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Stance and Intertextuality in Written Discourse

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Previous theory of social aspects of intertextual meanings has not fully examined the role of cultural meanings inherent in writers' or readers' ideological stances. The purpose of this study of intertextuality in teachers' peer dialogue journal exchanges was to determine how intertextual meanings are constituted by partners' cultural attitudes or stance that link disparate aspects of journals. It also examined the degree to which teachers were willing to explore ambivalences associated with their stance. And, it examined the influence of teachers' social relationships on their willingness to challenge each other's ideas and opinions. Results of the analysis of two pairs of teachers exchanging entries in a composition methods course indicated that each pair explored intertextual meanings in terms of a particular stance. Two female teachers explored the relationships between journal writing, gender differences, and their own personal experiences in terms of a feminist stance. Two male teachers examined the relationships between student behavior, school rules, and their own classroom behavior in terms of their stance towards teaching. In both cases, having developed a strong social relationship through their exchanges, teachers were willing to challenge each other and to explore ambivalences associated with their stances.

At all levels of schooling, students use various forms of shared writing: note-passing (Jackson, 1992), teacher and student dialogue journals (Staton, Shuy, Peyton, & Reed, 1988), peer dialogue journals (Beach & Anson, 1992), or electronic computer bulletin boards (Bruce & Rubin, 1993; Faigley, 1992; Hawisher & Selfe, 1992). In writing and responding to each other, students are creating social relationships through their writing. By participating as a member of an electronic bulletin board, they establish a social bond with other members of that bulletin board group (Myers, 1992). And, in exchanging texts about experiences and topics, they are creating a shared intertextual meaning. Members of a bulletin board devoted to the Star Trek television series share common intertextual meanings, meanings that constitute their social memberships as "trekies" (Jenkins, 1992).

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In these written exchanges, students are acting and reacting to each other's messages. For example, writer A responds to a Star Trek program on a bulletin board. Writer B reacts to writer A disagreeing with A's evaluation of the program. Writer A responds by noting that B misunderstood her message. B reacts that he thought that he interpreted A's message correctly. As they progress in this exchange, the meanings of these messages become more contested and indeterminate (Bloome, in press). A's and B's meaning become more indeterminate as the gap between what they intend to convey and what is actually conveyed widens. As Bloome (in press) notes:

> As people act and react to each other, the meanings and consequences of the actions they are reacting to are not always clear (both planned and unplanned indeterminacy), and even if they are clear, assumed to be clear, and agreed upon at the moment, their meaning and import are always open to being contested and changed later. Thus, the meaning and consequence of any utterance and action is always and necessarily indeterminate—and even if it were not, it would be socially reconstructed as indeterminate.

In a literacy event, this indeterminacy may, rather than frustrating participants, serve to involve, excite, or intrigue them. They may perceive such indeterminacy as a creative social challenge. Rather than simply resolving potential complications, they may actually seek to foment these indeterminacies as central to the social appeal of a relationship.

For example, one of the authors (Beach), received the following message from an administrative staff member on his department's e-mail network: "Watch channel 4 at 10 pm tonight to see a report on *Hey 'U'—Where's the Prof?* A student apparently took an undercover camera into various university classes and discovered that some students (TA's) are teaching students!" In responding to this message, Beach was most intrigued not by any simple comprehension of this message. Rather, he speculated about alternative motives. Was the sender simply inviting him to watch the TV news program or was she judging the students with the "undercover camera" or was she issuing a warning to expect one more sensationalized attack on public higher education? And, he wondered, what would be the public's potential response to the TV broadcast—would they interpret it as further evidence of university professors spending little time teaching and therefore not "working"? Beach entertains these optional meanings given his inherent suspicion towards administrative pronouncements.

Stance

In inferring these possible meanings as a reader, he is applying his stance—his ideological orientation or perspective. In adopting a stance, a reader or writer infers those meanings consistent with their beliefs, attitudes, or disciplinary orientation. In responding to the portrayal of class differences in a novel, a student may adopt a feminist stance given her social allegiance to and membership in a women's book club. At the same time, a text could be said to invite a certain stance. A scientific lab report invites a reader to adopt a field stance of scientist in order to understand its conventions.

Writers use cues signaling beliefs and attitudes to infer or convey stance. A writer who goes beyond a bare-bones neutral description of an autobiographical event to add descriptive details or "evaluative" comments or asides (Labov, 1972) may be more likely to convey stance than a writer who portrays the event with little or no elaboration (Beach, 1990a).

Writers' willingness to elaborate on texts reflects their needs to create and maintain social relationships. In order to gain an audience's "identification" (Burke, 1966), a writer elaborates on a text in a way that conveys an attitude consistent with that of her audience. Moreover, anticipating or receiving an audience's reaction often precipitates the need for further elaboration.

This notion of stance is therefore consistent with social theories of intertextuality (Bloome, 1989). Participants in a conversation—oral or written, adopt certain stances that constitute their social roles and relationships within particular literacy events with their own particular social histories (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). Take, for example, a group of Star Trek devotees who are members of a Star Trek e-mail bulletin-board group. Given their allegiance to this e-mail group, they adopt a stance of fans who are devoted to the program. Their social participation and membership in this e-mail group is dependent on their display of knowledge about and admiration for the program (Jenkins, 1992). Their shared e-mail messages mark their allegiances to the e-mail group's beliefs and attitudes.

