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ABSTRACT

This paper stems from a study of an eighth-grade writing club in an urban school. The study asked: How would students use a community-based set of texts to create identities for themselves and each other in relation to their communities, their schooling, and writing and to examine issues of personhood? The paper theorizes about what the notions of personhood and intertextuality contribute to educators' conceptions of literacy teaching and learning. It provides a definition of personhood, reviews related research, and presents an analytical framework which includes a rationale for why personhood and literacy are productively investigated through the intertextuality heuristic. To elaborate on the theoretical ideas presented, the paper focuses on two aspects of the writing club: (1) the ways two students took up opportunities presented to them as they participated for shaping and reshaping discourse practices about personhood along the dimensions of history, music, racial and ethnic identity, and womanhood; and (2) the significance of the study's framing in providing opportunities for students to make intertextual links between their research studies and the literacy practices of community members. In addressing how the students took up their literacy practices, the paper elaborates on the discourse practices that framed the writing project, which opened up what is described as an "intertextual field" containing dynamic potential for students to create intertextual links between their inquiry into community issues and the inquiry of community members who were using research and writing to address similar issues. (Contains two tables, five transcripts, eight notes, and 92 references.) (NKA)

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Learning about Culture, Language and Power: Understanding Relationships among Personhood, Literacy Practices and Intertextuality

Ann Egan-Robertson

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Ann Egan-Robertson

National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
1025 West Johnson Street
Madison WI 53706

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National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement

University at Albany, School of Education, B-9
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222
http://cela.albany.edu/
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Learning about Culture, Language and Power: Understanding Relationships among Personhood, Literacy Practices and Intertextuality

Ann Egan-Robertson

I found two different kinds of music. Common music and political music. Common music is what we hear on the radio, on MTV, all the time. Some people call this popular music but I can't call it popular because it's not popular with a lot of people when it talks about women that way. I call it common music instead. Political music is music that gets people to do something about the problems of the world. At first I thought cultural music was a third kind of music. Then I decided that cultural music is a kind of political music because it brings back your culture. . . . For some people, your culture was never written in books. Cultural music tells you how your own history was. . . .

Sandra Verne. (1993). "Does Music Affect the Way We Think and Feel About People?"

Dear Teachers,

Through the years of my schooling up till now, I feel I have missed something. Teachers, you've been great. But there's a problem. The problem is we have been deprived of learning about other cultures. In the future, I hope you can consider this letter.

Denise Yothers. (1993). "Racism: A Problem in Riverside."

These excerpts are taken from an edited volume of student writing published by Marielis Flores, DeLayne Monson, Sandra Verne and Denise Yothers (pseudonyms), which they entitled *Life as Teenagers in the Nineties: Growing Up in Riverside*. These eighth-grade students, members of a writing club at their urban school, used a number of research methods to explore their social identities and to address issues of personhood that had importance to them. These issues included racism, alcohol abuse, gang violence, and images of women in music.

Denise Yothers wrote that she conducted "a survey on about five different topics. One of them was racism. You know it was amazing for me to find this out. One hundred kids surveyed. Eighty percent have experienced racism!" Marielis Flores researched "What needs to happen to keep kids off the streets?" She came to this question out of her lived experience; her best buddy from childhood was in jail because of his involvement in a gang-related killing that occurred outside the school two days before the start of the year. She wrote, "My goal for this book is to

keep kids off the streets. A lot of teenagers like having money but they are doing the wrong thing . . . I know. I live in a bad neighborhood where you be seeing teenagers selling drugs. I'm writing this book to have kids stop selling and using." DeLayne Monson penned, "In writing this book, we are trying to better educate society and teenagers on what issues are affecting us and why they are so important for us to know about." Her inquiry into how to stop intergenerational alcoholism led the writing club to interview a group of high school peer health educators, who were writing a play called "End Racism in Our Schools; End Racism in the U.S.A.." DeLayne asked them in a befuddled voice why they were writing a play about racism when they were a health education group. She queried their director Marsha Davidson about connections they saw between alcoholism and racism. Sandra Verne's goal as a writer was "to let people know what music really is because kids/teenagers seem to think that music is just something to dance to. I'm trying to provide them with information that I have found by talking to people and researching." Sandra investigated the question "Does Music Affect the Way We Think and Feel About People?" out of her distress at being name-called by boys, including her twin brother.

Part of what makes these students' research and writing seem remarkable is that they had all been assigned to the lowest academic track in their school, which gave little attention to composition. Together, their inquiry and writing create an intertextual, polyphonic context for exploring a set of theoretical questions about literacy learning that frame this article: What is personhood and how can we understand these young women's writing as exploring and addressing issues of personhood? How does understanding relationships between personhood and literacy practices contribute to understanding the complexities of learning to read and write in school? How, and why, can the construct of intertextuality expand notions of how issues of personhood are embedded in literacy teaching and learning?

In this article I theorize about what the notions of personhood and intertextuality contribute to our conception of literacy teaching and learning. To do so, I provide a definition of personhood and review related research. I also present an analytical framework, which includes a rationale for why personhood and literacy are productively investigated through the heuristic of intertextuality. To elaborate on the theoretical ideas presented, I then focus on two aspects of the writing club: 1) the ways Denise Yothers and Sandra Verne took up opportunities presented to them as they participated in the writing club for shaping and reshaping discourse practices about personhood

along the dimensions of history, music, racial and ethnic identity, and womanhood, and 2) the significance of the framing of the study in providing opportunities for the students to make intertextual links between their research studies and the literacy practices of community members.

