Transformative Mini Conferencing:

Transformative New Teaching

Toward English Language Learners' Language and Identity Development

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Abstract

The present case study examines classroom interaction in an English as a second language (ESL) class in an urban high school. The study intends to explore the in-depth nature of teacher's effective teaching practices during the instructional time with focus on their influence on linguistically and culturally diverse English language learners' language and identity development. Data from multiple sources of class observations, interviews with the teacher and students, and documents were constantly compared and progressively analyzed. The developmental qualitative analyses found that Transformative Mini Conferencing (TMC), in its multiple realizations in mini writing-in-progress conferences, mini lessons, and mini filming-in-progress conferences, has a significant impact on the development of adolescent learners' powerful literacies. Implications toward Transformative New Pedagogy in the new times of diversity and technology are also discussed.

Keywords: English language learner, English as second language, transformative pedagogy, diversity, technology

The present society of increasing diversity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000) continues to see societal efforts to ensure equity. Also in the current era of advancing technology, is recognized a tall order to strengthen affordances of and reduce possible marginalizations from new forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991) of the new times.

Technology is used in many content areas—English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies (Miller & Borowicz, 2005); yet, its effective, innovative use seems limited in ESL instruction, particularly in an urban setting. Thus, little is known about effective ESL classroom practices needed in present times. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap, and to contribute to on-going dialogue on pursuing equity, access and success of growing minority who speaks English as a second language (Kindler, 2002) by addressing the quest guided by the following question: What is the nature of innovative classroom teaching with regards to English language learners' language and identity development?

Sociocultural Perspectives

Sociocultural perspectives on language and identity frame the present inquiry on innovative teaching. In sociocultural views, classroom is viewed as an organic venue (Bakhtin, 1986) and space that realizes activity systems of teaching and learning (Leontiev, 1981). Heteroglossic voices are embodied in participants' practices (Wertsch, 1991) of teaching, learning, and interacting; interactions position and are positioned by other voices in ways of representation and communication, which leads to co-construction of discursive cultures (Gee, 1989; Kress, 2003; New London Group, 1996) in the classroom.

New teaching practices are promoted with teacher's authoritative designing and appropriating of participants' funds of knowledge and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1991; Freedman & Ball, 2004; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Kalantzis & Cope, 2000). Creating learning community zones toward the microgenetic development of language and identity is teacher's key role in the new teaching; learning and development are traced and understood through participation-history-in-person or –in-group (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 2001; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Robbins, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991).

Methodology

Research Design and Participants

The present study, following the tradition of qualitative case study, investigates classroom dynamics in the real context of an ESL learning community case (Creswell, 1998, 2003; Ely, 1991; Stake, 1995). Twenty-one participants are 20 adolescent English language learners from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, and their ESL teacher, Ms. Sunim Kwon, in Vermeer High School, a Western New York inner city public school; they were purposefully selected to establish a viable case (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from multiple sources in 2008-2009. Prolonged, non-participant observation of 110 classes produced 108 hours of audio or video data and 110 field-notes (Spradley, 1980). Additional 8-hour audio data were collected from individual interviews with the teacher and students. Thirty-four types of documents, print or digital, along with researcher's log provided in-depth information about teacher (e.g.,

questionnaire), students (questionnaires, quizzes, writings, films, cartoons, and drawings), lessons (rubrics, quizzes, DVDs), and context (newspaper articles). Data were qualitatively analyzed through strategies of constant comparison, progressive focusing, and induction (Creswell, 1998; Spradley, 1980) and also with a judicial use of electronic software (NVivo9). Analytical techniques inclusive of analytical memos and code charts aided understanding and developing unfolding themes and relationships; the themes were naturally generalized with incorporating multiple trustworthiness strategies--triangulation, feedback and member-checking (Denzin, 1978; Ely, 1991; Stake, 1995).

<center>Transformative Mini Conferencing (TMC)</center>

Qualitative data analyses in stages led to finding the following feature dimension[2]: 'Transformative Mini Conferencing'. Considering 'conference' meaning "a formal meeting that typically takes place over a number of days and involves people with a shared interest" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2009), Transformative Mini Conferencing (TMC hereafter) is understood as 'a formal meeting for discussion that takes place for a short time during the class period, involves the teacher and students with a shared interest of learning, and creates meaningful dialogue toward changing and mediates learning and development.' TMC is practiced in multiple ways including mini conferencing on writing- or filming-in-progress and mini moral and strategy lessons. First I will contextualize the mini conferencing activity system and then discuss major classroom conferencing activities: mini writing-in-progress conferences, mini lessons, and mini filming-in-progress conferences.

Contextualizing Transformative Mini Conferencing: Purposeful Activities

Mini conferencing in Sunim Kwon's class is a purposeful, educational 'activity' (Leontiev, 1981), which 'frames' (Goffman, 1974) or contextualizes her ESL class in which her teaching and her students' learning occur. With their mini writing-in-progress conferencing as an activity of reference, I will discuss the relational context, using the hierarchy of activity as shown in Figure 1: 'activity' toward 'motive', 'action' toward 'goal' and 'operation' toward 'condition'.

Condition of 'weaknesses in the current writing'

Operation of 'revising' through talking and listening

Goal of 'improving the writing-in-progress'

Action of 'meeting and discussing the writing-in-progress'

Motive of 'becoming a better writer'