Group members are therefore socialized to adopt stances constituting membership in specific discourse communities. For example, members of a "fundamentalist" Swedish church community learned to "read" the Bible as the absolute and infallible "word of God" (Forstop, 1990). Through their responses to the Bible, members established their allegiance to these community values. In sharing their responses in group church sessions, members exchanged testimonials of how the "truths" of the Bible affected their daily lives, exchanges that served to verify their allegiance to the values of that community. Similarly, Star Trek fan club members establish "fanzines" in which they write their own stories or create their own videos based on the programs' characters. Social membership in these clubs is constituted and verified by intertextual exchanges about the program. Rather than assuming the role of passive, sycophantic groupies, these fans work together to create their own "fanzine" stories and videos. These stories and videos often represented erotic versions of the original programs, for example, stories of homosexual encounters between Spock and Captain Kirk (Jenkins, 1992). By constructing and sharing their own intertextual versions of these stories, group members affirm their group allegiances.

As part of their socialization, group members acquire stances by exposure to what Bennett and Wollacott (1987) describe as "textual shifters." These "textual shifters" consist of a series of texts that represent a shared ideological stance. For example, during the 1950s and 1960s readers' responses to James Bond novels were shaped by a host of different kinds of texts: films, film reviews, and fan-magazine interviews with and publicity about Sean Connery and Roger Moore (Bennett & Wollacott, 1987). These intertextual links cut across different media—responses to the stance inherent in Bond films transferred to responses to the stance inherent in Bond novels. In acquiring these "reading formations" within the context of the Cold War, readers learned to perceive Bond as a representative of Western, anti-Communist, patriarchal values. Thus, the book covers, films, and male magazines consistently portrayed women as sex objects. A reader or viewer is invited to perceive the "Bond girl" through a patriarchal, sexist "male-gaze" (Mulvey, 1975) stance or "reading formation" consistent with the appeal of Bond novels and films to males of the 1950s and 1960s.

STANCES AND AMBIVALENCES

Because these stances represent cultural attitudes and group allegiances, they are rife with indeterminacies and ambivalences. As Pratt (1987) argues, certain communities dominate other communities, creating a "split subjectivity, because they are required simultaneously to identify with the dominant group and to dissociate themselves from it" (p. 57). Rather than envisioning the classroom as a homogeneous, happy community, Pratt envisions a "linguistics of contact" that accentuates differences between competing representative communities. She cites the example of a course at Stanford University, "Cultures, Ideas, and Values" in which students explore the intertextual relationships between narratives from their own and other cultures, narratives portraying positive and negative aspects of their cultures. Through responding to and sharing these stories, students experienced "doubt, conflict, disagreement, because interpretations are always there in multiplicity denying each other the illusion of self-containment and truth" (p. 228).

In Bakhtin's (1981) theory of dialogism, these layers of multiple, indeterminate meanings are inherent in the discourse itself, "responsive" to a rich history of motives and meanings of previous use: "The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer word. It provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 280). Through their "active" or "responsive understanding," readers and writers are open to the multiplicity of meanings: "Every other sort of discourse as well is oriented toward our understanding that is 'responsive'—although this orientation is not particularized in an independent act and is not compositionally marked" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 280–281). For example, as they enter into the multiplicity of discourses or heteroglossia in the novel, readers need to be "responsive" to these discourses that evoke intertextual links to discourses in their own lives (Benton, 1992).

stance

Stance has to do with readers and writers openness or "responsive understanding" to the indeterminacies and ambivalences inherent in discourse and social relationships. Readers and writers may adopt a stance in which they suppress the exploration of multiple meanings. Or, they may adopt a stance of "responsive understanding," in which they are actively exploring multiple meanings. By entertaining and articulating multiple, conflicting meanings to others, students break out of "dualist," absolutist modes of thinking to entertain alternative perspectives. For example, Kroll (1992) provided college freshmen students with disparate, conflicting accounts of the same battle in Vietnam and asking them to write in their journals about these accounts. Through sharing their journal reactions—their doubts, confusions, and disbeliefs about these disparate accounts with Kroll, who provided supportive feedback—many of these students moved away from their dualistic thinking.

Readers' and writers' stance, or their willingness to entertain multiple meanings, may be related to their roles in and relationship to a particular social or literacy event (Bloome & Bailey, 1992). In his study of college students' use of writing to define and explore social identities in the classroom context, Brooke (1991) cites the example of a fundamentalist student, Brad, whose ideological stance limits his willingness to explore multiple meanings. In his writing group, Brad defined his social role as a fundamentalist by consistently resisting others' challenges to his religious beliefs.

Group members may therefore become locked into rigid, routinized roles or procedures suppressing exploration of indeterminacies or ambivalences (Nystrand, 1992). For example, in the classroom, the I-R-E (initiate, respond, evaluate) routine reifies status differences between teacher and student, allowing for little explicit dialogue exploration of indeterminate, ambivalent meanings associated with responsive understanding (Bloome, Puro, & Theodorou, 1989; Mehan, 1979). As Nystrand notes:

> It is just such active, responsive understanding teachers fail to practice when they determine prior to a given class the entire sequence of questions they will ask and what answers they will accept, and when they respond to correct student answers with a mere nod before moving on to the next question, often changing the topic of discourse. In doing so, these individuals make no attempt at active, responsive understanding; they "want, in effect," Bakhtin writes "to turn on a light bulb after having switched off the current. Only the current of verbal intercourse endows a word with the light of meaning." (Nystrand 1992, p. [6)

Khti

In these monologic or controlled literacy events, those in power attempt to confine the potential indeterminacies and ambiguities of meanings to those meanings consistent with their institutional values. For example, in schools, this takes the form of "silencing" alternative student voices (Fine, 1991). In other cases, students resist rigid role definitions of "students" through parody, what Brooke (1987) characterized as the expression of "underlife."

In contrast, in a social context in which conventions and roles are fluid and open to negotiation, participants may be more likely to adopt a stance in which they entertain multiple meanings associated with social definitions of intertextuality or what Bloome (in press) describes as "collaborative sense-making." All of this raises the question as to what aspects of stance inherent in the social context are more likely to foster exploration of multiplicity of meanings.

