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Deciding When to Step In and When to Back Off: Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction for Adolescent English Learners

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Abstract

Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction invites students to take an inquiry stance toward issues of interest and significance—exploring issues, framing questions, gathering information, synthesizing findings into messages, publishing or presenting their findings, and assessing their efforts before moving on to other inquiries. CMWI can be seen as a rich and dynamic landscape of literacy tasks, routines, practices, materials, and dialogues that invites students to ask questions and to look for answers to those questions. Data from four high-school classrooms illustrate that CMWI teachers made interdependent and layered instructional decisions in response to students' needs, and that they provided mediation toward for primary goals or instructional targets: confidence and risk-taking; concept development and content knowledge; skills and strategies for meaning-making; and linguistic awareness and cross-linguistic transfer.

Ten million or nearly one fifth of U.S. children between the ages of 5 and 17 speak a language other than English at home (U. S. Census Bureau, 2009). This national trend is exemplified by the increasing numbers of English learners in Texas schools, where the English language learner population has more than doubled between 1991 and 2004 (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). In 2007-08, over a quarter of a million Texas students, grades 6-12, were identified as Limited English Proficient (Texas Education Agency, 2008). Unfortunately, most secondary teachers speak only English, and many have not received appropriate professional development to support these students. In fact, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2000), during 1999-2000, only 26% of all teachers received training specific to the needs of English learners. Clearly, the need for research about professional development related to the instructional needs of these students is urgent (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

To address that need, we implemented a three-year project funded by the National Writing Project. An initial review of the research clearly indicated that, to reach project goals, we would have to address multiple complexities both inside and outside the classroom. We did not expect to find a “one-size-fits-most” approach but hoped to develop a theoretically coherent, flexible, and practical framework for writing instruction. From the literature, we synthesized a number of principles and practices into a framework we called Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction (CMWI).

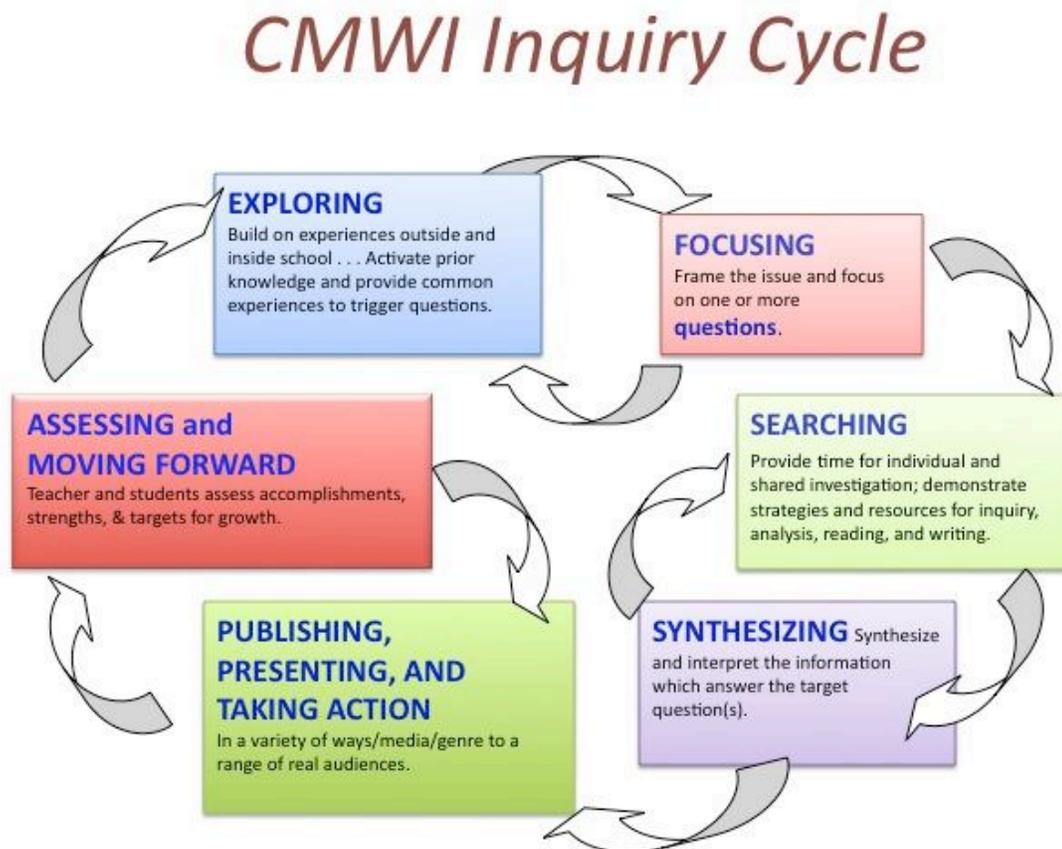
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The four teachers whose work is described below left the 2007 CMWI three-day summer institute with plans about how to integrate these principles and practices into their instruction, and they invited observers into their classrooms to help document those decisions. Here, we focus on two questions that emerged as important for these teachers and for the research team: “When should I step in to provide support for a student? When should I back off and let students work independently?” Those questions are central to what has been called a “gradual release of responsibility” model (Fisher & Frey, 2003; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) and are particularly pertinent for teachers of adolescent English learners (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006).