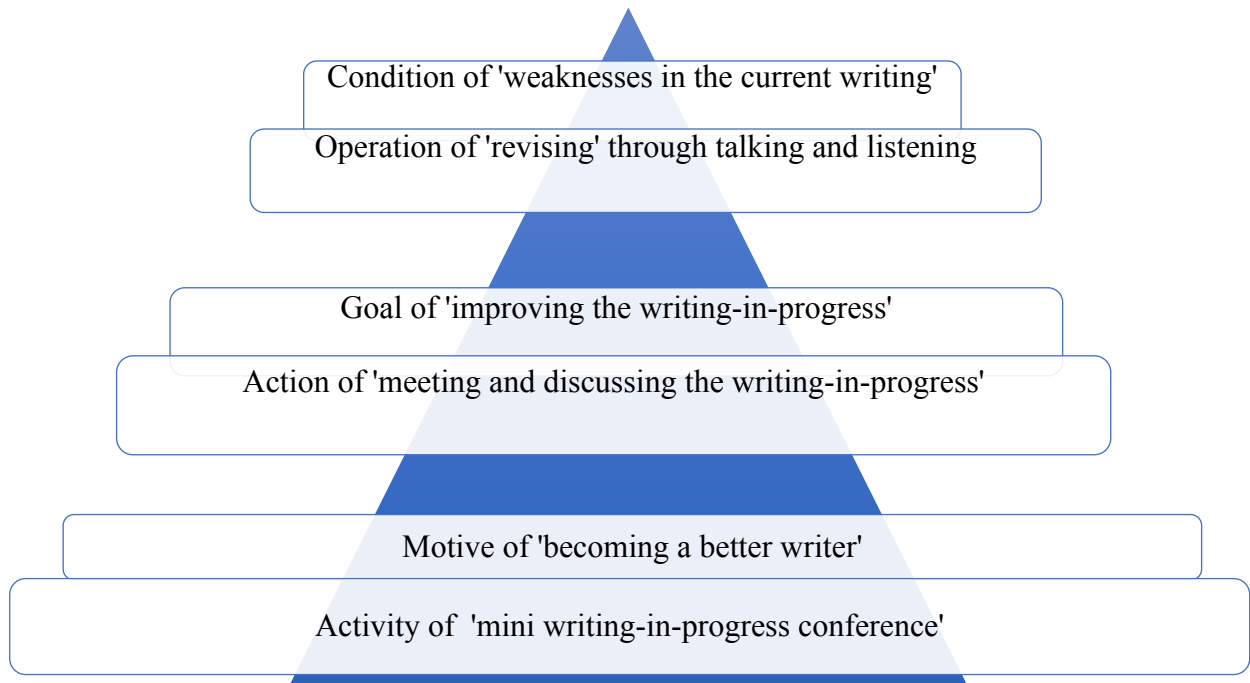Activity of 'mini writing-in-progress conference'

Figure 1. Context of mini writing-in-progress conferencing: Hierarchy of activity

"You Should Become a Better Writer": A Motive-Driven Activity

The ESL class' mini writing-in-progress conferencing activity is given life by the ESL learning community's core need that is shared by each individual student regardless of his or her specific, immediate needs such as punctuation (Ms. Kwon: "Period. Have a traffic stop sign.... You'll be killing people") for Mohamed and capitalization ("No matter how big you write, it is still a small letter") for Abdul, for example.

The core of the needs lies in academic writing in the areas of vocabulary (Gambi: "Disabled, what is that?"), sentence structure (Ms. Kwon: "Don't write run-on sentences), spelling (Leonardo: "Maybe, how do you spell it?"), cultural, idiomatic expressions (Ms. Kwon to Leonardo: "Kate is Kelly's daughter, not her son"), writing mode (Ms. Kwon to Gambi: "You're writing as you speak"), writing style (Ms. Kwon to the class: "This is a friendly letter. You wrote the formal letter last time. It's different. See this"), and organization (Ms. Kwon to the class: "Don't forget to have introduction, body and conclusion. Check before you come to me"). Because the students speak English as their second language that is spoken for everyday communication in the larger society, listening and speaking skills are, in general, not on top of their concerns or needs to focus on. The need is repeatedly recognized and made aware in this ESL class through Ms. Kwon's terse, powerful motive statement: "You should become a better writer."

Importantly, the motive to be a better academic writer is relevant to students' life, per Ms. Kwon speaking her 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzalez et al., 2005), because, only when the students go beyond the academic language barrier or, rather, cultural barrier, they are better prepared with enriched life skills or 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1991) to fully participate, as legitimate members (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in the mainstream instruction and, further, in the larger society where powerful, academic literacies are prized toward access, equity, and success (Gee, 1989). Thus, the motive of becoming-a-better-writer is deeply and importantly relevant to each student's life; the life-relevant motive motivates the mini conferencing activity. Further, the TMC activity potentially transforms the students' language and identity through the conferencing history (Holland et al., 2001; Wertsch, 1991).

"Fix It Together": Goal-Oriented Actions

In the active system of the mini writing-in-progress conferencing activity, the teacher and each student-writer have a shared goal of improving the writing-in-progress. The goal is conscious (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006); all participants are aware of and practice their transformative learning ritual for this activity. The teacher-student pair changes as one pair-work finishes and another pair-work is ready. Whose pair-work is the next depends on the student's seatwork. At the very time of need for mini conferencing, the teacher-student collaborative dialogue to improve the writing-in-progress, whether it is a graphic organizer, a first draft, or a revised draft, begins. What is being done--their meeting and dialoging--is to fulfill their shared, conscious goal: "fix it together". Fixing the writing-in-progress together is a must in this class. It is the milestone to go through to become a better writer.

"You Go Fix It": Condition-Based Operations

Then, what is actually being done, at the present time during the mini writing-in-progress conferencing time, by the teacher and the student-writer individually and socially to improve the writing at hand, and, ultimately, for the struggling writer to become a better one are as follows. On the teacher's side, she waits for the next turn, receives the notebook with the current writing on it, reads, asks questions, listens to the student, marks errors with a red pen, gazes at the student-writer, gestures to draw the writer's attention and so on. On the student's side, he or she announces the readiness for the upcoming conferencing, walks to the teacher's desk, sits, submits the writing, reads, asks or answers questions, listens to the teacher, tells how the marked error will be revised, keeps eye contact with the teacher, and so on. Their dynamic chain of mini

conferencing behavior is unconscious (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006); they just do naturally to continue the purposeful dialogue and to have errors on the current writing fixed and improved. The errors or less satisfactory parts of the writing-in-progress are the conditions under which their natural teaching and learning practices unfold developmentally.

When the teacher-student-pair work session is done, then, it is time for the student to "go fix it" by him- or herself. They are separated; still, the collaborative work continues as the student is reminded of the previous dialogue, and the teacher keeps monitoring the writer's voice-in-writing at work (Bakhtin, 1986) while conducting another pair-work with another student-writer.