In this article, we will examine the ways in which stance is played out in one form of written discourse—the peer dialogue journal in which students exchange and respond to each others' entries. We then analyze some representative examples of students' exchanges to determine how the quality of their social relationships influences their willingness to explore indeterminacies and ambivalences associated with their adopted and perceived stances.

FEATURES OF ORAL AND WRITTEN DISCOURSE IN PEER DIALOGUE EXCHANGES

In writing peer-dialogue journals, students bring perceptions of or assumptions about discourse conventions or forms constituting oral and written discourse. In school settings, students acquire knowledge of forms of essay writing that emphasize the use of formal, impersonal register and an authoritative, definitive voice. Students may then equate writing with formal, authoritative discourse as contrasted with talk as informal, exploratory discourse. However, when employing peer dialogue journals, students may then perceive this form as constituted by features of both oral and written discourse. As Shuy (1988) notes, the reciprocity of dialogue journals is "closer to talk written down than any other school writing" (p. 81). Conversational exchanges in an interactive mode, according to Halliday (1989), reveal an unfolding process, whereas formal essay-writing in schools is often more preoccupied with finished products. Halliday notes that "writing creates a world of things; talking creates a world of happening" (1979, p. 93). Journal writers entertain opinions, or "passing theories" (Dasenbrock, 1991), from which a point begins to emerge through the exchange. As Schiffrin (1990) notes, "Opinions free the speaker (as author) from a claim to truth, by emphasizing the speaker's claim (as principal) to sincerity" (p. 245). Given the focus on exchanging opinions, writers may then focus on each others' "internal, evaluative positions" (Schiffrin, 1990, p. 244), leading to an exploration of beliefs and attitudes.

For example, in contrast to the formal essay, a peer-dialogue journal exchange may consist of a series of narratives that revolve around certain underlying opinions. After one partner recounts an event, based on a "felt–sense" intuitive link, the other responds with a related narrative. As one narrative triggers another, an intertextual pattern emerges, revolving around a shared underlying stance. For example, by sharing a series of "run-around" college registration stories, students begin to define and construct a common critical stance regarding institutional bureaucracy. As they become engaged by each others' stories, they discover a common social bond that may lead to an exploration of their shared stance and their own perspective on an event. As Mary Bateson (1989) noted in *Composing a Life*, "Women today read and write biographies to gain perspective on their own lives. Each reading provokes a dialogue of comparison and recognition, a process of memory and articulation that makes one's own experience available as a lens of empathy" (p. 4). For example, in a teacher education program, evaluation of preservice teachers consisted primarily of "given-back stories" in dialogue journals (Clandinin, 1992; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In these given-back stories, instructors describe their own experiences that represent a stance distinct from that of the student. It is assumed that in responding to the alternative stance implied by the given-back story, the student may reflect on his or her own experience. For example, Clandinin (1992) was responding to a paper written by her student, Julie. The paper was an analysis of a group of students' conversations. However, the analysis struck Clandinin as cold and impersonal, lacking any expression of Julie's own ideas. In a given-back story, Clandinin gave her "a story of distance from the children, of lack of connection with the subject matter and a lack of voice as she hid behind the various theoretical formulations displaying what Belenky, Clichy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) would call 'received knowledge'" (Clandinin, 1992, p. 133). In sharing this story, Clandinin is helping the student recognize her own impersonal "academic" stance. What's crucial here in terms of social intertextuality is the student's response to the given-back story and the instructor's awareness of her own stance as shaping her evaluation of Julie's paper. Clandinin reports that:

> Julie was angry with me and with herself but she was able to begin to make sense of the given-back story. I began to be aware of the institutional narratives and the ways evaluation shaped and constrained the collaborative relationship that Julie and I were attempting to construct. Julie had, in the face of a university assignment, completed a paper that draws on quotations from experts and that silenced her own voice, accounts of her own narrative knowing. (p. 133)

In this example, Julie responds negatively to the challenge posed by Clandinin's given-back story. These tensions between student and teacher precipitated both to reflect on their own stance regarding academic writing. Thus, in an exchange, partners become aware of indeterminacies and ambivalences associated with their stances. Partners may be more willing to explore these indeterminacies and ambivalences if they share a mutual respect based on a positive social relationship. However, students may adopt a relatively rigid textual stance, perceiving journal writing as simply a set of formal mini-essays rather than a combination of both oral and written discourse.

Social and Gender Roles

In writing peer-dialogue journals, students are also constructing social and gender roles through their exchange, particularly with partners they do not know. In oral conversation, nonverbal cues often serve to define social and gender roles. In written conversations, students may be less intimidated by fear of immediate repercussions or intimidation than is the case with oral conversation. For example, high-apprehensive writers offered more directions for revisions in the electronic mail exchanges than in the face-to-face groups (Mabrito, 1991). Although males may dominate oral discussions (Aries, 1982; Kramarae & Treichler, 1990; Sadker & Sadker, 1990; Somers & Lawrence, 1992), differences in nonverbal intimidation may be mitigated by written exchanges.

Writers engaged in written conversation may be more likely to reflect on each other's messages than is the case in oral conversation because they have more time to mull over an opinion in order to formulate some specific reactions. Writers in Mabrito's (1991) study were more likely to use comments suggested by electronic mail than comments given to them orally because they retained more of the information from reading than from listening.

In adopting social roles, students are also aware of differences in status or power particularly associated with "student" versus "teacher" roles. Tannen (1990) characterized dialogue that fosters mutual, compatible understanding as "symmetrical." In contrast, in "asymmetrical" dialogue, one person may assume a more dominate role, which serves to distance one party from the other. In some teacher–student dialogue journals, teachers may employ an "asymmetrical" dialogue or imply a distant, impersonal teacher role (de la Luz Reyes, 1991; Peyton & Seyoum, 1989; Schatzberg-Smith, 1988; Staton, Shuy, Peyton, & Reed, 1988). Research comparing peer- and student-to-teacher dialogue journals show more positive results when students write to each other (de la Luz Reyes, 1991). Students may be more intimidated by writing to a teacher than to a peer. For example, in one study (Schatzburg-Smith, 1988), only 12 of 38 college students exchanging entries with their teachers asked questions. Preservice education students' entries written for their teacher frequently consisted of syntheses of readings and advice from the teacher as to whether or not the students were "getting it" (Gallego, 1992). In contrast, students writing for peers were more likely to engage in problem-solving, wrote in an informal mode, focused on self and personal experience, and wrote longer entries than when writing for the teacher.