The study of the writing club focused on the question: How would students use a community-based set of texts to create social identities for themselves and each other in relation to their communities, their schooling, and writing and to examine issues of personhood?[1] It focused on this question because of the recent interest in an examination of issues of personhood as these relate to literacy education (Street, 1994; Willis, 1995). Interestingly, analysis of the question itself highlighted the importance of the intertextual links created in framing the project by myself as teacher-researcher. For example, a key part of the writing club involved interviews of community artists and activists of whom students asked questions such as: "Do you think there is a connection between alcoholism and racism?" "Do you think racism is connected to kids dropping out of school?" "Do you think music promotes sexism?" "Why did you start writing/investigating racism?" "Explain what you mean by racism." "How do you stop racism?" Therefore, in addressing how the students took up their literacy practices, this article elaborates on the discourse practices that framed the writing project, which opened up what I describe elsewhere as an intertextual field (Egan-Robertson, 1997a; Egan-Robertson, in press). This field contained dynamic potential for students to create intertextual links between their inquiry into community issues and the inquiry of community members who were using research and writing to address similar issues.

The Usefulness of Personhood in the Study of Literacy

> . . . [A]gencies including UNESCO came to associate literacy with the idea of a fully human person, with enlightenment in contrast to the dark space of "illiteracy." This, I would like to suggest, is characteristic of the ways in which literacy and personhood are intertwined in many cultural discourses . . . (Street, 1994, p. 141).

Literacy scholars in Australia, Great Britain and the United States (e.g., Davies, 1994; Street, 1993, 1994; Willis, 1995) have called for examination of the identities and personhoods constituted through literacy practices. They ask what kinds of literacy practices gain significance

and whose and what purposes are served by them. For example, Street (1994) asked: How is literacy a site for negotiation of dominant and subordinate discourses about people? The related questions he raises are refinements of the first broad question: What are the definitions and assumptions about writing and literacy? Who has the right to shape the literacy agenda? How do people adapt literacy to their own agenda (e.g., to challenge "structures of power and domination" [p. 7])? How is it that school literacy has become so dominant that local literacies go unrecognized there? Street (1993, 1994) links literacy and personhood by bringing together theories of language from the field of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 1995) with close ethnographic study of literacy in specific settings (cf. Hymes, 1974; Heath, 1982, 1983), such as in the Hmong community in Philadelphia (Weinstein-Shr, 1993). Street (1994) adopts the concept of personhood from anthropology to describe the ways cultural discourses about people are constituted through literacy practices: how some cultures come to "associate literacy with the idea of a fully human person, with enlightenment in contrast to the dark space of 'illiteracy.'" He categorizes literacy programs as following either an autonomous or ideological model. The autonomous model holds that literacy is a neutral technology that is acquired by individuals and results in cognitive consequences, such as the acquisition of rational thought; the ideological model sees literacy as constructing social and power relationships and asks who benefits from these relationships.

On the U.S. scene, Willis (1995) has raised questions about literacy and personhood based on her son's experiences as a writer in third grade: How do the cultural practices of African American students become marginalized as resources for composition in school? How can we understand issues of personhood related to double consciousness, feeling separate from while being part of a group? Willis reviews personhood, with a focus on double consciousness in African American literature. Ladson-Billings (1992, 1996) theorizes that the literacy achievement of African American students is enhanced when teachers create instructional contexts that assign significance to students' cultural identities and community knowledge. Most importantly, "successful teachers of African American students" explore with their students the question: "Literacy for what?" (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 318). These questions, which have significant implications for examining literacy in U.S. schools, animated the research elaborated in this article.

Defining Personhood

> Personhood is best viewed as a field that is ideologically structured in any society. . . . As an ideological sector, the notion of the person is not fully ordered by a privileged or dominant structure, but is a site of articulation of dominant and subordinate ideological components. It is this articulation, rather than approximations of a totalizing concept such as the individual, that may most fruitfully be examined in different cases. (Gergin & Davis, 1986, p. 1)

Personhood is a dynamic, cultural construct about who and what is considered to be a person; what attributes and rights are constructed as inherent to being a person; and what social positions are available within the construct of being a person. Discourses of "person" — and related discourses such as "self," "identity," "individual" — vary a great deal across situations, across people, across cultures and across subcultures (Kirkpatrick, 1983; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1989; Schwerder & Miller, 1983; Shotter & Gergin, 1989) as well as within cultures (DuBois, 1969). Geertz (1973, 1979, 1983) stresses the importance of personhood within cultures and asks questions about the meaning of a group's situated system of symbols (culture) within its discourse and what it allows members of a cultural group to do. For example, he discusses how people organize their lives and argues that research on personhood needs to consider what it is like to be a person at a particular historical moment in a particular place, articulating ideological notions about being a person.

Scholars in the area of critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 1996; Luke, 1995-1996) provide definitions of discourse that have significant implications for understanding personhood. Gee (1996) defines discourses as "ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles (or types of people) by specific groups of people. . . ." (p. viii). Fairclough (1989, 1995), drawing on sociologists of language such as Bakhtin (1981), Bourdieu (1977) and Foucault (1972) and sociolinguists such as Halliday (1978), discusses how language positions people. For example, the way a doctor talks to a person "positions" that person as a patient with a particular set of rights for talk but also with cultural implications for acting and thinking as a patient, which is a cultural category of being a person. Fairclough has developed a useful rubric for critical discourse analysis that involves three components: textual analysis; interpretation of the

interactional processes involved in a text's production and consumption; and explanation of "how interaction process relates to social action" (1989, p. 11). *Textual analysis* includes ideational, or content, analysis of what counts as knowledge, analysis of social relations, and analysis of social identities; *intertextual analysis* combines textual analysis with interactional analysis; and *explanatory analysis* brings together these two types of analyses with analysis of sociocultural practice at the situational, institutional and societal levels.