Then, the following sections are devoted to discussing more details of three major transformative teaching and learning activities that I observe in Ms. Kwon's ESL class: Mini writing-in-progress conferencing, mini lessons, and mini filming-in-progress conferencing.

Mini Writing-in-Progress Conferencing

Ms. Kwon and all her ESL class members, placed at intermediate and advanced proficiency levels, participate in mini writing-in-progress conferencing throughout the academic year. The number of the mini conferences is preliminarily based on the district-prescribed textbook: the green book for the intermediate and the red one for the advanced level students.

For example, the green Visions book contains 27 chapters in six units in total, which is what is to be accomplished along with the unit and the final tests to be submitted to the district for each student's final grade. In addition to the given language-skill-based

exams--vocabulary or reading comprehension questions as an example--related to and included in each unit, each student is expected to write on a given topic. The textbook only requires the students to produce a writing sample, whether a summary, a biography, or a persuasive letter. Product matters.

What actually take place in this class are more than 27 writing literacy events. Not only product matters. This class prizes both process and product because the motive is becoming a better writer and the goal is improving each writing-in-progress. In this activity system here in the progressive, recursive learning ritual--writing a graphic organizer > mini conferencing > writing a draft > mini conferencing > writing a revised draft > mini conferencing > writing a final paper > mini conferencing, their writing is also continuous and developmental, and involves several sub-units or developments as each writing progresses toward the final paper. There may be more than one version of a graphic organizer or a draft. Thus, the number of the writing-in-progress conferences depends on each student's progress upon the mini conference. Likewise, the length of each conference counts on the current work. One mini conference may last for a minute or more than a couple of minutes when combined with other mini strategy or moral lessons dependent on the emerging need in the learning situation at hand. There are no prescribed rules limiting the length or quantity. They focus on quality in both process and product, not quantity. The group focuses on quality in learning and development.

"You Got Better": *Microgenetic Academic Writing Development*

Learning and development may not be generally expected to take place successfully in a short period of time; however, 'microgenetic development' (Wertsch, 1985) is observed in a short period of instructional time in the intensive learning zone of

Ms. Kwon's ESL class. Each success of the student in the writing-in-progress marks a milestone of his or her microgenesis; the series of microgenetic development continues in its 'revolutionary' trajectory (Newman & Holzman, 1993, as cited in Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Over a single class time and throughout the school academic year, does students get better in their writing-in-progress. Student-writers get better in their history-in-time. Here I present an example of one student-writer's microgenesis. Mohamed, a male, Arabic student in his ninth grade is currently nearing his intermediate ESL
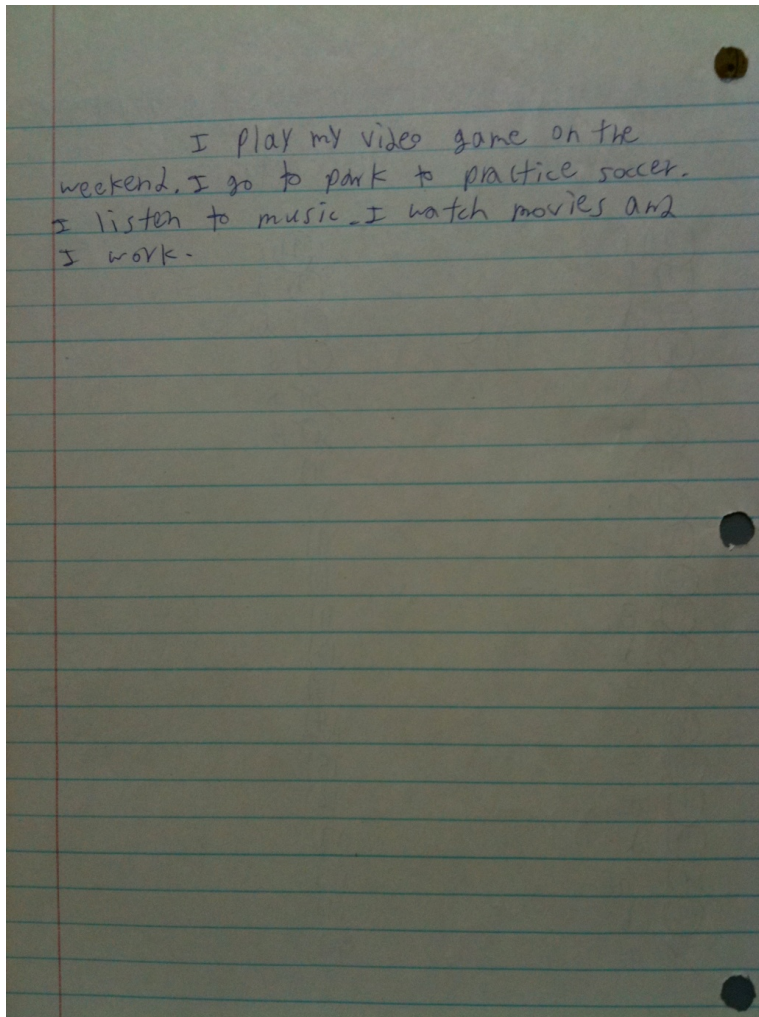

Photo 1: "A beginner": Mohamed's microgenetic writing on October 24, 2008

proficiency in his 'development continuum' (Hornberger, 2003). One of his earlier

writings dated October 24, 2008, shown in Photo 1 (above), shows where he is at then

'current' time. His 25-word writing is simple in its sentence structure; it is short in length;

three simple sentences beginning with the subject, 'I', in one paragraph show little content

development or transitional phrases. As Ms. Kwon describes him with a few of others in

her intermediate, mixed class, he is 'now' more "a beginner" than an intermediate writer.