These written exchanges may be characterized as "symmetrical" versus "asymmetrical" (Tannen, 1990) in terms of whether they represent equal versus hierarchical status relationships. In an analysis of a professor's reactions to his students' journals, Bean and Zulich (1992) found that the professor's reactions were frequently "asymmetrical." The professor often provided general advice or comments that implied the professor's superior knowledge and status. Students were less likely to react to these comments than to comments categorized as "symmetrical." When asked to categorize instances of a professor's comments about their journals, college students preferred comments involving self-disclosure and dialogic exchange over comments perceived to be impersonal, ritualistic, proforma reactions designed to maintain status differences (Beach, 1990b).

In order to maintain a positive social relationship, or what is perceived to be "symmetrical" exchanges, partners "frame" their reactions to the other as "a way of showing that we are involved with each other, and how we feel about being involved. Our talk is saying something about our relationships" (Tannen, 1990, p. 13). By responding with positive reactions, self-disclosure, or humor, a partner supports the writer's explorations of intertextual connections. In an analysis of a user group consisting of preservice teachers' e-mail exchanges, Myers (1992) examined intertextual links between message segments. Students employed a number of strategies: sharing of hopes and frustrations, seeking out responses, teasing or the use of humor, affirming reactions, elaborations, challenges, and definitions of shared values.

College students participating in a "networked classroom" in which they exchanged e-mail messages served to decenter the teacher's authority in the classroom (Faigley, 1992). Moreover, in contrast to oral classroom discussions in which positions are formulated, analysis of the "networked classroom" transcripts indicated that the discussion

> is more wavelike, with topics ebbing and flowing intermingled with many cross currents. Not only do the many voices act out Bakhtin's principle of the multiaccentual nature of the sign, but the movement recalls the opposition he described between the monologic centripetal forces of unity, authority, and truth and the dialogic centrifugal forces of multiplicity, equality, and uncertainty. (Faigley, 1992, p. 183)

In her study of six teachers with whom she wrote dialogue journals, Miller (1990) found that teachers frequently described their own constraints, tensions, ambivalences, and uncertainties associated with teaching. One teacher, Beth, a mathematics department chairperson, wrote about her difficulties of being an administrator who missed teaching her classes. She is reflecting on the tensions between dependency and autonomy within institutional constraints.

> I don't think it is the need to go back and be a teacher again but to find a space that allows me to be me, to feel that what I have to say is important. The only place there is for me where I can be me to the greatest degree is our teacher-researcher group. I wonder if in administration that environment is dropped because of self-interests talking a priority, because of the fear of being shown as an incompetent, because of a false self built upon successfully landing a job? I do not own this job yet and cannot "see" what that could mean. The struggle is either with me always having to ask, or with the subtle controls emanating from those who are my superiors. (p. 125)

In her response to Beth, Miller (1990) responded in an entry that acknowledged Beth's need to examine her own ambivalences.

> I can see how you are struggling with all aspects of this job right now. The job itself seems to bring lot of issues to the surface for you. And I know that you fight that shutting down and shutting out that the pressures sometimes force you to do. You talk about trying to resist the compartmentalized, sequential, logical aspects of your job as the only ways to do it, and yet, sometimes, maybe your shutting down is an intuitive way of protecting your sanity, of knowing where you have to stop pushing, for the moment, anyway!

Rather than denying or imposing her own advice, Miller attempts to describe or explain Beth's ambivalence; a reaction representing a "symmetrical" exchange. As Beth's partner, she may be in a better position than even Beth to reflect on some aspects of her stance. And, she does so within the context of a long-range social relationship established through journal exchanges.

At the same time, how participants frame their challenges to others can readily antagonize and alienate audiences. In studying one of his "networked classrooms," Faigley (1992) found that students, who were employing pseudonyms, would often include sexist or racist messages designed to deliberately provoke or even offend other students. Many of these messages, particularly those by males, were definitive assertions or generalizations that reflected little sensitivity to complexity. Protected by their anonymity, these students, Faigley argues, were not concerned with the social consequences of their messages, reiterating the link between the quality of social relationships and exploration of indeterminacies and ambivalences in written messages.

DIALOGUE JOURNAL EXCHANGES WITH LITTLE EXPLORATION OF INDETERMINACIES OR AMBIVALENCES

Given our interest in the relationship between exploration of ambivalence and social relationships in dialogue journals, we examined exchanges between pairs of students in a college linguistics class (Beach & Anson, 1992). In this class, students were asked to share their responses to the readings and lectures with a partner. To determine changes over time in the students' journals, we analyzed their entries in the beginning, middle, and the end of the course. Two judges, who achieved a high degree of agreement, categorized the overall focus of each entry. The judges categorized whether or not the students explicitly invited a response from their partner and whether or not students responded to that invitation. If, during an entry, a student issued even one invitation or made one response to their partner, that entry was categorized as a "yes" in terms of inviting or making a response. The students' entries were also categorized in terms of whether or not they were simply summarizing the readings, employing narratives to illustrate ideas and metacognitively reflecting on their own learning. By and large, the results indicated little social exchange. No more than one fifth to one third of the students invited a response from their partner or responded to their partner. If they did respond, partners often simply agreed with their partner's position. Many students simply ignored each other, treating their teacher, rather than their partner, as the real audience. In extreme cases, rather than addressing their partner as "you," students addressed their partner in the third person. Because they were treating the teacher as the primary audience, these students may have been more concerned about appearing as fulfilling their assigned tasks of responding to the readings than with engaging in dialogue with their partner. As a result, while two thirds to three fourths of the students went beyond simply summarizing the material, no more than one third and less than half reflected on what they were learning. There was little evidence of responding to or inferring each others' stances or of challenging each others' opinions.

