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The Roles of Qualitative Inquiry in Literacy Education

: A Discussion with Case Studies

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I. Introduction

Thus far, the methodological discussions within the field of Korean language arts (KLA) education are significant in that they not only expand the subject area of the research on KLA education but also serve as the basis for re-examining conventional research topics from various perspectives. Over time, consensus on the need for elaborating on research methods specifically for KLA education spread during the 2000s (Cho, 2005; Jeong, 2001; Kim, 2005; Yoon, 2001). It has led to the establishment of the identity of KLA education and academic progress over the last two decades. On the other hand, concerns also emerged that the foundation of the research methodology lacked comprehensiveness (Kim, 2017; Yoon, 2014).

This study intends to discuss an important aspect of qualitative research in the field of literacy education. Simply put, how can the observation, analysis, and reflection on advances in language arts classrooms be conducted? What is the distinctive value of qualitative inquiry for literacy education? What type of analytic method can be used for both reliability and validity?

Qualitative data are well-founded and serve as the foundation for the majority of the description of human behaviors. Qualitative data frequently lead to serendipitous findings or new integrated concep-

tual ideas with undeniable, fascinating, and profound insights. This study acknowledges that the elements of an excellent qualitative inquiry drastically vary according to the ideologies, epistemologies, or/and beliefs of people about literacy research. Moreover, the evaluation of qualitative inquiry is dependent on not only theoretical perspectives but also contexts, situations, or research circumstances.

As quantitative research failed to explore the complex dynamics of the classroom, qualitative research approaches began to attract the attention of literacy scholars in the investigation of various issues such as reading/writing development, reading-writing connections, and the social dimensions of literacy practices. This shift helped to discover additional extensive, intense, and detailed classroom observations and illustrations, which widened and deepened the understanding of ongoing literacy environments. One of the distinct features of qualitative inquiry was mostly open-ended in terms of not only data but also analytic approaches. In other words, qualitative research frequently relied on an open-ended consideration of literacy practices instead of predetermined measures. Given the fact that literacy practices are influenced by the socio-cognitive, social, and multiple linguistic factors of learners, the need emerges to explore multifaceted perspectives, topics, and questions.

In contrast to the quantitative approach, qualitative studies are mainly concerned with the subjectivities of literacy practices instead of their generalizability and/or objectivity. Fundamentally, qualitative research tends to emphasize explorative, introspective, and reflective aspects instead of pursuing generality, objectivity, and universality. Given the objective of illustrating the value, role, and epistemology of qualitative inquiry, a comprehensive description of literacy practices would be helpful for understanding the manner in which focal teachers and students interact in a particular manner. Therefore, the study selects focal classrooms, which discuss a telling case (Mitchell, 1984) for illustrating the particular aspects of complex, multifaceted, and multiple dimensions of literacy practices.

II. Theoretical Framework and Related Research

1. Situated learning

With a partial response to the criticism of traditional teaching in delivering abstract knowledge, situated learning theory evolved as an alternative to the current cognitive and psychological paradigms of knowledge and learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed that learning occurs via actual behaviors in which learners are engaged instead of separate approaches for obtaining abstract information, which challenges the traditional ideas of learning and acquisition of knowledge. In contrast to Lave and Wenger (1991), who shifted the focus from decontextualized knowledge to learning as processes in which learners could acquire knowledge by engaging in actual practices, conventional cognitivists presume that learners could transfer the obtained abstract knowledge into different contexts. This conceptual shift provides new views on teaching and learning. Lave and Wenger contend that learning occurs among community members as well as inside the minds of individuals. Therefore, the relationships between people and their social environment are essential for comprehending the intricate nature of teaching and learning.