Seven learning months later, in May 2009, this student-writer "got better" as

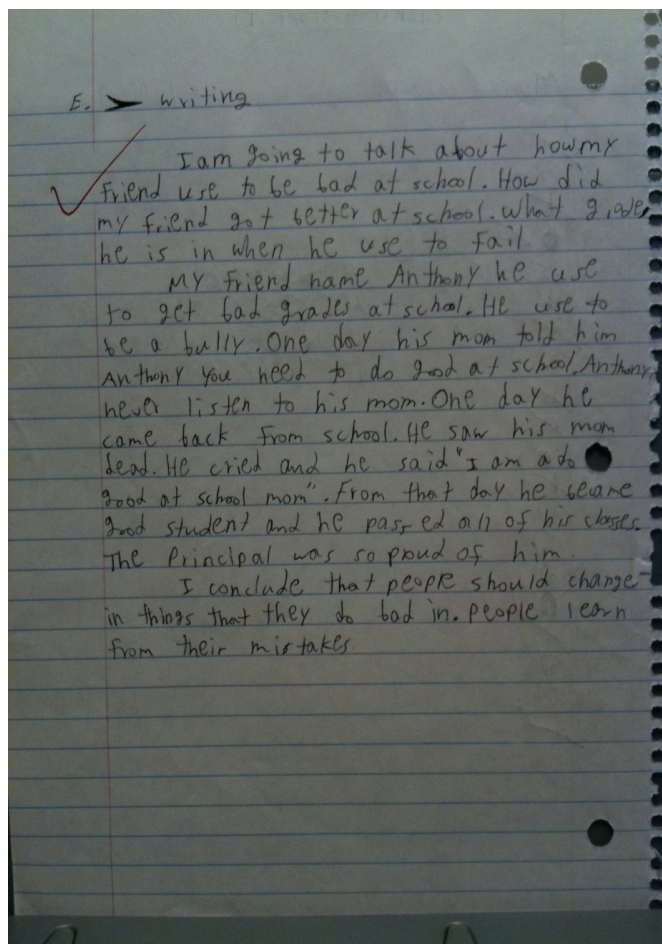shown in his writing (Photo 2). His 135-word story about this friend is not simple or

Photo 2: "You got better": Mohamed's microgenetic writing on May 29, 2009

short. It is written in three paragraphs, with an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

Each paragraph contains more than one sentence with different sentence structures—"am

going to", "should", "told", and "passed" to list a few; he shows a good command of

different kinds of verbs in different tenses. Also, all sentences do not begin with the same

subject pronoun, "I", as shown in his October 2008 writing; his first paragraph, for

example, of three sentences shows three different subjects of "I", "my friend", and "he".

Although there still are grammatical errors such as "use to" instead of "used to", his

writing shows, for sure, improvement in his grammatical competence (Canale & Swain,

1980) toward 'mastery'. Mohamed is a better writer now; the motivated goal is achieved

in his learning.

"Come to the Dark Side": Progressive, Developmental Mediation

Mohamed's microgenesis also takes place over a single day. He learns with other

diverse students in Ms. Kwon's class for two consecutive periods, first and second, every

weekday. The following observed event happens on April 29, 2009. He reads about the

U. S. Supreme Court from his green textbook. His task is to write a personal letter to a

teacher of his by using the content of the assigned reading. Mohamed begins with a

graphic organizer, then, a draft and a final letter. I will further discuss what is happening

in the 'Dark Side' briefly mentioned earlier by tracing his development through his mini

conferenced writings (Photos 3, 4, and 5) below.

Photo 3 shows Mohamed's final graphic organizer, kept in his portfolio, about the

reading of the role of the Supreme Court. This student-writer is using his higher order

thinking with the aid of his developing graphic organizer. He uses two circles, each of

which is the basis for the paragraph in his letter-to-write. Mohamed organizes the two

circles in the sequence that he will write the letter later. The function of the circle above

is to list three major roles; that of the other one below is to describe the importance of the

Supreme Court. Also, Mohamed puts the thesis statement of each paragraph-to-write on

the right side on top of each circle. The positioning of the sentences, "There are Thre[e]

ways of court role" for the bigger circle above, and, "Their actions affect the lives of

many people" for the smaller circle below, on the graphic organizer seems to show that

he makes an effective use of the different areas of the graphic organizer space for
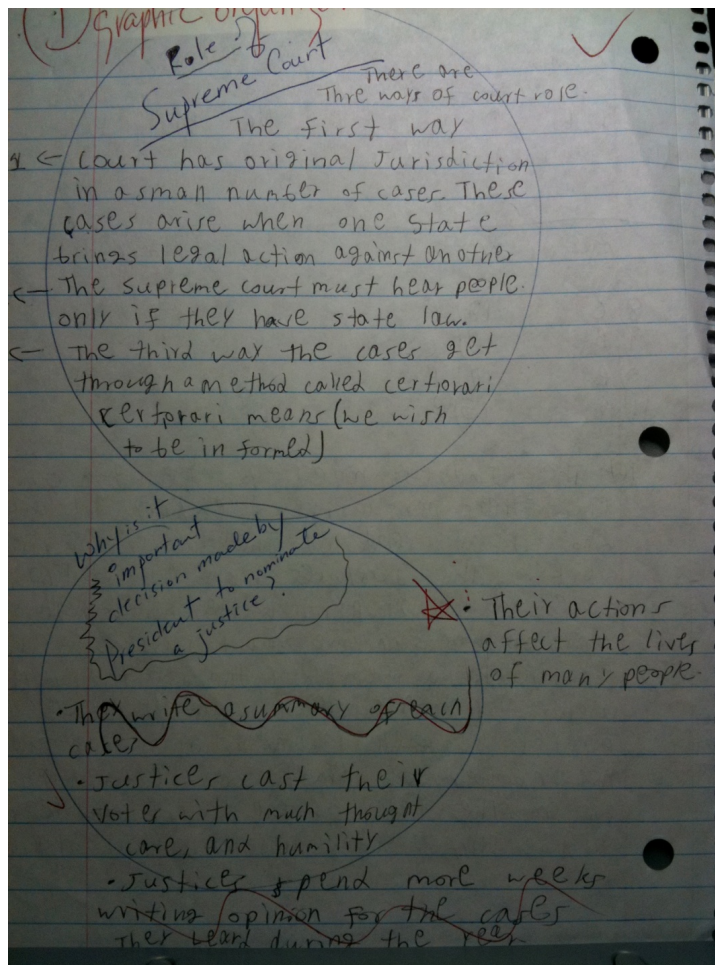
different functions.