It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions about these results. The degree to which quality of the social relationship between partners was related to their willingness to explore aspects of stance may have been a function of the class environment—a large lecture course in which students may have had little opportunity to get to know each other on a personal basis. Moreover, given the overall weighting of the final grade on tests based on knowing and applying linguistic analysis, the students may have focused their exchanges primarily on rehearsal of the course content as "received knowledge" (Belenky et al., 1986). Students may therefore have adopted a "student" stance consistent with the course's cognitive focus. All of this suggests that the social roles and context shaping these exchanges may have limited students' willingness to explore indeterminacies and ambivalences.

DIALOGUE JOURNAL EXCHANGES THAT EXPLORED INDETERMINACIES AND AMBIVALENCES

To further explore the possible relationship between social relationships and exploration of stance, we analyzed a number of pairs of students' journals kept by inservice English teachers enrolled in a graduate writing methods course. In contrast to the large linguistics class, there were only 20 students in this course. The students in this class shared a lot of their ideas and opinions in relatively lengthy discussions. Moreover, there were no exams; students' grades were based solely on their journals and papers.

In their journals, students were asked to respond to the course readings and to reflect on their own composing processes. In some cases, students exchanged discs and responded to each other within a word processing file using an alternative font. In analyzing these exchanges, we examined the "paper trail" or history of their reactions, self-disclosure, and related experiences, intertextual links that served to frame their relationships. And, we examined the ways in which their exploration of ambivalences reflected memberships in competing communities.

In this report, we discuss two randomly selected pairs of exchanges: Gail and Karen, and Randy and Mitch, all secondary English teachers; their names are pseudonyms.

Gail and Karen

Although they did not know each other personally, in their exchanges, Gail and Karen consistently used their journal exchanges to establish a close social rapport. They were open to disagreeing with each other. In one instance, Gail was most critical of a guest speaker with whom she didn't agree. Karen responded by stating, "I think you have to give her a break. It's her summer, she came in as a favor to us. I know I don't take the time to consider how the activities I create could be translated for the higher grades."

In sharing their responses to the reading and teaching experiences, they frequently agreed with each other. This agreement led to an elaboration of ideas involved in collaboratively constructing a shared stance. We include a number of selections that illustrate instances of this collaborative exploration. (Whereas Gail was often more likely to initiate new topics in the following selections, Karen also initiated topics, something not illustrated by our examples.)

In the following excerpted exchanges, Gail and Karen are discussing a research report, *A Good Girl Writes Like a Good Girl* (Sperling & Freedman, 1987), which analyzes a high school teacher's, Mr. Peterson's, written comments and conference feedback to a high school student, Lisa.

G: Initially this article was difficult to "get into." I found the quote upon quote of "experts" to be tedious and wanted the writers to get to the point.

K: I felt the same way. I'm disappointed that so many of the articles whose topics are Writing Well tend to be weighed down with unnecessary fluff.

G: My next next reaction was that, wow . . . How many times have I written copious notes on a student's paper only to have them hunt for the final grade and then casually toss their work into the recycling bin. FRUSTRATION. So that memory became my impetus to continue reading, thinking perhaps Sperling and Freedman might have a clue to this teaching dilemma.

K: Yup. What an insult. That behavior is a good argument for ceasing to put grades on papers. If I had the time, I'd have kids conference with me after they received a paper back, and tell me what they think they should get based on my comments and on their own reactions.

Given their social bond, they therefore were open to sharing these frustrations with not only the research report but also with their experience of students ignoring their written comments. They are constructing a stance based on shared attitudes towards writing instruction.

G: The case study was very interesting. Lisa reminded me a lot of myself at her age. Adept at following directions and very perceptive in doing the "right" thing. What made me sad for her, however, was how much of herself she gave up in her writing, especially in the editing process. Thinking of a response that I gave you earlier, perhaps this is why I was such a persistent "one-drafter" at her age. I was willing to play the game of please the teacher only so far. I understood what they wanted and very often could deliver it, but I wasn't about to let them mess with MY words if they felt I fell short.

K: Yes, I think power is a very important thing to give students in their writing. I can remember feeling that I was denied power a lot what I was in school.

In her recollection of her own writing experience, Gail elaborates on her own experience of being a student who did the "right thing." By going into some detail about that experience as compared to Lisa's experience, she was able to develop an explanation for her reluctance to be more than a "one-drafter." Through her elaboration, she moved toward a belief about her own past writing. Gail's recollection then evokes a similar recollection in Karen (Beach, 1990a). Although Karen does not elaborate on her own recollection, the fact that she shares Gail's experience may have served to verify the validity of Gail's perceptions.

In one of her final entries, Gail explores possible reasons for what she believes is a successful exchange with Karen. She attributes some of the success to their larger social stance having to do with gender. In the following entry discussing Gannett's (1992) research on gender differences in journal writing, she explores the relationship between journal writing and gender:

G: One of the first comments she (Gannett) makes that impressed me was when she was describing/unlocking Ted (a college student in Gannett's study), "Notice also that he enjoys reading sports journals and diaries of athletes, but, like many of us, he makes no connections between the journals he reads and the journal he's writing." What do you suppose kept Ted from internalizing those readings? I had lunch today with Sandy and Jo from class and we were discussing the significance of reading to writing that had been raised in class. Sandy, another voracious reader, said that in her early writing she often tried to imitate the authors she read so that says to me she was somehow internalizing what was going on, and at a much younger age than Ted. It floors me, but then again it makes perfect sense, that so much of this seems to be gender related.