While discourses about personhood are dynamic in that they are built and rebuilt as people interact within and across social and institutional contexts, it is also the case that notions of personhood can be viewed as fixatives within discourse practices that constrain and delimit the possibilities for creating identities for oneself and others. These fixatives are manifest in the form of systems for organizing people, such as academic tracks. Discourse practices associated with personhood are part of the social realities that people must deal with (Carby, 1987; Davies, 1994; Davies & Harre, 1996; Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 1996). Classrooms provide a good example of how historically situated and interactionally negotiated discourses of personhood are related.

Discourses of Personhood in Classrooms

Before the beginning of the school year, before either the teacher or students have set foot in the classroom, discourse practices of "person" may already have been put in place by the nature of the arrangement of the furniture, the forms that have to be filled out, the written records of prior work, and by the classroom experiences that the teacher and students bring with them. There are also systems of classification and divisions that organize pedagogy. It is in this sense that personhood can be viewed as both constructed and as "historical" construct. A student may be constructed as a member of a particular reading group, and often as part of an academic track. For example, Denise, Marielis, DeLayne and Sandra were each assigned to the lowest academic track in their school. Marielis, a bilingual speaker of Spanish and English, and DeLayne, a bidialectal speaker of African American and "Standard" English, were also categorized as special education students, reflective of national statistics in which bilingual and bidialectal students are positioned as having problems with language learning (Delpit, 1995; Garcia, 1988). These

students' placement in special education can also be understood as telling examples of discourses of deficit assigned to students from communities of color (Tate, 1997). When I invited the students to join a writing club, they indicated interest but commented that they "couldn't write." Their definition of themselves as nonwriters fit the discourse practices of their academic and special education tracks, in which basic skills and fill-in-the-blank worksheets abounded. Sandra stated that they had not had writing class since fifth grade "and then it was Dick and Jane." Interviews with the students and their teachers as well as data from a larger ethnographic study of their English language arts class confirmed that the students had not had many opportunities to do elaborative writing in school. These discourse practices are ones Street (1984) would describe as fitting the autonomous literacy model. Discourses about literacy practices and personhood in mainstream U.S. schools create organizational positions that require there to be academic achievers, underachievers and nonachievers, reflective of a sociocultural system of competitive stratification and status positions that often result in differential access to valuable learning opportunities (Apple, 1996; Oakes, 1985).[2]

Part of the "historical" aspect of personhood in many U.S. classrooms is that students are defined as gendered children or adolescents of particular racial/ethnic background and language group(s), as are teachers. Terms such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, economic class, and even academic track, which are so often used in educational forms and by educators to categorize students, come to be closely associated with discourse practices associated with personhood.[3] Thus, there is a complex of factors involved in school and classroom literacy practices that together constitute discursive practices associated with personhood. It is at the level of the purposes of literacy and education that meanings of personhood are constituted (King, 1995; Street, 1994).

In another example, Lee (1995), who is working at a Chicago high school to create a culturally relevant approach to teaching literature, argues that stigmatization of African American students occurs through the omission of, or negative judgment about, their linguistic practices as academic resources. Such exclusionary and deficit views of a community's language and literacy practices, Lee (1995) argues, often lead to silence among African American students. These practices can be understood through the construction of personhood, from a linguistic standpoint: How does language omission contribute to a definition of personhood? Who has a language/

dialect that is viewed as acceptable and proper? Negating or devaluing the linguistic resources of a community can be understood as a way of negating an attribute of personhood. Lee's (1993) scholarship redefines how everyday linguistic practices can become academic resources as students take up new positions vis-a-vis school-based literacy. For example, Lee uses the everyday linguistic practice of "signifying as a scaffold" to teach African American students to analyze literature.

Willis (1995) asks teachers to be cognizant of how classroom literacy practices influence African American students' sense of personhood. Building on the work of DuBois (1969), she analyzes the way her son experienced double consciousness as a writer in third grade when he realized that he could not draw on his cultural experiences as a member of the African American community because his classmates and teacher would not understand their significance. The accuracy of her son's claim became painfully evident when, in composing an essay for a national contest, the rules forbade him from referencing his experience as an African American, thus defining him as a nonperson.

Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995, 1996) can be understood as raising questions about personhood from the interrelated standpoints of academic achievement, cultural competence and critical consciousness: Are African American students viewed as educable, as capable of high academic achievement? Are students allowed to demonstrate their cultural competence as African Americans as they participate in school-based learning? Do students and teachers examine together the ways knowledge, literacy and education contribute to or constrain social justice for all? Indeed, Ladson-Billings argues that establishing teaching and learning practices that critically examine the broader society helps successful teachers of African American students to meet the twin goals of academic achievement and cultural competence. Similarly, Gadsden (1992) implicitly raises questions about personhood and multicultural literacy education: Which communities count as having a literate tradition? Gadsden, whose research documents literacy practices across four generations of African Americans in rural South Carolina, calls for educational programs that build on the "literacy legacies" African American students bring to school.

The questions that these scholars raise from the perspective of literacy and teacher education are useful for addressing questions about personhood and classroom practices in general.