Photo 3: Mohamed's mini-conferenced graphic organizer on May 4, 2009

The two-round history of student-teacher mini conferences for the graphic organizer work can be traced with the colored pen marks on the mini conferenced graphic organizer (Photo 3 above). It seems, during the first mini conference, that Ms. Kwon uses a blue pen and adds the missing title, "Role of Supreme Court", on top of the circle above so that Mohamed is raised awareness of the needed title, which he adds later in both his draft and then letter. Also, seemingly, the teacher crosses out the only sentence then in the second circle, "They write a summary of each cases" and adds the leading question, "Why is it important decision made by President to nominate a justice?" on the circle that misses the thesis statement at that time. The teacher's question, saliently written down for attention and processing, leads Mohamed to go back to the reading, evaluate the current organizer, and re-construct his writing tool so as to answer the teacher's leading question. At the second round, using a red pen, Ms. Kwon checks the first thesis statement, stars the second thesis statement, and checks the second sentence added for the second circle; the star and the check marks seem to indicate her assessment that Mohamed's additions are good. She crosses-out the third sentence, which is advised not to be used for the draft at the next step. Finally, at the current graphic organizing step, Ms. Kwon names it as "1 graphic organizer" on top of the paper in a red pen, which means that Mohamed's task at hand is to write the first draft of the letter using this mini conferenced graphic organizer.

Mohamed decides to address the letter (Photo 4 below) to Mrs. Weimer, his social studies teacher. Using his mini conferenced graphic organizer (Photo 3 above), he writes out the information in two circles in a personal letter format about which the teacher
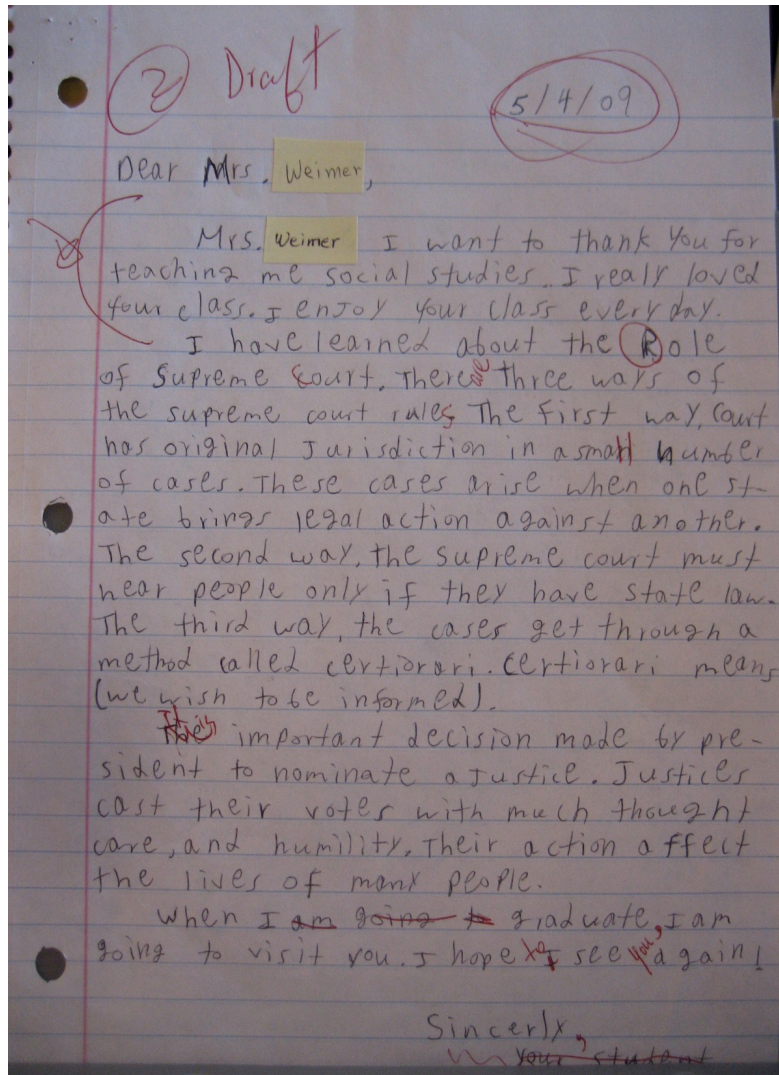
Photo 4: Mohamed's mini-conferenced draft on May 4, 2009

gives a lecture to the whole class the other day. All the organized information is written

up in two paragraphs in his letter-in-progress. He adds "The second way" to the first body

paragraph. Also, he includes the date ("5/4/09"), salutation ("Dear Mrs. Weimer,"),

closing ("Sincerly"), and signature ("Your student") as well as two other short paragraphs,

the opening and closing, to fulfill the format of the given genre, friendly letter. The

graphic organizer is transcended into a friendly letter.

Then, the student-teacher mini conferencing for the draft seems to take place once. Ms. Kwon uses a red pen to raise Mohamed's awareness of the errors. First, she circles the date. Second, on the first body paragraph, she circles the capital letter 'R' for "Role"; she embeds the capital letter 'C' for "Court"; she adds the missing "are"; she adds the plural '-s' to "rule"; she repairs "r" for "small" with 'll'. On the second body paragraph, she replaces "The" with "It is". And, on the closing paragraph, she crosses out "am going to" and adds a comma; she replaces "I" with "to" and adds "you". She adds a comma after "Sincer[e]ly"; she crosses out "Your student", which seems to signal Mohamed to write his own name. The teacher names the writing "2 Draft" on top, which indicates that the student writer's next task at hand is to write up the "clean", "beautiful" final letter.