In her reaction to Gail, Karen notes that "I felt the same way after reading that article. Then, I felt a little foolish for having not realized it before." Gail then explores relationships between Gannett's (1992) research and Tannen's (1990) research on gender differences in conversation:

G: Continuing on the study of Ted, Gannett says that he does "indeed try to use the journal as a seedbed for developing essays . . . then drops it abruptly." Maybe Ted answers that question when he said, "it just seemed too personal." I'm hoping that

Tannen has more insights as to why men consider their inner self too personal for disclosure.

K: Ask Randy (another student in the class) about that! I find it very interesting that he is able to admit that he finds personal disclosure difficult. Kind of contradictory, isn't it? He reminds me of my brothers in many ways—this being a chief way.

In her reaction, Karen is exploring the potential ambivalences in male attitudes towards self-disclosure. By framing her reaction as a question, "Kind of contradictory, isn't it?" she is inviting Gail to mutually consider ambivalences within their own exchanges. In connecting their entries to a larger cultural stance associated with gender roles, they are both exploring the complexities of that stance (Mulac, 1989).

Gail then relates these theories to her own personal experiences:

G: This man, J. and I met through the same group of people because we were both in theatre except that he was a few years older than me (me 22/he 26), was taking some time off from pursuing his degree and managing a camera store. Well, we hung out in the same crowd for a summer and started dating. After about 6 months, he said he loved me.

K: That surprised me! Not that I think someone couldn't love you—but that my experience has always been that men have a terribly difficult time admitting that for the first time to a woman. If they are like many men I know, they always have a terribly difficult time saying it.

G: Things were fine for quite a while until I asked him what "love" meant to him. The curious thing was that J. could tell me he loved me, but he had no language to articulate what "love" meant to him. My response, probably no less sophomoric, was that if he couldn't tell me what love meant, how could I trust him saying he loved me. Needless to say we lasted about a year.

By comparing their own personal examples of gender differences in language use, Gail and Karen bolster their social relationship by sharing common experiences. By sharing these experiences, they find that they hold similar attitudes about love relationships, attitudes related to their allegiance to a shared stance. Based on this emerging stance, Gail then makes a further intertextual link between another male student described in Gannett's (1992) research and a television character:

G: The "writer" man, Steve?, who had to drop out of class . . . his discourse reminded me a lot of the D.J., Chris, on Northern Exposure (pg. 166). Look at his reading list and think of the article I read in today's paper—remarkable. I wonder if this isn't some kind of archetypal figure? Steve says, "What is it about human nature—while raveling aboard a train we long for the natural beauty of the outdoors. Yet when we have a view of such, replete with exotic trees, stone laden streams, and compelling values, we shy away somewhat—because it is too close. We are creatures who require 'space' to define 'beauty'." Can't you see that being Chris' radio dialogue?!

K: Yes, but like I told you in class, I hate that character. Now—why do I hate him? Maybe he doesn't meet my expectations for how men are supposed to behave/communicate. I don't know; I'd probably hate the character just as much as if it were a woman. Pop psychology is just not something I can stomach.

Having cited some examples of male uses of language, Gail then turns to a discussion of female use of language:

G: Then we turn to women (or "girls" to quote the men). The switch is as profound as turning a light on and off in a darkened room. Carrie writes, "So many unanswered questions hand like dirty socks on the shower curtain rod." I love that line. The image is immediately familiar, visual, real. None of the men's writings evoked that sense of immediate connection with me. I wonder if a man would respond in the converse? I agree with Gannett's observation/assertion of "predominate focus on connecting internal and external events in the women's journals, while the men choose to write about more externally dramatic events. . . "

In this section of the entry, Gail's identification with a female's use of language is linked to her own experience of "connecting internal and external events" in her journal. She then entertains a counter-example of a male who employs a similar language:

G: But then how do you explain something like Stephen King's latest book, *Gerald's Games* which is a psychological thriller that takes place in the female mind (the protagonist is handcuffed to a bed for the bulk of the book) and felt very authentic . . . did Tabitha really write it? Or can the experienced, crafted male writer transcend gender? I wonder if King keeps a journal?

K: I believe so. I'm not of the school that says only a black woman can write a novel about a black women, etc. Writing is art, and when you're good at it you can make the reader believe anything.

Gail then applies all of this to her own experience of sharing entries with Karen to Tannen's research as presented on the PBS program, "He Said/She Said":

G: It has been our exchange and dialogue that has been the significant motivating factor in this journaling for me. . . All right, a few comments on *He Said/She Said* because I do believe I heard some direct ties to how gender differences in communication plays out in our journaling. When Tannen was talking about the perceptions around women nagging, she made the observation that men have/are raised with a sense of independence and women with a sense of inner dependence. I think this has direct relationship to the journal. A number of the women talked about how they'd "die" if they couldn't get their feelings out or dialogue their way through life in their journal. There was a keen sense of inner dependence between the woman's inner voice on the page and her daily life. For the men, however, perhaps it is the sense of independence that keeps them from committing at the feeling level to the "inner dialogue" that the feminine journal typifies.

In this exchange, Gail and Karen define intertextual links between gender, language, and journal writing associated with their larger stance. By creating a "symmetrical" social relationship, they are then willing to explore ambivalences regarding the topic of gender differences. For example, having set up an either/or dichotomy, Gail cites the counter-example of Stephen King. She then raises the question as to whether or not King's authentic use of a female narrator derives from his own experience with journal writing. Karen then reacts by arguing that the race or gender of a writer is not necessarily a prerequisite for authenticity, a contention that challenges the overall argument about the relationship between gender and writing. As they note in their final comments, this sense of a shared stance served to motivate them to explore their thoughts:

K: Sharing journal with you has been enjoyable. I have been particularly struck by how similar we are in our tastes, our backgrounds, and our professional beliefs. It's reassuring to know there is someone out there who doesn't think of my views as wigged-out and who doesn't see my desire to change things as radical and unnecessary.