Background: Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction

Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction (CMWI) is consistent with what Johns (1997) called a socioliterate approach to writing instruction, one in which learners are “constantly involved in research into texts, roles, and contexts and into the strategies that they employ in completing literacy tasks in specific situations” (p. 15). CMWI invites students to take an inquiry stance toward issues of interest and significance (see Figure 1). CMWI can be seen as a rich and dynamic landscape of literacy tasks, routines, practices, materials, and dialogues that invite students to ask questions and to look for answers to those questions. Further, CMWI sets up a series of guided inquiry cycles through which students write messages to authentic audiences for significant purposes. As students engage in these inquiry cycles, the teacher observes them carefully, supporting and mediating for the group and for individual students as necessary.

Figure 1. *Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction Inquiry Cycle* (adapted from Short et al. (1996). *Learning together through inquiry*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.



CMWI principles are consistent with multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 1995a), culturally responsive instruction (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995a; 1995b; Lee, 1993), cultural modeling (Lee, 2007), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970, 2006; Giroux, 1997; Shor, 1992), and “anti-bias education” (Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2006). These approaches are not identical, but they all share strong commitments to a comprehensive view of diversity and to a democratic, dialogic, problem-posing instructional stance. More specifically, CMWI embodies a sociocultural approach to writing instruction (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006; Prior, 2006). Relevant concepts include *communities of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), *apprenticeship* (Rogoff, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988), *funds of knowledge* (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), and *semiotic mediation* (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Wells, 2007). CMWI integrates choice, authentic audience and purpose, as well as an appropriate balance of explicit strategy instruction and student independence (e.g., Atwell, 1998; Burke, 2003; Jago, 2008; Romano, 2000). CMWI principles also recognize that inquiry is integral to literacy

instruction in general and writing instruction in particular (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996; Wilhelm; 2007).

Finally, research about second language acquisition is, of course, critical to CMWI because its goal is to address the unique strengths and needs of English learners/writers. For example, CMWI views a learner's first language as an asset—a resource to support second language learning (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006; Ball, 2006; Fitzgerald, 2006; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). In addition, CMWI teachers build on Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1979; 2009) and academic writing improvement--the ultimate goal of CMWI. CMWI also emphasizes the need to attend to “comprehensible input” (Abt-Perkins & Rosen, 2000; Solomon & Rhodes, 1995). Further, CMWI acknowledges diversity among English learners. Although English learners are often referred to as a homogeneous group (ELLs, LEPs, etc.), they actually bring a wide variety of educational, linguistic, and cultural experiences—all of which have implications for instruction, assessment, and program design (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Finally, CMWI also uses English learners' cultural funds of knowledge (Ball, 2006; Moll, 1994; Slavin & Cheung, 2004; Solomon & Rhodes, 1995).

CMWI Principles

CMWI principles address the need for social interaction, the importance of student choice and ownership, purposeful and challenging tasks that connect to students' lives; attention to students' emerging identities; the significance of communities of practice promoting inquiry, dialogue, and critique.

CMWI Practices

CMWI principles suggest that teachers should engage in various combinations of these research-based practices:

- Inquire, write, and publish with students;
- Build on cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge;
- Use prior knowledge and experience as a foundation for academic tasks;
- Frame significant issues as springboards for inquiry;
- Demonstrate the use of literacy strategies and resources;
- Provide time and support for individual and shared investigation;
- Provide feedback for revision and editing (including support for cross linguistic transfer when appropriate);
- Publish & present findings in a variety of ways to real audiences;
- Assess learners' strengths and targets for growth; use assessment data to inform instruction; and
- Use state and district curricular frameworks to guide instructional decisions.