Namely, to what extent and how do discursive definitions of personhood get established along various dimensions in classrooms and literacy practices (e.g., who counts as a person, and as a member of a community, with linguistic and literary resources, with academic ability and valued educational and literacy agendas)? To what extent and how do they provide different moment-to-moment access to literacy for students and socialize students to particular views of personhood, and define the curriculum? The questions that Ladson-Billings (1995), Lee (1995), Gadsden (1992), and Willis (1995), among others (e.g., Au & Kawakami, 1994; Guiterrez, et al., 1995; Foster, 1992, 1995; King, 1995; McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993; Walsh, 1991), raise also suggest that paying explicit attention to how personhood is being defined may provide a means for restructuring classroom and literacy education in ways that address the goals of educational equity and multicultural education. However, to do so, a dramatic commitment to diversity is often requisite (Ladson-Billings, 1996), one that is likely to include the social construction of intertextual links to students' communities. In designing the writing club, I intentionally created intertextual links between the students' research problems and questions and the literacy practices of community members who were associated with social change work in their various communities. Given the above review of scholarship on literacy and personhood, I reasoned that it was important for students to examine the reasons and methods community members hold for addressing issues of personhood in the community and wider society.[3]

Examining Personhood Through Intertextuality

Although the questions discussed above establish the importance of examining personhood in classrooms and although I have noted that classrooms may be predisposed to particular definitions of personhood, I have not yet addressed why it is useful theoretically to investigate issues of personhood through the construct of intertextuality. *Intertextuality focuses analytical attention on the ways sets of texts are brought together and made use of by readers and writers.* The analytical approach I take builds on critical discourse analysis scholarship in education, which in turn builds on sociocultural scholarship that posits the constructed nature of everyday life, including the constructed nature of ideology and personhood. Since there is extensive

literature on sociolinguistic and discourse analysis of classrooms, I will not review it here (for reviews, see Cazden, 1988; Gee, et al., 1992; Hicks, 1996; Hornberger & Corson, 1997; Luke, 1995-1996; McKay & Hornberger, 1996). Briefly, from this perspective, it is through patterns of interaction that discourses of everyday life create ideologies of the world. In classrooms and schools, ideologies often account for who has access to what educational opportunities and what and whose knowledge is valued as significant. This sociocultural scholarship has contributed to our understanding of how classroom norms and values are socially constructed through the face-to-face interaction of teachers and students (e.g., Bloome, 1989; Heath, 1982, 1983; Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1993). For example, the placement of students in reading groups positions students as particular kinds of literacy achievers and often accounts for the distribution of learning opportunities based on notions that basic skills, like spelling and grammar, need to be mastered in building-block fashion, before students are capable of critically interpreting texts. As Egan-Robertson and Willett (1997) argue, the contribution of ethnographic and sociolinguistic research to education includes redefinitions of education, literacy and classroom practice.

Within this broad area of research, there has been a good deal of recent interest in intertextuality (Beach & Anson, 1992; Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Hartman, 1992; Hicks, 1996; Kamberelis & Scott, 1993; Lemke, 1992, 1995; Luke, 1995-1996; Short, 1992). One approach is to explore intertextuality and intercontextuality (Beach & Phinney, in press; Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Floriani, 1993; Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1993) as socially constructed resources through which teachers and students create relationships in and across educational activities. From this perspective, intertextuality involves more than the juxtapositioning of texts. Bloome and I (1993) argue that social recognition, acknowledgment, and social significance are assigned to juxtaposed texts as a central part of the meaning construction process in classroom settings. We have argued that there are three types of intertextual relationships that together comprise the cultural ideology of a local event: intertextual substance, intertextual process, and intertextual rights. *Intertextual substance* has to do with the set of texts, including the content of the texts, that can be juxtaposed. It addresses the question: What is among the sayable in an event in this social institution? *Intertextual process* refers to the norms, or particular ways, for assigning significance. In other words, it responds to anthropological questions such as how, where, when and for what purposes juxtapositions are

recognized, acknowledged, and assigned social significance. ***Intertextual rights*** refers to who can do the saying. Describing the social consequences of intertextuality "requires identification of the social positioning and other social work done . . . in the construction of an ongoing event" (p. 320). From this perspective, intertextuality is viewed as a socially constructed resource people use to construct culture and ideology. The study presented in this article expands the understanding of the social construction of intertextuality by exploring how it is connected to the construction of literacy practices and personhood.

Fairclough (1992, 1995) provides a complimentary perspective on the significance of intertextuality in critical discourse analysis. Fairclough's (1995) analytical framework features a combination of:

> a theory of power based upon Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* with a theory of discourse practice based upon the concept of intertextuality (or interdiscursivity). The connection between text and social practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice: on the one hand, processes of text production and interpretation are shaped by (and help shape) the nature of the social practice, and on the other hand the production process shapes (and leaves 'traces' in) the text, and the interpretative process operates upon 'cues' in the text (p. 133; italics in the original).

Fairclough's approach to intertextuality provides an explanatory framework; that is, it goes beyond interpretative analysis to provide a critical analysis: one that explores issues of power related to language and literacy education. It is important, from this perspective, to analyze how power relationships are constructed through the use of language in everyday interactions in institutions like schools; specific settings, such as classrooms; and the intertextual practices in teachers' and students' composition and interpretation processes. My analytical framework for intertextuality incorporates, from Fairclough's framework, a theory that assumes, a priori, that language in use, or discursive practices, is rife with power relationships, with Bloome and Egan-Robertson's (1993) focus on generating an "emic" or insiders' understanding of who can make what kind of intertextual links and with what social consequences.