G: It's hard to articulate, but sometimes just your presence was a motivating force for me. I think it might have something to do with all of our "similarities."

Bakhtin's answerability

Given these similarities, the two are then willing to explore ambivalences associated with their stances. Gail's comment that "sometimes just your presence was a motivating force for me" echoes Bakhtin's notion of "answerability"—the fact that every act contains the potential of a reaction. In writing her entry, Gail was continually anticipating Karen's reactions, particularly in terms of a shared stance. Gail may then have expounded on her own attitudes knowing that she would receive, in most cases, some verification from Karen for her own position. This shared stance also served to bolster their social relationship, creating a safe arena in which to explore tentatively-held beliefs and attitudes.

At the same time, Gail and Karen also adopted slightly different perspectives on experiences, differences that served to stimulate further thinking and reactions. Thus, social intertextuality also stems from a shared curiosity in differences related to stance, curiosity that serves to further interest each partner in the other's perspectives.

Randy and Mitch

In their exchanges, although Randy and Mitch frequently agreed with each other, they were also willing to challenge each other, leading to further exploration of ambivalences. In some cases, this took the form of one partner adopting a tentative, ambivalent stance, leading the other partner to seek to resolve that tentativeness. For example, in the following exchange, Randy and Mitch are discussing their evaluations of student papers. Reflecting his sense of self-contradiction, Randy raises some doubts about the genuineness of a student writer's feelings:

R: I like the personal connection this writer made with T., although for a while I wondered if this connection were going to be made. The sentiment is a little over done with the use of exclamation points and there is a sense that the story might be a little too pat, maybe even contrived to a degree. Still, it's fairly well written.

M: Oh, please, all of these responses are contrived. Who are you trying to kid?

In his assertive reaction, Mitch challenges Randy to honestly explore his own position about the paper. Through his humorous reaction, Mitch challenges Randy's sense of seriousness, creating a stance of shared irreverence.

In a subsequent extended exchange, they discuss ambivalences associated with students' perceptions of their roles as teachers in the classroom.

R: From Zemelman and Daniels page 63. "Students are always uncomfortable when their expectations are not met, and they will try to redirect the class experience back into familiar channels and patterns." I get this a lot in my classroom. I do things differently than many English teachers. My students sometimes resist this because they are familiar with what they think an English teacher should be, and I come in and shatter that conception for some. Often what happens then is that students get a new impression, equally distorted, the you're "one of those different teachers." They have a schema for that. Unfortunately my experience has told me that because of this, the students don't always think they have to work for me . . . "after all, he's such a different teacher."

M: Yep. But you can be a different teacher who requires work. That's a different-different teacher.

R: This takes the form of a student coming into my classroom and expecting me to bend my rules on something . . . "because you're not strict, right?"

M: Yeah, they want you to be what they want you to be.

R: Actually, I don't consider myself myself strict, but I am consistent. If I tell students the rules, I expect they'll follow them. Why don't they get that? Is this making any sense to you Mitch?

M: Of course it does.

R: Do kids come to you who expect greater latitude with rules or whatever on the assumption that since you're innovative and are excited about teaching you'll cower to any student need?

M: See, and one of the things that I do is that I tell my students that there are some rules that I won't bend on. Some of them I tell them are not mine to decide. The nice thing about having high school students is that I can ask them if they've ever had a job where they had to do something that they didn't necessarily want to do. Most of them can relate to that.

R: I don't know if that pertains as much to the quote as I think it would, but the bottom line is this: Kids have trouble with things that don't match their school schemas. I, as a teacher with sense of humor, should not have rules . . . or something like that

M: Yep. That's what they want—funny and no rules. But when you think of it, humor probably has as many rules as anything.

R: Related Babble: The kids generally complain about the music I play between classes, but let me forget to turn it on one day and all I here is "What happened to the music?" "I thought you hated the music." "We do hate the music, but that doesn't mean we don't want you to play it! We like the music; just not the music you play!" Go figure.

M: Maintain the status quo no matter how much I don't like it. What I have that I know is better than having something I don't know. It's the dysfunctional family axiom.

In this exchange, Randy and Mitch examine their ambivalent feelings about being innovative and maintaining "rules." Randy experiences a tension between his behavior in his classroom and the institutional norms or rules outside of his classroom. Relative to the norms operating in the school, he assumes that he is perceived as "different." He is also perplexed about his students' attitudes towards his own attempts to enforce rules in his classroom: "Why don't they get that?" In posing his question, "Is this making any sense to you, Mitch?" Randy is seeking Mitch's social acknowledgement and verification for his perplexity.

Mitch discerns some emerging patterns in Randy's entries. He identifies with Randy's frustration with students' perceptions of the school rules by sharing his own experience of coping with the rules. Whereas he shares his own sense of ambivalence as to whose rules to follow—the school's or his own, he also notes that he has no choice but to enforce the school rules. At the same time, he verifies Randy's perception that "Kids have trouble with things that don't fit their school schemas," noting, "That's what they want—funny and no rules." He then further extends the ambivalence by noting that "But when you think of it, humor probably has as many rules as anything." Then, when Randy expresses his further perplexity over students' reactions to the music he plays in his classroom, Mitch adopts a student perspective and responds with: "Maintain the status quo no matter how much I don't like it. What I have that I know is better than having something I don't know." Mitch is encouraging Randy to openly explore his perplexity by both acknowledging that perplexity and sharing his own similar experiences. And, he is further extending Randy's notion that students apply their "school schema" to their experiences. Mitch's appropriation and application of Randy's notion of "school schema" serves to further acknowledge the social value of their exchange. It implies that they can mutually construct knowledge through sharing similar experiences.