Situated learning is frequently linked to the concept of Vygotsky of the zone of proximal development and activity theory. Lave and Wenger (1991) emphasize the relevance of learning environments in providing learners with opportunities to learn through involvement in real activities, which utilize the tools of the discipline community in a contextual manner, while discussing different interpretations of the work of Vygotsky (p. 49). To demonstrate their point, Lave and Wenger use the example of young tailors working on garment and cutting fabric in relation to how they learn. By gradually mastering tailoring and the social norms governing the industry, rookie tailors eventually evolve into specialists. Thus, the contextual settings for

learning, which are prepared to enable students to achieve their goals in real-world situations, are a crucial component of learning (Lave, 1988).

Orr (1996) demonstrates the manner in which peer actions may result in knowledge growth in contrast to the theory of learning by Lave and Wenger's (1991) by using the case of a beginner tailor, which suggests that learning occurs through interaction with experts. Thus, highlighting that Orr revealed how informal contacts among peers may lead to learning is vital. A large portion of learning could involve implicit, nearly imperceptible, and tacit improvisation. Given that the impacts of information sharing within informal groups on learning have been identified, these findings offer insights into the notion of communities of practice.

The concept of "legitimate peripheral participation," which Lave and Wenger (1991) described as learners "inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of community" (p. 29), is a crucial distinction. By participating in the practices of experts, learners acquire knowledge from the standpoint of valid peripheral involvement. In the writing classroom, students work on assignments and participate in group conversations facilitated by the teacher, such that students may envision how seasoned authors approach writing. According to Lave and Wenger, instead of concentrating on individuals, the appropriate analytic unit would be interactions between a teacher and students or among small student groups. This notion is significant because, in their opinion, learning cannot be reduced to learning by doing or to being positioned "as it were some independently reifiable process that just happened to be located there" (p. 35).

2. Development of situated learning theory

Greeno (1997) contends that situated instruction and learning,

as a social practice, do not need to always occur in group settings through a comparison of cognitive and situated learning views. Greeno claims that students can act in a social or group situation without physical engagement in group activities. The author contributed to the notion of learners as individuals within systems by describing an example of a student educating himself using a textbook, which exerted an impact on the enhanced conceptions of the community of practice by Wenger (1998).

Alternatively, Wenger (1998) shifted his focus from legitimate peripheral involvement and apprenticeship to communities of practice and identity in his book entitled *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. He advanced the traditional notions of communities of practice as groups that connect and cohere through *mutual engagement* on *joint enterprises* and share a repertoire of means for doing things. Toward this end, he extended the earlier ideas of situated learning (e.g., Greeno, 1997; Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Orr, 1996). The work of Wenger represents a significant advancement in the debate of communities of practice and situated learning, because the prior literature did not provide a precise description of a community of practice.

In a book entitled *Cultivating Community of Practice*, Wenger et al. (2002) once again indicate a change in the viewpoint of Wenger on the concept of communities of practice. This change is significant to the notion of communities of practice because it also represents the body of work that has been published to date in addition to reflecting Wenger's shift in thought from prior works. The description "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4) is used to redefine the concept of communities of practice. The main distinction between the revised idea and that presented in the book in 1998 is the emphasis on information acquisition and dissemination over task completion as the main goal. In light of this discussion, the coordinated environ-

ment does not include gathering students for a shared endeavor, as stated in the previous writings of Wenger. Instead, it pertains to assembling student groups for related or parallel tasks. Although the idea of community remains relatively vague, it may serve as the basis for empirical studies on the formation of groups and places related to communities of practice (Cox, 2005).

3. Limitations and implications

The perception that such a powerful conceptual idea about learning seemingly disregards certain crucial components of learning is conspicuously lacking from the view of Lave and Wenger. What guidelines should be followed while creating a positive learning community? In addition, how may a student learn in a setting that emphasizes practice? Lave and Wenger appear to illustrate scenarios in which learning can occur, but readers may be left wondering how it does so. Thus, the study infers that additional research into their theory by examining communities of practice will help to elaborate how instructors design activities for pupils, such that they gain literacy skills. Lave and Wenger regarded the management of the transparency of knowledge as useful for the organization of circumstances for beginner learners given that novices have no clue on which aspects to focus and into which places to look, notwithstanding the lack of a full explanation of each stage. Additionally, the current explanation of the idea of Lave and Wenger does not adequately describe the difficulties encountered by learners. Therefore, a possibility exists that additional studies may be required to elaborate on the decision-making procedure for regulating the openness of knowledge to enable students to learn through community engagement.