CMWI instruction can be thought of as a series of inquiry cycles, both small (a single lesson or a conference with a student) and large (an entire unit). Figure 1 represents the recursive phases of this inquiry cycle.

Methodology

The 2007 CMWI professional development project described here consisted of a three-day Invitational Advanced Institute (18 hours), online follow-up support, and four research team meetings throughout the school year (12 hours). During online discussions and follow-up meetings, participants discussed their instructional decisions and students' responses. The research design for Year 1 was to identify and evaluate CMWI instructional tools and practices in these teachers' classrooms and to make revisions in the model for Year 2 professional development.

To document teachers' use of CMWI, five observers collected observational and interview data. Each observer made at least five classroom observations throughout the year. The first observation provided an overview of the classroom and the school environment, and subsequent site visits yielded observational field notes, papers distributed to students, and follow-up interviews with each teacher. Relevant student work was collected when possible.

Each observation session lasted at least one class period. A semi-structured, observational protocol focused observers on three foci: description of the campus and classroom setting, description of the instructional tasks/events within the observational period, and description of the interactions between and among teachers and students. Observers recorded scripted, low-inference field notes and made digital audio recordings. Transcriptions of relevant excerpts from these recordings were added to the field notes.

Follow-up interviews were also recorded and transcribed and included these open-ended questions:

- What happened in this class period that best demonstrates how you are applying the CMWI Principles & Practices?
- What patterns are you noticing in the ways students are responding to these principles and practices? In their writing performance? In their attitudes toward writing?
- What surprises, puzzles, or anomalies are you seeing related to these principles and practices?
- What are one or more specific instructional decisions you have made to adapt or revise your CMWI instruction in response to students' actions or comments?

Observers also asked follow-up questions, including asking for clarification or elaboration regarding teachers' instructional choices during the observed class.

Data also included three letters to the research team during the year about how they enacted CMWI principles and practices. A focus group interview in the summer of 2008 served as a member check of preliminary findings. Student writing samples were also collected, but that analysis is not addressed in this report.

Data analysis conformed to accepted procedures related to inductive analysis of qualitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Field notes, interview notes, and the teacher letters were read multiple times to identify recurrent issues or themes. The emic coding structure moved from low- to higher-inference categories. These emergent categories were grounded in the data but also informed by the teacher researchers' responses during debriefing sessions.

Participant Background

Five females and one male volunteered with the approval of their principals and school districts. Two taught at middle schools (6-8 grades) and four taught at high schools (9-12 grades). The findings presented here focus on the four high school teachers. All of the teachers were Anglo, with English as their first language. Teaching experience ranged from 2-8 years; however, the number of years of experience at the current grade level ranged from 0 – 4 years. All volunteers had previously participated in a National Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute.

The four high school teachers worked in two large school districts in the north Texas region. Their students' first languages included but were not limited to Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Farsi. Funding constraints and curricular mandates influenced placement and instructional decisions for students; all the teachers in this study taught mainstream English Language Arts classes rather than English as Second or Other Language (ESOL) classes. Each teacher chose one class of students to document for this study. Each class had 10-25 students. Classes at both schools were structured in 90-minute blocks that met every other day.

Audrey and Jennifer taught in the same high school during the data collection year, a public high school in a fast-growing suburban community near Fort Worth. It currently serves over 27,000 students in its 36 schools. Enrollment in the district has more than doubled in the past ten years, and it is predicted to double again in the next decade. 50% of students at this school were classified as White, 25% as Hispanic, and approximately 25% from other ethnic groups. Within the school and the district, approximately 5% of all students were designated as Limited English Proficient.

Lori and Colleen taught in the same high school during the data collection year, a public high school in a suburban community of 110,000 people that is home to two universities. The school district serves over 22,000 students in its 30 schools. Within the school, approximately 60% of students were classified as White, about 25% as Hispanic, and 15% represent other ethnic groups. 6% of the students at this school were designated as Limited English Proficient.