Afterward, Mohamed writes up his personal letter to his social studies teacher, Mrs. Weimer. All the mini conferenced errors are addressed. The clean letter (Photo 5) still shows a few spelling mistakes ("realy" and "Sincerly") that are not brought up during the last mini conference; the final letter, however, looks good with fairly minor errors. This version goes through the last mini conferencing; it is accepted and submitted. Ms. Kwon writes the number "3" on top. The teacher and the student are now finished with one continuous writing task through developmental mini conferencing. The organizer is better written; so is the draft; then, the better letter is written. Thus, improving writing-in-progress, the goal is achieved through the student-teacher joint work. The social space of 'Dark Side' for mini writing-in-progress conferences mediates the beginner's transformative development to be a better writer.
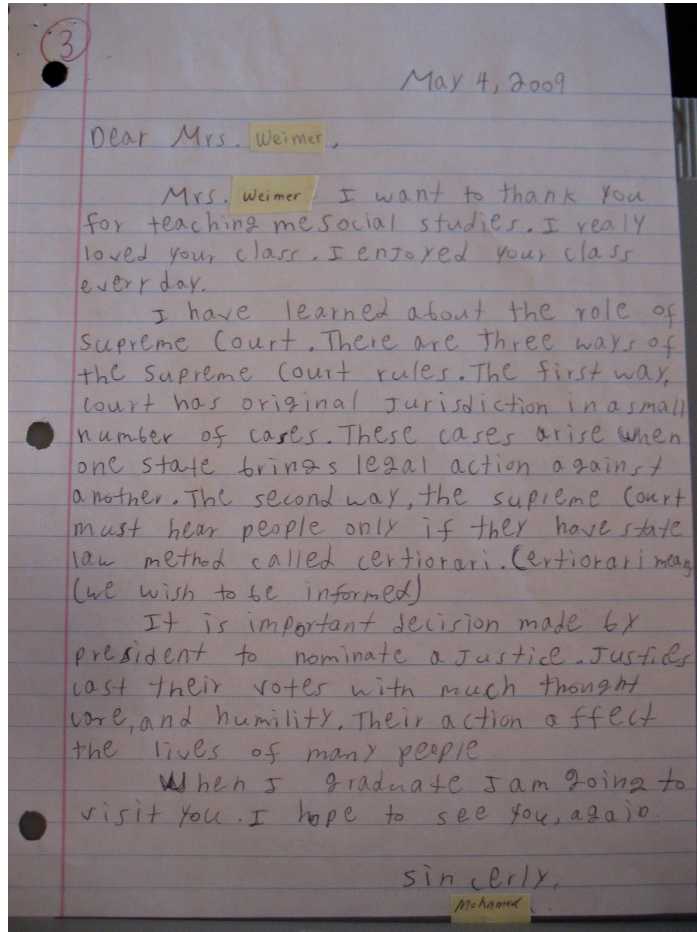
Photo 5: Mohamed's mini-conferenced personal letter on May 4, 2009

Mini Lessons

Every class period is thoroughly planned out beforehand. Teaching and learning

in Ms. Kwon's ESL class seems all in her plan. The district's time-lined agenda that

prescribes unit by unit may frame the ESL teacher's lesson plan, which is supervised and

can be audited, if needed, by the director of Lakeville Public School District ESL

Department. Interestingly, as glimpsed in my earlier discussion of mini writing-in-

progress conferences, the dynamic, dialogic nature of interaction cannot be pre-

prescribed or pre-planned.

Class dynamics, however, which might seem to be prescribed according to district′s strict agenda, are beyond expectation and show heteroglossic interaction (Holquist, 2002; Wertsch, 1991). Success in mini conferencing thus what makes it transformative is largely dependent upon Ms. Kwon′s real time teaching contingently situated on emergent needs (Miller, Thompson, & Boyd, in press) relating language and personality. A good example of her unplanned lessons shared at the time of need is mini strategy and moral lessons, discussion of which follows.

"When You Copy It, Study It": Mini Strategy Lessons

Sunim and her ESL students gather in their closet-classroom to teach and learn. Each member is supposed to work hard throughout the class period until the last minute of the period ("I wanna see you trying until the bell rings."). Students′ pens are supposed to be moving as an indicator of their constant work for learning ("Why is your pen not moving?"). Thus, doing nothing ("You′re not working. That′s wrong", "Blank sheet, I have a proof you did nothing") or doing superficially ("Don′t pretend that you are working hard. Come to the dark side") is not acceptable to this teacher doing serious teaching.

As an example of her teaching students a strategy to encourage and enhance their hard work, Ms. Kwon says to a student that copies superficially from the textbook and does not study before the unit exam, "This is the second time. I went over it. You don′t remember? You didn′t study. The point is not copying. When you copy it, study it." Two things are worth mentioning on this teacher′s utterance. First, the teacher gives the student who fails in the unit exam a second chance to re-take it and improve the score if he wants to. Regrettably, the second chance does not yield a fruitful result because the

student does not study and learn. Merely re-taking the test does not make any difference. What matters or can make a difference lies in the quality of the student's learning practices, which he shows lack of.

Second, 'copying' here does not mean mechanical, mindless mimicking of the textbook information, which would not lead the student anywhere further in his development continuum. Copying here denotes 'transformative imitation' for learning and embeds higher order thinking. Thus 'copying-as-thinking' potentially leads the learner to learning. It is what Ms. Kwon believes; she tries to help the student to practice in class and internalize copying-as-thinking as his learning strategy repertoire. Classroom interaction in this ESL class is purposeful; it is learning-oriented.

Also, as shown previously in the example of Mohamed's microgenesis--from a 25-word writing in one simple paragraph to a 100-word letter in four paragraphs developed through an introduction, a body and a conclusion, the formatting or organizing basics are explicitly taught as a learning strategy or writing 'rule of thumb'. Ms. Kwon says to a student writing a summary of a reading from the red textbook, "Yes, it's a good rule of thumb. With intro, body, conclusion, you can't go wrong." The mini learning strategy lesson takes less than a minute; the short one-point lesson is effective because it focuses on the very need.