Later in the entry, Randy shares his response to a book about social relationships:

R: Page 66 of same book. A reference to Judith Viorst and her book *Necessary Losses*. I've read that book, and the very fact that it appears in a writing book intrigues me. (The very fact that I've read that book might intrigue you.) It's becoming clear to me that the "social aspects" of the classroom are a lot more significant than I had believed. Yikes! This means I'll have additional pressure to make kids feel good.

M: Well, it's part of the same conspiracy to get Randy to share his feelings!

In this exchange, Mitch again uses humor to further encourage Randy to "share his feelings." He is able to discern a pattern across Randy's different entries that suggests "the same conspiracy." By sharing that perceived pattern with Randy, he is acknowledging Randy's ambivalence towards expressing his feelings both in his classroom and with himself.

Randy then explores another perplexing matter: his concern about awarding passing grades to mainstreamed students:

R: I have an ongoing disagreement with our director of special ed in our building over the "mainstream model" of dealing with special ed students. I'm all for mainstreaming special ed kinds. I love having G., a special ed teacher, in my classroom. I think these students deserve special attention and should be given special help. Where do we disagree? The director thinks that any student who tries should pass. I disagree. It isn't really all that hard to pass my class for an "average" student who puts in a minimum of effort. But one has to "play the game" to a certain extent. A student who receives a failing grade in my class has one or two problems, a lack of effort, or a lack of ability. I don't want to damage youngsters, but pretending they have abilities they don't have is lying. Are these students better served, emotionally or otherwise, by getting a high school diploma which is meaningless? How long will it take for an employer to discover that student A has no skills? At what risk to damaging a student's confidence do I lie about a student's ability. I think we owe it to special ed students (and all students) to move them along in their academic abilities. To find ways/strategies so that they CAN learn to read and write and think. This may or may not work in my classroom. If it doesn't something else needs to be tried. Except that I'm pressured to move these kids along through the system, because THEY TRIED.

M: It's one of those battlefields they talked about in one of the readings. But the thing that I'm getting in touch with is that a high school diploma doesn't mean that much. I think more and more we are warehousing lots of kids. I don't want to lose sight of the kids who are good and working hard, but there are some kids who don't belong in high school, but to do that would mean we'd need your paradigm shift. No small thing that!

R: By ignoring their needs, I don't think that *we've* tried enough for them.

M: Perhaps, and maybe this is my cynicism—maybe it just doesn't matter that much!

Again, Randy is grappling with his ambivalence towards students, in this case, mainstreamed students whom he is "pressured to move . . . along through the system, because THEY TRIED." He refers to the institutional conflict between the school and the world of work. Mitch then extends that conflict to raise the question as to the value of a high school diploma. And, in noting that

". . . there are some kids who don't belong in high school, but to do that would mean we'd need your paradigm shift," he extracted a larger concept, "your paradigm shift" from his perceptions of a pattern in Randy's thinking. By perceiving this pattern in Randy's paper trail, Mitch provides Randy with a larger intertextual perspective regarding a stance towards teaching. By receiving that perspective from Mitch, Randy can then reflect on the meaning of his own stance towards teaching relative to Mitch's stance.

In reflecting on their stances towards teaching, Mitch and Randy apply a history of similar socialization and attitudes. However, as they begin to explore the meaning of these stances, they begin to explore tensions between students', other teachers', and their own definitions of these stances. And, when Randy seeks verification from Mitch for his ambivalent feelings about teaching, he only discovers further ambivalences. In order to resolve these ambivalences, they must both examine larger institutional or cultural conceptions of teaching associated with their stance.

SUMMARY

Analysis of the exchanges between these two pairs indicates that the meaning of intertextual links between entries has much to do with their shared stances towards, in Gail and Karen's exchange, gender roles, and, in Mitch and Randy's exchange, their roles as teachers within the institution of the school. Both pairs were motivated to explore the meaning of these stances because they represented their basic belief system. Gail wanted to explain why her exchanges with Karen were productive in terms of her exploration of gender differences and language use. As a teacher, Randy wanted to explain why students and teachers hold different conceptions of teachers' roles. These exchanges ultimately led these writers to consider their larger allegiance to or membership in social groups. In exploring these allegiances or memberships, they discovered ambivalences characteristic of institutional allegiances.

Given the quality of their social relationships, they were willing to challenge each other's "passing theories" (Dasenbrock, 1991), stimulating each to explore further ambivalences associated with these stances. Consistent with reader-response theorists' current interest in stance (Hunt & Vipond, 1992; Many & Cox, 1992), research on the role of stance in constituting intertextual meaning could further explore how writers in journal, letter, memo, or e-mail exchanges define and share stances. And, how writers' interpret their partner's frames shapes their own subsequent reply, creating a paper trail built on a series of interpretations of each other's frames. As the paper trail unfolds, the partners established certain consistent patterns of reacting, patterns based on an intertextual awareness of those conventions constituting their own unique exchange.

It was also the case that one partner's narratives evoked or triggered the other's narratives, intertextual links based on unarticulated, shared themes or social meanings. In some cases, the link was based not simply on similar content, but also on a shared stance towards feminism or teaching. Given that shared stance, partners then cited autobiographical experiences that reflected that stance.

Students in the linguistics course were less likely to use their exchanges to explore indeterminacies and complexities then students in the writing methods course. Some of this many have been due to differences in the size and nature of the course, particularly the degree to which partners interacted with each other outside the class. Further research could examine how the larger social context of a course influences specific written interactions within that context (Brooke, 1987; Faigley, 1992; Somers & Lawrence, 1992).

All of this suggests that intertextual meaning in shared writing is constituted by particular social interactions leading to a collaborative construction of stance.

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