Findings: CMWI Mediation for English Learners

During data analysis and member checking, it became clear that the teachers found it difficult to implement the CMWI principles and practices in linear or straightforward ways. For the most part, these teachers used some variation of a reading/writing workshop approach. The teachers were cognizant of curriculum mandates and the need to prepare students for the state-mandated test, but they were also sensitive to students' developmental and affective needs. Beyond this general commonality, the research team initially had difficulty seeing patterns in the data. The

CMWI principles and practices were not immediately observable as discrete decisions or actions. The teachers seemed to be making spontaneous decisions in response to students and had difficulty offering specific rationales. In our preliminary analyses and our debriefing discussions, however, the layered and interdependent complexity of these teachers' instructional decisions emerged as the most salient characteristic of their instruction.

Data suggested that CMWI teachers made complex instructional decisions in response to their perceptions of students' needs--during planning and during instruction, or, as the teachers said, "on the run." The teachers set conditions for learning by instituting predictable yet flexible classroom practices. They provided multiple opportunities for dialogic transactions and used multiple modes for reading and writing. These CMWI teachers consistently increased the amount or degree of individual and group support when needed, and they decreased support when appropriate. It is this differentiated support or mediation, varying in quality and quantity, that is the focus of this report. In the data, we noted four foci or instructional targets for this mediation. From teachers' actions and from their comments, we inferred that they were teaching toward four foundational targets which are foundational to literacy proficiency and academic success:

- confidence and risk-taking;
- concept development and content knowledge;
- skills and strategies for meaning-making; and
- linguistic awareness and cross-linguistic transfer.

Because the English learners in these teachers' classes were not newcomers, we saw evidence of students using L1 primarily as they talked with classmates about the course content, their reading responses, or their writing plans. We did not capture instances when teachers actually taught for cross-linguistic transfer with these particular students, but the teachers encouraged students to use L1 when helpful for meaning-making.

In identifying the instructional targets that guided the teachers' decisions about when and how to provide mediation for individuals and for the whole group, we realized the importance of the questions, "When should I step in? When should I back away and let students work independently?" The following discussion draws on data from the four high school teachers to illustrate how they stepped in and backed off to support these four interrelated learning targets.

Mediating Confidence and Risk-Taking

These teachers repeatedly emphasized how they attempted to acknowledge students' identities, making connections with their personal experiences, and thereby, building confidence as readers and writers. In addition, they saw the interpersonal relationships with students as important to the establishment of their communities of practice. In her reflective letter, Audrey, who taught 9th grade, foregrounded this kind of mediation:

E's (one of Audrey's students) language gaps were obvious from the first day. . . . When she wrote, her language seemed to look more like a child who was stuck in invented spelling but without any knowledge of phonics. After spending a couple of weeks getting to know her, I found out that she has moved around a lot. Originally from Mexico, her family has moved from California to Texas in the last few years.

Audrey goes on to describe the student's learning acceleration throughout the year, to the student's excitement in being given choice in what she read, and how the student was drawn to characters with whom she identified or books that had familiar Spanish words in them. This level of knowledge about students' backgrounds, families, and needs was important for all of the teachers. Each used dialogic transactions, discussions, and writing exercises as opportunities to learn more about their students as well as share about themselves; their classroom communities included both the students and the teacher.

By forming relationships with their students, these teachers were able to learn more, not only about students' personal needs, but also about their academic needs. Audrey explains one way she facilitated dialogue among her students to support their risk taking:

I have to have the desks this way so that everyone can see me and the boards. It also allows them to have more conversation and everyone is not looking at the back of someone's head. (Audrey, Interview)

By providing different degrees and kinds of support for individuals and for groups, these teachers mediated risk taking according to their judgments about what each student needed. Affirmation of student's risk-taking and small group discussion were two types of mediational support noticeable in all teachers' classroom. In fact, the teachers seemed to see this kind of support as foundational to the CMWI principles and practices.

Mediating Content Knowledge and Concept Development

Another target for mediation we saw in these classrooms was content learning or concept development. Teachers used multiple strategies to make content knowledge meaningful and to promote concept development, not simply to expect students to memorize facts. For example, Jennifer, who taught 12th grade, faced the challenge of helping English learners deal with British literature. In an interview, Jennifer said that she used discussions as “anticipatory sets—I get them talking and thinking about something in their own lives and then I move into, ‘Well, let's see what Hamlet thinks about that . . .’” In her letter to the research team at the end of the year, Jennifer explained her approach to Beowulf and other challenging selections from British literature:

With this unit, I wanted to focus on the idea of “culture” and try to find parallels between cultures, even cultures far removed from modern day. Before reading this piece, I asked students to answer the following questions: What communities or cultures are you a member of?