Additionally, test-taking strategies are also explicitly taught and learned in this class. Ms. Kwon's ESL class is not immune to the institutional power of the current era of testing and accountability. Being good at, or, at least, passing in the State and District mandated tests is not an option, but a requirement to obtain a high school diploma; the institutional context makes a realistic goal for every class member including the teacher

("My goal is to pass you, not fail you"). Here in this ESL class, tests are still powerful; students may be still weak in front of the powers; importantly, the overpowering tests are actively addressed. Test-taking strategies are explicitly taught; the strategy lesson is repeated throughout the year; the same lesson is reminded as the test comes near. Ms. Kwon prepares her students out of the test-fearing context and socializes them into a test-preparing culture.

During the first period of April 30, 2009, a week before the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) begins, Ms. Kwon reminds the whole class of the bag of tricks: "Use your highlighter. Write down important information. You can underline then create your own graphic organizer. You're used to a graphic organizer. No dictionary at test." It is worth noting that graphic organizer creating practice—the class' routine, ritualistic practice as a crucial part of their writing-in-progress, helps the students prepare for the test. Then, one day before the NYSESLAT, the teacher reminds, again, her third-period students of the test format and the strategies: "Tomorrow you have an exam. If you find a word that you don't know the meaning of.... Number 1 to 15, multiple choice, number 16 is the essay.... In your graphic organizer, while you're reading, write down important information." During the fourth period on the same day when the students take the final practice test that is solemnly simulated in class, Ms. Kwon walks around and monitors each student's note-taking skills while listening to the test CD. Before the second listening, she advises the class to make layered notes, "Those who have a lot, then add it. Just embed it. You might miss dates." The test-taking strategies are repeatedly preached; the strategies are not just for one test, but for learning; they are students' learning strategies being practiced and embodied.

"I Want You to Be a Human Being First": Mini Moral Lessons

In any classroom, some time may be spent to address students' off-task behavior. In Ms. Sunim Kwon's language class, the seemingly disciplinary talk, being present here, is qualitatively different. The purpose of the interaction, configured in a mini lesson, is not to punish the undesirable classroom behavior or the student who behaves undesirably; rather, it is to help the adolescent pupil in her 'classroom custody' ("My kids") to learn a moral lesson, which may guide the student to develop a better personality and, thus, to behave better in class as well. The persistent guardian and leader of this language class, Ms. Kwon, pursues her kid-students' language learning, and, further, their personality or identity development that is embedded in language learning (Robbins, 2003).

Considering the social motive of mini writing-in-progress conferencing as becoming a better writer, Ms. Kwon would not be satisfied to see her students grow to become better writers only. To her, more important is for them to "be a human being first" as she repeats this particular mini moral lesson throughout the academic year whenever it feels needed to be talked about either to an individual student or to the whole class.

As an instance, during a one-on-one mini grade conference in the second period on April 30, 2009, Ms. Kwon says to Mohamed, "The difference between men and boys. Boys don't listen. Men, we don't have to tell them because they know what is right or wrong." The teacher is pushing this 16-year-old boy to grow to be mature, like a 'man'. This mini be-a-man moral lesson seems to work to all students present; all the boys and girls in class, being observed, do listen very attentively to the teacher.

An episode of mini grow-up moral lesson on May 15, 2009 also shows Ms. Kwon's skillful use of her voice tone for the sake of teaching the moral lesson and drawing the student's attention to the mini writing-in-progress conference.

Kayle: (sitting in front of the teacher) How are you doing?

Ms. Kwon: I'm good. Thanks. How are you?

Kayle: I like your class.

Ms. Kwon: Do not play. Don't make me call your father. I told you. You're the oldest. I don't care if you fight with a 14-year-old student. Grow up.

Kirk: (sitting in the back row, asks to Kayle) How old are you?

Kayle: (to Kirk without looking back at him) Seventeen.

Ms. Kwon: (in a loud voice to Kayle) DROP THAT. You're like.... I'm here to fix your essay. (then changes her voice tone suddenly and begins the mini conference in a soft voice)

Kayle: (participates in the mini conference in a soft voice without further distraction)

The teacher's use of the sudden, loud voice is dramatic. She sounds very angry with this 17-year-old male student, the oldest in the third period. Another sudden change in her voice tone, however, quickly suggests that her use of vocal tone is pedagogically strategic rather than emotional. She is in control. Any of the student-members is not surprised at the sudden yelling or calming down. They know what her intention is; their teacher is giving the oldest student a short lesson to behave as a mature human being, in other words, a man. Personality instruction, at the time of need, is embedded in mini writing-

in-progress conferencing. The mini be-a-man moral lesson works; Kayle is back at conference.

In addition, a 'human being' is, to Ms. Kwon, also 'respectful' about oneself and others. As one of her class rules show, to "[k]eep your *Dignity*" is another mini value lesson to be respectful about oneself. Also, through the mini lesson and their story telling dialogue on diverse cultural practices, the students learn to be respectful for others and their diverse cultures ("You have to respect them" during the class' discussion on King Tut and others' cultural practices). The students' respect is communicated and practiced in multiple ways: for example, a classroom discussion on Tutankamin, a collaborative letter to President Barack Obama, Hanna's movie project about President, and Gambi's drawing of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mini Filming-in-Progress Conferencing

This section is devoted to elaborating the conferencing aspect of the ESL class' transformative video project learning ritual. The whole process of class film making involves more than several mini filming-in-progress conferences: On sequence one, the class discusses the theme; on sequence two, a storyline; on sequence three, a storyboard; on sequence four, materials and roles; on sequence six, part footage critique; on sequence eight, whole footage critique; on sequence ten, evaluation. The final, tenth step of the learning ritual is the class screening and evaluation conferencing, which is the focus of following discussion.

"Why Was It Good?": Multimodal Project Evaluation Conferencing

Before the final version of the class video project is ready for the premiere during the second period on May 19, 2009, Ms. Kwon hands out a hard copy of the teacher-

made video project evaluation rubric to each of ten class-members present on the day.