From the theoretical perspective taken in this study, it is important for the researcher to position herself within the research. I locate myself as a member of a middle-class, multiracial family and as a professional engaged in researching dimensions of my society. These dimensions, literacy practices and personhood in educational and classroom discourse, evolved, in part, from my interdisciplinary teaching of language arts and social studies at the secondary level. As West

(1994) notes, any discussion of our peoplehood as a nation needs to begin with a recognition of race as a salient aspect of our history and our present. Foundational questions in the nation's legal and literary history from this perspective include: who counts as a citizen and as a writer, and who counts as contributing to our country's history and literary tradition (e.g., Berry, 1994; Carby, 1987; DuBois, 1969; Franklin, 1974; Gates & McKay, 1997; West, 1995). My personal story within this sociocultural context situates me on a dynamic field with continuously shifting borders demarcated by a distant past, in which my Irish immigrant ancestors encountered signs in store windows that read N.I.N.A.: No Irish Need Apply, my childhood during which my mother, a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, worked as a seamstress, the present in which I read and negotiate the world as the mother of my two-year-old daughter Maya, who is of African American and European American heritage, and a future in which Maya will deal with the complex legacies of discourse practices about personhood in a society still rife with conflicts about issues of race, class and gender, particularly in institutions, such as schools.

Multiple Studies within a Study

To conduct the study, I implemented a students-as-ethnographers writing club at an urban K-8 school.[4] The school where the study took place is located in the heart of a working-class New England city, in a neighborhood rich in history of social activism of various ethnic groups (e.g., Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Irish Americans). At the time of the study, the community was experiencing the high tide of poverty and associated wave of violence endemic to inner-cities in the early to mid 1990s. The study focused on several young women as they examined questions about community life. I invited eighth-grade students who were interested in researching and writing about the community to join a writing club, which I convened for approximately three hours per week between February and June, 1993. Thus, the study from which data are taken involved teaching a small group of middle school students how to be ethnographers of their own communities, and it involved researching what the students did (the literacy practices in which they engaged as they researched their own communities). The two sets of studies, the students' and my own, adopted a collective question about community-based

literacy practices, asking who was researching and writing about the community, how they did so and what their purposes were.

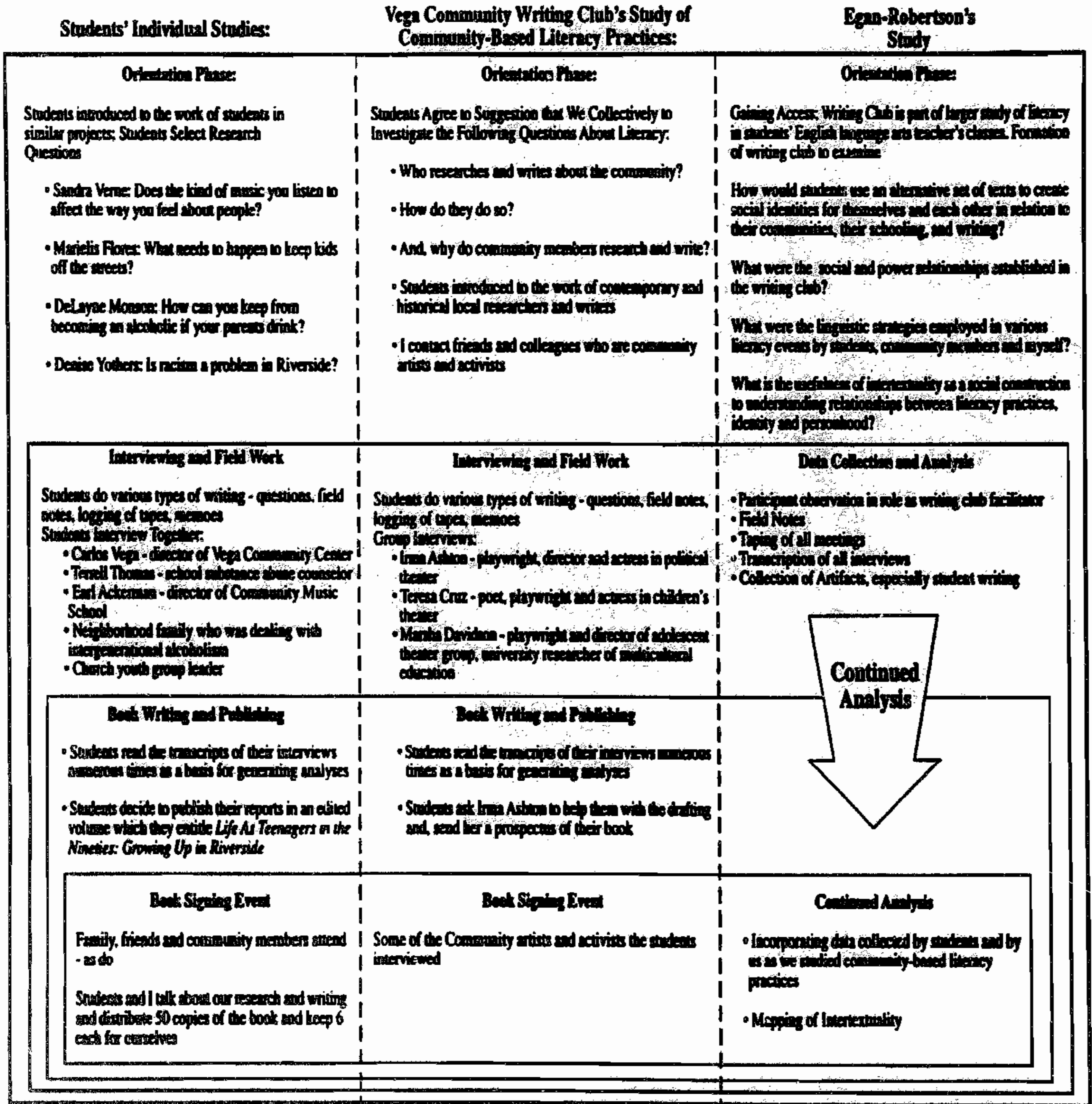
The corpus of data included: fieldnotes, 45 hours of audio- and videotapes of writing club activities, conversations, and interviews collected over a four-and-a-half month period, collection of written artifacts, especially student writing, eight months of participant observation in the students' language arts classroom, select audiotapes of English classroom interactions, demographic data on the school and community, and interviews with the students' English and special education teachers.