She then asked students to identify and describe places, objects, values or beliefs, and rituals that were important to their community or culture, as well as identify one “monster” feared by their community or culture:

I gave the students information about the culture of the Anglo-Saxons before starting. About halfway through the story of Beowulf, we stopped and answered these six questions again, but this time about the Anglo-Saxons. It seemed to be an effective way to help them think about how history and life conditions affect the values a culture adopts (Jennifer, End-of-Year Reflection).

After this unit, students then wrote definition essays, using the questions about their own community as the topic choices. Students read definition essays from professional writers for examples.

This example also illustrates “stepping back.” Once students were provided with a learning scaffold, example, or other strategy within one particular context, and the teacher was sure students could use it successfully, the teacher then allowed more student autonomy and choice to apply this to learning of other content. The teacher monitored student progress, and those who still needed support were provided other necessary mediators as the unit progressed.

The mediation of content for these adolescents also helped the research team focus more broadly on our definition of “culture” as it applied to culturally mediated writing. In reflecting upon her own implementation of “culturally mediated” instruction, Jennifer reported:

The next time I do this unit, I want to focus on the word “culture” first, as one of my beginning-of-the-year activities. I want to come up with a lesson that defines the word or at least explores the way in which this word could be defined. I envision some kind of poster hanging in my room with an exploration of this term, so that I can refer to it throughout the year. (Jennifer, End-of-Year Reflection)

Indeed, by examining culture only through a narrow lens of ethnicity or race, we neglect to consider teen culture, popular culture, or the myriad groups to which students belong. By making learning relevant to students by connecting to their many cultures, these teachers maximized student engagement and content learning.

Mediating Skills and Strategies for Meaning Construction

A third target or focus for instructional mediation focused on meaning construction. Colleen, who taught 9th grade, emphasized this kind of mediation in her teaching decisions. While reading *Romeo and Juliet*, Colleen mediated students’ meaning construction with a graphic novel, an adaptation of Shakespeare’s play. She combined reading, retelling, and discussion. For example, she and the students discussed why the illustrator represented the characters and action in particular ways. In conjunction with this shared reading, Colleen had the students write learning logs from one character’s perspective. As they wrote these entries, she moved around the room, talking quietly with students as they worked. She was stepping in to help all the students with the graphic novel and individuals as they wrote these responses.

Colleen also explained how she used mentor texts to as a mediational tool:

. . . we all made life maps to help generate ideas for personal writing. Then we looked at five different examples of memoirs and talked about how the details in each contributed to the author's voice. We then set to work writing. A few days after we let the dust settle, we revisited our memoirs and took them through the revision step (Colleen, Interview).

The teachers in this study, like Colleen, consistently made conscious instructional decisions that built upon students' cultural knowledge whenever possible. They used multiple genres and mentor texts to illustrate strategies and provide examples. By providing students with many different tools and teaching them how to select among them, these teachers provided mediation for meaning-making strategies that students could then apply on their own.

Mediating Linguistic Awareness and Cross-Linguistic Transfer

We define this category as a teacher's explanations or demonstrations of one or more linguistic systems (graphophonemics, syntax, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization). Mediating linguistic awareness is particularly important for English learners, as they learn to use their first language as a resource for learning a second language to build proficiency in L2. Lori, who taught 10th grade, explained it this way:

As part of my writing instruction, students talk to each other about their writing. . . As they talk with each other, they are able to help their peers with weaknesses in understanding and writing. They want to know something is correct before they write it down on paper. My preferred method for grammar instruction is to read interesting texts and analyze those for the author's use of the conventions of English. I am [also] using my students' compositions to illustrate both the correct and incorrect use of grammar. . . . (Lori, September letter)

Lori mediated for her students by providing them with relevant examples, including other English learners, and by providing them with a classroom community that allowed them to make mistakes and learn from those errors. At the end of the year, Jennifer reflected on her students' needs in this area:

My students still struggle to construct meaningful sentences. I think I will incorporate the use of mentor sentences next year, drawing from the work of Harry Noden and Jeff Anderson. Because they struggle with syntax in their writing, I know that complex syntax is a barrier to their reading of difficult texts.