The rubric explains that "[p]roject is 10% of your making period grade" and detailed

descriptions of five evaluation criteria: storyboard, meaning, images, music/voice and

edit. The full mark of each criterion is 100%, which means respectively:

Storyboard:	Story is thoroughly developed with vivid graphics and full of details.
Meaning:	Presentation shows complete understanding of the subject and conveys a solid concept.
Images	Images are clearly focused and convey meaning. They project creativeness.
Music/voice	Music is carefully selected to enhance the meaning. Voice is clear and loud.
Edit	Titles, credits, and subtitles are well paced. Utilized visual effects and transitions well to show the superior project.

When the class is ready with the evaluation rubric, Ms. Kwon invites the class to the

upcoming film festival and explains the festival.

Ms. Kwon:	(stands) You are all invited [to the film festival]. If you can come, you will see how our film is showing on a big screen and how other kids' films are. I'm going to see. (reads and explains each of five criteria on the evaluation rubric. holds the laptop computer on her arm so that the class can see it clearly and turns on the video project titled 'Adjectives')
Students:	(get quiet and watch the small computer monitor very attentively)

Ms. Kwon:	(movie screening finishes) Who gives it 100%? Who gives 75?
Student:	Good.
Ms. Kwon:	**Why was it good?**
Leonardo:	I like the image.
Helena:	She expresses it really well.
Chuck:	She gives the details.
Ms. Kwon:	What kind of details?
Sina:	I like the color.
Abdul:	I like the yellow.
Ms. Kwon:	Wasn't the flower beautiful? What about the sunrise? It made you cry? It was so beautiful.
Mahood:	I will give 75%.
Gambi:	Zero.
Sina:	75.
Ms. Kwon:	How many are giving 75? Eight! While they were working on this months and months, Yelina, Yuria and Malia, they stayed late on Early Release days.
Chuck:	**Are you giving them zero**, Gambi?
Ms. Kwon:	That's not nice.

The vignette shows part of the mini multimodal project evaluation conferencing about three female students' movie titled as 'Adjectives'. Classroom discourse consists of quick turns of condensed, subjective opinions. The teacher is asking the class a short guiding question based on her rubric; she does not exercise authoritarian control of flow

(Bakhtin, 1986); she is in the dialogue. Ms. Kwon's genuine thinking question

(Lightbown & Spada, 1999), "Why was it good?", empowers each student's freedom to

speak out his or her own inner voice. Every one practices a fair right to comment.

Particularly, the ones who usually refrain from participating in class participate in this

evaluation conference; Sina, Mahood, and Abdul voluntarily speak up.

The multimodal filming project seems to make students' silent voices heard. It

seems to influence the students to use their expressive voices externally and socially in

their comfort zone of intensive learning. Multiple, new identities are being practiced in a

real way. While actively participating as an actor, an actress, a camera person, a film

editor, and staff, the students are developing new identities as critics and producers. The

novice critics do not hesitate; they are highly engaged, which seems to indicate that the

apprentices participate in higher mental practices of evaluating and conferencing (Rogoff,

1990) while practicing new, responsible, mature identities, and that also suggests

burgeoning learning or good learning, in itself, toward New York State English as a

Second Language Standard 3--English for critical analysis and evaluation (New York

State Education Department, 2009). Student-critics' subjective, confident critiques flood

the classroom.

Another thing worth commenting regarding the multimodal project evaluation

episode above is the mini moral lesson seamlessly embedded in the dialogue. It is, first,

recognized that the video project seems to motivate the participating students to work

much harder. This hard work, in Ms. Kwon's grading scheme, deserves recognition as

every good 'effort' or 'participation' in this ESL class, and, thus, leads to additional credit

added up to the student's final grade. Here, a student named Gambi gives the film zero

whereas the majority is willing to give it 75 or 80. Another student named Chuck, usually silent, speaks up and says, "Are you giving them zero?" His voice sounds to show disappointment in the poor grader's malpractice of respect that the whole class learns and practices. While practicing this evaluation, students learn to respect and recognize other students' hard work respectfully. The value of hard work is embedded; the moral of respect is also embedded.

Later, at the film festival in June 2009, Yelina, Yuria, and Malia's 'Adjectives' wins the Best Educational Video award. Their collaborative multimodal project is screened on a big screen in a full-housed theater. With the real audience' applause, three student-producers' proud smile shines and fills another space beyond the four walls of classroom.

In summary, Ms. Sunim Kwon's Transformative Mini Conferencing (TMC) takes place in her and her students' mini writing-in-progress conferences in their 'Dark Side' conferencing space, mini moral and learning strategy lessons, and mini filming-in-progress conferences. Through mini conferencing experiences, the students develop to become better writers, better human beings and award-winning film producers.

<center>Implications</center>

Stories of Ms. Kwon and her adolescent ESL class-members, part of which are shared in this paper focused on Transformative Mini Conferencing practices, shed light on what may be kept in mind by interested, responsible stakeholders at varied levels of education so that their raised awareness and commitment may lead to engaging further dialogue and make happen needed changes to reconstruct healthy policies toward equity, access and success for marginalized population and the public good.

First, expert-calibrated, top-down prescriptions on instruction may not guarantee success in new times when diversity and situated dynamics in class feature what is needed here and now. Needed shift in focus may be to empower teachers whose success stories can be heard, and to invest and support in developing pre- and in-service teacher education programs where effective, innovative, situated teaching practices are shared and appropriated through workshops. Networking for good teaching seems the step to be taken with professional development initiatives; it will create opportunities to enliven teaching excellence, available only locally so far, to the broader audience of teaching profession.

Second, access to technology in class may not suffice to ensure quality education. Needed investment is to make developed and known teacher-expert knowledge and skills on how to make a situated use of technology to better help learners in need. Then, follows each teaching practitioner's understanding functional specializations of varied, effective teaching practices, and educated, purposeful hybridizing and seamless connecting multiple repertoires in his or her class.

Third, as glimpsed throughout the discussion in this paper, language and identity are indispensably interwoven. Particularly in the context of education in the U. S. where character or personality education is not deemed to be a major, or even a minor, role of public education, what seems missing is the key bridging the critical components of powerful literacies needed in new times: knowledge and skills embedded in learning English as a global language, and plural identities conducive to fostering successful local and global citizenship.

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