This study involved a set of concurrent ethnographic studies: the studies conducted by the students, the writing club's study of community-based writing practices, and my study of these studies as they developed. The accompanying Table provides a diagram of the relationships among these studies. The vertical axis highlights phases in the life cycle of the writing project: orientation phase, interviewing and fieldwork phase, and the book writing and publishing phase, which culminated in a book signing event. The horizontal axis provides key information about each life cycle phase from the perspective of a particular study. Column 1 of the Table highlights the students' research questions, the types of writing they did, the people they interviewed, their processes of data analysis and report writing, and the book publication party they hosted. Column 2 highlights the students' and my research of community-based literacy practices and provides details related to this collaborative study. Column 3 features highlights of my study of the students and our collective study.

Data Analysis

The goal of the data analysis was to explore the relationships among personhood and literacy practices, using the construct of intertextuality. Analysis was conducted using discourse analytic techniques (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Fairclough 1989, 1995). I conducted twelve microanalyses of videotaped segments of club meetings to analyze the social interactions within the group, noting the social positioning being done as texts were recognized, acknowledged, and assigned social significance as the students engaged in research of their communities. To conduct the analyses, I drew on several sources, each of which has been elaborated in the discussion of

TABLE 1: Relationships among Research Studies



Students' Individual Studies:	Vega Community Writing Club's Study of Community-Based Literacy Practices:	Egan-Robertson's Study
Orientation Phase: Students introduced to the work of students in similar projects: Students Select Research Questions • Sandra Verne: Does the kind of music you listen to affect the way you feel about people? • Marielis Flores: What needs to happen to keep kids off the streets? • DeLayne Monson: How can you keep from becoming an alcoholic if your parents drink? • Denise Yothers: Is racism a problem in Riverside?	**Orientation Phase:** Students Agree to Suggestion that We Collectively to Investigate the Following Questions About Literacy: • Who researches and writes about the community? • How do they do so? • And, why do community members research and write? • Students introduced to the work of contemporary and historical local researchers and writers • I contact friends and colleagues who are community artists and activists	**Orientation Phase:** Gaining Access: Writing Club is part of larger study of literacy in students' English language arts teacher's classes. Formation of writing club to examine How would students use an alternative set of texts to create social identities for themselves and each other in relation to their communities, their schooling, and writing? What were the social and power relationships established in the writing club? What were the linguistic strategies employed in various literacy events by students, community members and myself? What is the usefulness of intertextuality as a social construction to understanding relationships between literacy practices, identity and personhood?
Interviewing and Field Work Students do various types of writing - questions, field notes, logging of tapes, memoes Students Interview Together: • Carlos Vega - director of Vega Community Center • Terrell Thomas - school substance abuse counselor • Earl Ackerman - director of Community Music School • Neighborhood family who was dealing with intergenerational alcoholism • Church youth group leader	**Interviewing and Field Work** Students do various types of writing - questions, field notes, logging of tapes, memoes Group Interviews: • Irma Ashton - playwright, director and actress in political theater • Teresa Cruz - poet, playwright and actress in children's theater • Martha Davidson - playwright and director of adolescent theater group, university researcher of multicultural education	**Data Collection and Analysis** • Participant observation in role as writing club facilitator • Field Notes • Taping of all meetings • Transcription of all interviews • Collection of Artifacts, especially student writing Continued Analysis
Book Writing and Publishing • Students read the transcripts of their interviews numerous times as a basis for generating analyses • Students decide to publish their reports in an edited volume which they entitle *Life As Teenagers in the Nineties: Growing Up in Riverside*	**Book Writing and Publishing** • Students read the transcripts of their interviews numerous times as a basis for generating analyses • Students ask Irma Ashton to help them with the drafting and, send her a prospectus of their book	
Book Signing Event Family, friends and community members attend - as do Students and I talk about our research and writing and distribute 50 copies of the book and keep 6 each for ourselves	**Book Signing Event** Some of the Community artists and activists the students interviewed	**Continued Analysis** • Incorporating data collected by students and by us as we studied community-based literacy practices • Mapping of Intertextuality

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related literature presented above. It is important to emphasize that, based on the previous theoretical discussion, I use the abstract term of personhood to describe, interpret and explain the issues the students were investigating and writing about; however, the students and community members did not use this term, nor did I use this scholarly term with the students. However, the students, community members and I explicitly used related terms, such as race and racism, gender and sexism.