Instructional Landscape Diagram

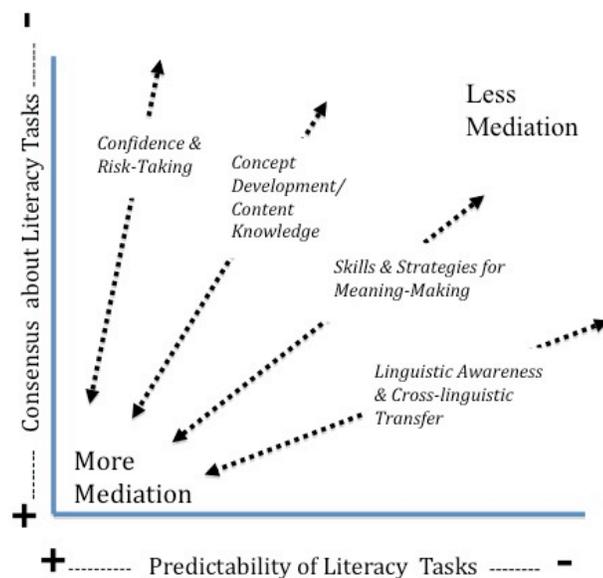
These teachers were all acutely aware of their students' needs, and they used formative and summative assessments to inform their practice. In the state where these teachers work, a high-stakes accountability system has been in place for more than a decade so students' test scores (and the various subscores) are a ubiquitous data source. These were most relevant for Audrey, Colleen, and Lori, who were teaching students who had not yet passed the tests required for

graduation. Jennifer's 12th graders had already passed that test. In terms of classroom-based assessment, these teachers relied heavily on informal observations of students as they moved through the writing process, as well as evaluations of the students' writing products. As mainstream classroom teachers, these four were not particularly aware of the English learners' performance on the language assessments used for program placement. The ELL specialist on each campus typically administered those assessments, and the teachers did not mention using that information to inform their instruction. Further research about the use of language assessment would be useful.

Once goals were determined, necessary supports were found and provided to those students (sometimes only a few, sometimes the whole class). Often, these instructional decisions were made mid-lesson, as teachers observed students' work and made adjustments to their lessons on the run.

In our debriefing sessions, we talked about the complex moves we saw these teachers making to meet student needs. We began talking about this movement in and out--teachers' increasing the support when needed and decreasing it when possible. The instructional landscape diagram (Figure 2) was generated by the research team (researchers and teachers) and proved a useful tool to explain this complex mediation. This diagram was adapted from Human System Dynamics, which applies principles of complexity thinking to human systems (Glenda Eoyang, personal communication, November 15, 2008).

Figure 2. *Instructional landscape representing how teachers mediated four instructional targets contributing to academic writing proficiency.*



This figure represents the “instructional landscape” which the students and teacher negotiate as they read and write together. The horizontal axis of this figure represents a continuum from “Highly Predictable” to “Unpredictable” literacy tasks, practices, routines, *etc. that comprise the instructional landscape*. The vertical axis represents a continuum from “High Consensus” to “No Consensus” on those literacy tasks, practices, routines, *etc.* In other words, when the instructional landscape is highly predictable and when there is a great deal of agreement on what to do, students are working with a high level of support or mediation. The lower left of this figure refers to the instructional decisions that give students a great deal of support--the convergence of familiar tasks and agreement on the expectations. The upper right area represents less predictability and more open-ended tasks. We saw these four teachers move around this “landscape,” to offer varying kinds and degrees of support to facilitate individual and collective learning. This diagram became a useful for our discussions about the data and in our debriefing sessions with the students. It helped us visualize about what Englert, Mariage, and Dunsmore (2006) call a “highly orchestrated set of teaching moves” (p. 209). Similar to what we saw in our observational data, these authors described a writing teacher who “used a combination of *step-in* and *step-back* moves that parallel the relational roles of teachers in an apprenticeship relationship” (p. 210).