Although Wenger (1998) provides a very clear conceptual idea about communities of practice, critics (e.g., Cox, 2005; Pemberton et al., 2007; Vann & Bowker, 2001) argue that communities of practice are seemingly a natural collection of linkages through internal logics.

The issue is that outside sources frequently influence the actual status of a community. To be more explicit, the pressure from school and department culture, as well as large-scale test assessment, may heavily impact real instruction.

Haneda (2006) also questioned the notion of community and various forms of learning (2006). Except for butcher apprentices, readers were unable to locate any problems or conflicts related to the process of becoming a community member in the examples of communities provided by Lave and Wenger (1998). In addition, a minimal discussion is conducted on the disparities between novices and seasoned members. This scenario necessitates thorough research and comprehension due to the complexities of numerous aspects of engagement in communities of practices.

4. Qualitative study: What does it mean for classroom research?

At first glance, qualitative fieldwork could be viewed as the procedure of *data collection*, to a certain extent, when compared with other mixed and quantitative research methods. The reason is that qualitative researchers would return home from a field or classroom with collected *data*, field notes, documents, and audio and video records. However, qualitative fieldwork is more similar to *a learning process* instead of data collection (Blommaert & Jie, 2010).

For instance, when various teachers educate same-grade students on a uniform subject, the teaching philosophies, techniques, concerns, modes of communication, and rapport of diverse teachers would develop different cultures. Even a teacher that relies on the same approach for teaching frequently experiences different cultures according to varying classrooms or students. What, then, are qualitative data and qualitative inquiry? Qualitative research has emerged and developed across disciplines over the past five decades. As each discipline has its distinct goals, questions, methods, and practices, a qualitative inquiry has been re-interpreted according to different

contexts. These notions have led to the complexity of well-defined qualitative research.

Scholars have used classroom study to describe a research technique that involves monitoring occurrences and occurring in the classroom and thoroughly reporting them (Heath & Street, 2008; Pacheco, 2010). According to this viewpoint, qualitative researchers spend more time in the classroom observing the instruction of teachers, reactions of students, and interactions between the teacher and students compared with other mixed or quantitative research methods (Athanases & Heath, 1995). These characteristics are included in the duties of qualitative researchers:

1. The social connections between a teacher and pupils, as well as their behaviors and occurrences in the classroom, are examined as thoroughly as possible. This observation cannot be conducted in an experimental setting.
2. Researchers should challenge the many implicit codes and assumptions made by participants.
3. Data collection is typically tricky and unstructured. Researchers would capture audio and/or video, write field notes, and acquire documents as part of the data collection process.
4. Concentrating on a very small group of participants, the researcher creates in-depth descriptions of them to learn what they signify to the participants.
5. Each researcher has a unique background, social position, and personal perspective. These characteristics would influence their interpretation of data and the reflection of students on classroom activities.

5. Why qualitative inquiry?

Many researchers are aware or agree that testing hypotheses through quantitative or pre- to post-experiments is a scientific, rigorous, and high-level methodology; however, qualitative methods, such as qualitative observation, interviews, and the observation of how

people speak in their daily lives, are frequently viewed as low-level ones (Agar, 2013). Researchers in the domains of linguistics, language, or literacy instruction use conventional science laboratory methods in their study as a result of this historical misunderstanding of hierarchy, that is, the comparison of groups in streamlined, controlled environments created by researchers.

