Section D: Demographics

How old are you?

Are you a female or male?

What is your ethnicity?

What are your plans after high school graduation?

_____

What would you like your English teachers to know about what motivates you to read and write?

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