This landscape diagram also triggered discussions about which instructional practices offered mediation for each of the four instructional targets as these teachers “stepped in” and “backed away.” We also found this graphic useful in visualizing overlapping and interdependent individual and collective zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Table 1 resulted from our discussions of the particular instructional practices documented in the data. No five-step scheme or scripted lesson plan could offer such “just-in-time” and individualized mediation for language and literacy learning.

Table 1. *Instructional Practices Observed as Mediation for Particular Learning Domains*

Focus for Mediation	Instructional Practice Observed in CMWI Classrooms
Confidence and Risk-taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life maps • Autobiographies and memoirs • Literature discussions • Reader response journals • Student choice • Informal conversations • Assignments that use funds of knowledge
Concept Development and Content Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word walls • Writing and talk about background knowledge • Multiple modes to mediate knowledge • Posters, charts, graphic organizers, etc.
Skills and Strategies for Meaning-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think alouds • Strategy lessons

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text annotation/sticky notes • Shared Reading • Guided reading
Linguistic Awareness and Cross-linguistic Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charts and posters • Mnemonics • Mentor Texts • Informal conversations/conferences

Conclusions and Implications

To conclude, our most salient finding about how these teachers enacted CMWI principles and practices over one school year is that they managed to orchestrate mediation toward these four instructional goals or targets contributing to language learning and literacy proficiency: 1) confidence and risk-taking; 2) concept development and content learning; 3) meaning-making skills and strategies; and 4) linguistic awareness and cross-linguistic transfer. We can point to three interrelated conclusions based on this finding.

First, these teachers clearly recognized the diversity among their students labeled “adolescent English learners.” These teacher researchers (and their data) reminded us that each student is unique and that no instructional approach will work for all students who happen to be learning English as their second, third, or fourth language in school. Second, these teachers not only recognized student diversity, but they attempted to build on the identities, knowledge, and skills that their students brought to the classroom. Third, these teachers did not simply focus on ethnicity or linguistic differences, but also used popular culture, technology, and students’ personal interests as opportunities for mediation.

Further research should focus on detailed documentation about when and how teachers mediate toward each of these goals or targets through particular instructional practices, assignments, routines, materials, etc., but also within their conversations with individuals and groups of students. Of course, further research should attempt to link these instructional decisions with data about changes in student writing. The actual influence on student achievement was not considered in the analysis presented here but is, of course, our ultimate goal. Future research should document whether deliberate attempts to mediate these four kinds of learning leads to measureable improvement in students’ reading and writing proficiency.

These findings also suggest revisions for CMWI. Specifically, CMWI principles and practices might be refined to delineate more clearly how these teachers invite their students to take an inquiry stance and how they enact both short and long-term inquiry cycles. These findings prompted specific revisions for Year 2 CMWI. In Year 2 we expanded the summer institute to five days; we expanded the online support; and we ensured that the role of the observers was seen as primarily supportive--not evaluative. We also used revised versions of the inquiry cycle (Figure 1) and the instructional landscape diagram (Figure 2).

In terms of implications for professional development and instruction, we would offer the following general recommendations consistent with the CMWI principles and practices:

- Invite/encourage students to take an inquiry stance toward content objectives. Begin each daily lesson, each assignment, each instructional unit, each grading period with a one or two open-ended questions to frame students' thinking.
- Invite students to use their cultural and linguistic resources as a foundation for new learning. Giving students choices about what they read and write is just one of many possible instructional moves that invite students to use their cultural funds of knowledge for academic purposes.
- Look for authentic audiences, texts, tasks, and contexts. These will give students reasons to engage in school-based literacy and learning experiences.
- Watch and listen to students; look for growth; and build on strengths.

Table 1 lists specific instructional strategies that we observed these teachers using. This is, of course, not an exhaustive list but suggests how teachers might enact CMWI principles and practices. Teachers who are moving with their students across and through the learning landscape will adapt and adopt practices like these to meet the needs of their students.

Growing numbers of adolescent English learners are striving to be successful in academic settings, and, as literacy educators, we know that the stakes are high for these students. The need to support them has never been more urgent. This study clearly suggests that we cannot look to formulaic programs but that we must ensure that knowledgeable and confident writing teachers have relevant information and enough autonomy to make complex instructional decisions to mediate language and literacy learning for these young adults. Solidly grounded both in sociocultural principles (Englert, Mariage, & Dunsmore, 2006; Prior, 2006) and in classroom experience, CMWI offers a framework to help teachers meet this urgent challenge.

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