Learning about Culture, Language and Power

I begin by discussing excerpts from Denise Yother's and Sandra Verne's writing to illustrate the analyses generated by students and to show how their writing was produced. I next present a "macro" analysis of the intertextual links proposed by me as teacher-researcher of the writing club, illustrating the importance of intertextual links made by a teacher to the opportunities available for students to craft school-based literacy practices.[5] I highlight the importance of these initial intertextual links in framing young people's opportunities for taking up discourses about various dimensions of personhood. Then, I discuss a set of transcript segments, taken from the third writing club meeting, to illustrate how from the onset of the writing club, membership involved constructing literacy practices of researchers interested in examining issues of racial and ethnic identity and racial prejudice. I included a brief excerpt from a community artist is included to represent the pattern of reasons for and ways of researching and writing that the students encountered as they investigated community members' literacy agendas. This data is important to include, because it significantly influenced the content and processes students adapted in their own writing. Finally, data from Sandra Verne's writing conference with a community artist illustrates the ways in which students created intertextual links with the discourses and methods raised by community members in composing their reports.

"Is Racism a Problem in Riverside?"

> *When I started researching this chapter, I had racism and racial prejudice confused. When the writers club interviewed Teresa Cruz, she asked, "Has anyone experienced racism?" . . . I started saying I did by being called, 'That white girl,' 'Honky' and 'Gringa.' Then I found out that is not racism! What that is called is racial prejudice . . . . Like Marsha Davidson said in words teens can understand, 'Racism = prejudice + power.'*
>
> Denise Yothers. (1993). "Racism: A Problem in Riverside."

This excerpt from Denise's ethnographic report can be understood as articulating "dominant and subordinate ideological components" (Gergin & Davis, 1986) of personhood, along dimensions of racial identity, racism and gender. The quote provides an example of the kind of analyses Denise generated to report findings related to her research question: "Is racism a problem in Riverside?" She illustrates her process of coming to critical awareness (consciousness, in Freire's [1972] term) by providing an example from her personal experience as a researcher to educate her readers about key terms she had encountered (racial prejudice and racism), their meanings and the centrality of power relationships to racism. Her choice of examples makes visible the intersection of gendered and raced identities and how these discourses of personhood are used among adolescents ("I started saying I did [experience racism] by being called, 'That white girl,' 'Honky' and 'Gringa.' ").

Her words suggest some recognition of racism as a system of penalty and privilege based on skin color ("Racism = prejudice + power"). Her understanding of issues of power related to racism are reflected in her letter to teachers, cited at the start of this article. In the letter, Denise asks her elementary and middle school teachers to change their teaching practices to provide multicultural perspectives, writing that, "there's a problem. The problem is we have been deprived of learning about other cultures." Her writing suggests that she has begun to see that some groups of people within our society are set apart and excluded from the curriculum. Denise wrote the letter as a response to Irma Ashton's (a community artist who met with the students on three occasions) suggestion that she write a skit in which an adult and a young person discuss racism. Denise's use of the phrase "other cultures" provides an example of how discourse is a site of articulation of dominant and subordinate notions about personhood: it works to normalize a Euro-centric perspective that views "other cultures" as apart rather than a central component of our society.

Taken together these quotes from Denise's writing represent the kinds of connections she made for herself and her readers based on issues of race and racism as these related 1) to interactions among peers (being called "That white girl," "Honky" and "Gringa") and 2) to classroom interactions around official texts (e.g., whose history and culture is taught and whose is excluded from the curriculum). Two of the European American teachers in attendance at the students' book signing event cried when Denise read her letter aloud along with a quote she included from Carlos Vega, director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center: "I think racism is a society problem. Everyone in this society has to work to end it. It can't be one-sided. Teachers can't do it alone. The principals can't do it alone. The superintendent can't do it alone. The mayor can't do it alone. It has to be done by parents, the church, the educators. Ending racism has to be valued by everyone that's part of society. We all need to work at it." This example from Denise's research report illustrates how she made intertextual links between her inquiry process and the "minority discourses" (Luke's term, 1995-1996) about social change that she and her co-researchers encountered and incorporated into their writing. Literacy became recognized, within the writing club and the students' writing, as a site of negotiation of dominant and subordinate discourse practices about personhood.

"How Does Music Affect Your Feelings?"

> *My goal for this chapter is to let people know what music really is because kids/teenagers seem to think that music is just something to dance to. I'm trying to provide them with information that I have found by talking to people and researching.*
>
> Sandra Verne. (1993). "Does Music Affect the Way We Think and Feel About People?"

In this text and the one at the start of this article, Sandra positions herself as a teenager, researcher, interviewer and author, and as someone who is an authority on the topic she has researched. Through a chain of discursive actions, Sandra builds an argument; she creates a picture of music as something that has become accepted as entertainment by teenagers. She establishes a goal ("to let people know what music really is") and a position of authority to speak from; and she demonstrates how she has elected to address the problem through taking public action as a writer ("I'm trying to provide them [teenagers] with information I found by talking to

people and researching"). In her writing there is evidence that Sandra is using contrast (e.g., between common music and cultural music) to illustrate some of what she has learned about the potential impact of music on people. Sandra's writing task was to write a chapter prospectus to several audiences: to ask the principal for money to publish the book that she and her fellow students were writing; to inform her English teacher about their work in the writing club, which counted as their English class three days per week; and to communicate with a local artist the students asked to return to help them "write up their reports;" and most importantly to provide information to her peers about her research findings. The writing task itself provided a series of positions from which she could have written; from among these she chose that of a researcher having information to share that would make a positive difference in people's lives. She wants teenagers to know that music affects the way they think and feel about women; that it "puts messages across." She wrote: "In music there are references to women as 'whores', 'hussies' or 'bitches.' We are affected by music when people go up to other people and start making false accusations. . . . When people say those things, they think it is okay because they see it on T.V. and repeat it." Sandra had generated a critical discourse analysis of how ideas about women become normalized through the media. She reveals to her readers her process of generating a contrastive analysis between "common" music and "political" music, providing definitions of her terms for readers and detailing the decisions she made as an analyst ("Common music is what we hear on the radio, on MTV, all the time. Some people call this popular music but I can't call it popular because it's not popular with a lot of people when it talks about women that way. I call it common music instead.") Her awareness of the power inherent in words is clear in her explanation of cultural music as a kind of political music ("Political music is music that gets people to do something about the problems of the world. At first I thought cultural music was a third kind of music. Then I decided that cultural music is a kind of political music because it brings back your culture. . . . For some people, your culture was never written in books.") As in Denise's writing, there are traces of the way dominant versions of history have excluded the history of many communities of color. For example, Sandra includes in her chapter information she learned from Irma Ashton that the drum could not be played by Africans in captivity as slaves, once slave holders realized that the drums were used as a form of communication. Sandra reports one of the "minority discourses" she accessed for learning history from the community's perspective ("Cultural music tells you how your own history was. . . ."). Bringing "back your

culture" was a theme evident in questions Sandra asked of community members across the interviews. In her field notes from a March 3rd interview of Irma Ashton, Sandra wrote, "She told us about how her daughter traced her family roots. . . ." On May 10th, Sandra asked Teresa Cruz, "How did you go about tracing your roots?" "At what age did you realize that you wanted to trace your roots?" In these writing excerpts, Sandra's process of coming to consciousness 1) about the importance of learning history from the community's perspective and 2) about how "the production and reproduction of the social order [in this case discourses about cultural groups and about women] depend . . . upon practices and processes of a broadly cultural nature" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 219). The particular data selected for inclusion in the next sections of this article articulate dimensions of Sandra's and (to some extent) Denise's production of their texts, through identifying intertextual links to various aspects of the writing club.

Intertextual Links Proposed in the Formation of the Writing Club

In this section I highlight that the analyses of culture, language and power presented in the students' writing were influenced by the macro-level juxtapositions made by myself as teacher-researcher and, then, by the community members the students interviewed. Thus I elaborate here on intertextual links I made in forming the writing club. Table 2 is a copy of the flier I distributed to students who had chosen free time during an activity period.[6]

TABLE 2: Flier for the Community Writing Club

VEGA SCHOOL
COMMUNITY WRITING CLUB

FORMING NOW!

WHEN: TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, AND THURSDAYS DURING ACTIVITY PERIOD

FOR WHOM: POD 9 STUDENTS INTERESTED IN WRITING AND RESEARCHING WHO ARE NOT INVOLVED IN ANOTHER ACTIVITY DURING THIS TIME.

WHAT WE WILL DO:

- WRITE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY
- LEARN TO DO ACTION RESEARCH
- INTERVIEW COMMUNITY WRITERS, ARTISTS, ACTIVISTS, AND OTHERS
  READ THE WRITING OF STUDENT WRITERS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY
- PUBLISH OUR WRITING
- MAKE DECISIONS TOGETHER

HOW TO SIGN UP:
SEE MS. EGAN-ROBERTSON FOR A PERMISSION FORM, OR IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION.

Many types of activities were associated with writing club meetings during different phases of its life cycle. Initially, the group read and heard about the work of teenage ethnographers from around the country. At the first meeting, I raised potential questions that they might be interested in researching: "What's it like being a young woman growing up in Riverside? As a young African American woman? As a young Latina? As a young white woman?" As will be illustrated later in this article, this is an important theoretical point, because the students then adopted questions to investigate and helped each other design and implement research plans in which they built intertextual links with the questions I used to frame the study. As part of the study of their communities, students interviewed a number of family and community members. Most of the interviewing was done collectively. The students wrote in variety of ethnographic genres and narratives and presented their findings in an edited volume. In establishing the writing club, I drew on my social network of colleagues and friends, with whom I had done similar critical educational work in the past. One of the people was Irma Ashton,[7] a local theater producer, director and actress. Before the students interviewed Ashton, I brought in a copy of *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (Washington, 1993). I shared this book for theoretical, methodological, historical and political reasons: Truth had lived in the area in the mid-19th century, and Ashton was known for her dramatic portrayals of Truth. Indeed, Ashton was sometimes publicly referred to as "The Prophetess," much as Truth once had been. Also, in preparation for their interview with Ashton, the students read a biographical sketch of her, which was included in a playbill for a show about Ida B. Wells, a 19th century journalist and anti-lynching activist. Ashton acted as Wells in the two-woman show, touring regionally before traveling to South Africa with the show. I also brought in Wells' autobiography *Crusade for Justice* (Duster, 1970). Thus, from the beginning, acting as the teacher-researcher, I proposed to the students an intertextual framework and analysis that deliberately incorporated community texts and discursive practices based on critique. My actions are relevant to the theoretical problem and question raised in this article because they focus attention on the kinds of literacy practices that were assigned significance by me as teacher-researcher and highlighted for students whose and what purposes were served by the community-based literacy practices of the artists and activists they met through the writing club. As noted in the literature review section, what kinds, whose and what purposes are served in literacy practices are central concerns in the construction of discursive practices of personhood.