The problem is that, living, acquiring language, and teaching language do not occur in isolated, decontextualized, or laboratory conditions. A researcher frequently concentrates on numerous variables in decontextualized situations to determine causal links. However, other elements may influence results or effects in real settings outside of experimental circumstances such as beliefs, wants, interpretations, and backgrounds (Smagorinsky et al., 2010).

A researcher specifically seeks to test a hypothesis, which is similar to the case of any scientific study, from the standpoint of experimental methodology. Agar (2013), who critiqued the propensity of various research techniques, poses the question, "What if you don't have a theory or a hypothesis? What if you just want to explore how the world works?" (p. 8).

Without consideration of controlled variables and measurements, for instance, Blaise (2005) aimed to investigate how young children's identities are constructed by observation. With an ethnographic view, she observed and collected data on a kindergarten as a learning community, a teacher, and 26 children. Blaise explicitly described the manner in which she designed a self-reflective research plan and her role as a researcher during the observation.

Taken together, for this research, I opt to use an ethnographic lens to address the research question to collect empirical data in a naturalistic setting (Heller, 1997). Traditional experiments have attributes of control and experimental groups, settings such as a laboratory and objective measurement. In comparison, ethnography is context-specific and allows room for multiple perspectives (Frank, 1999). The ethnographic lens was helpful to me when exploring the unique-

ness and spontaneity of interactions in the high school classrooms, understanding epistemologies and teaching methods of writing, investigating the contexts of schooling, and grasping the conceptions of teachers about writing instruction.

III. Research Method

Two questions give direction to my project:

1. How will approaches to writing foster narrative and argumentative writing among students?
2. How do the epistemologies of the teachers from the instruction, assessment, and learning of writing over the course of a school year?

Those approaches are based on the guiding principles of a structured process approach. The study is conducted in language arts classrooms across two school contexts, where teachers differ in terms of epistemologies for writing instruction.

1. Research design

As discussed above, a valuable approach to more fully grasping practices of teaching and learning writing in the classroom setting is to conduct a qualitative study exploring different modes of instructions by identifying, appreciating, comparing, and analyzing classroom portraitures. One approach to investigate writing instruction is 'qualitative research' with a set of connotations. In the field of literacy education, varieties of 'qualitative' research with key features of ethnographic perspectives have become widespread in recent decades.

I designed this study as qualitative research with an ethnographic perspective (Agar, 2013; Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Purcell-Gates, 2004).

I conduct it over the course of ten weeks in two ninth-grade English language arts classrooms. At the beginning of the study, two English language arts teachers and I visited with them to learn about their current knowledge and understanding of teaching writing, which led to teacher-generated curricular and instructional plans that would be implemented in the coming months. Lessons in the classroom were videotaped to document how their major writing units engaged students in learning to write and how teachers with varied epistemologies for teaching writing handled the process. Classroom observations, field notes, teaching materials, and student written work will all be collected as data. Triangulating findings will be aided by interviews with teachers and students. The data analysis shown below was done in collaboration with the teacher participants.

2. Participants and school sites

Two teachers, Ms. Foss and Ms. Glen (all names of participants and schools are pseudonyms), recruited in this study had the experience of participating in a larger study of English language arts teachers to examine their instructional practices for student achievement in reading and writing. From the prior research, professional development, and meetings, I identified teachers who (1) had revealed greater attention to teaching writing, (2) taught in similar demographic school settings, and (3) worked with the same grade high school students.

From the end of August to the mid-October, I observed these two teachers twenty-five (Ms. Foss) and twenty-nine days (Ms. Glen) respectively. Ms. Foss was a teacher at Hampton High School, a suburban school for students in grades nine through twelve. Hampton is situated in a big, affluent, and high-achieving district. Her fourth-period language arts class participated in the study. The majority of the student population at Hampton are white (around 77%); the remaining demographic is split between Asian (5%), Black (8%), Hispanic (6%), and multi-racial (4%). Most students come from the middle class

families. Ms. Foss was in her eighth year of high school teaching and had a master's degree in education.

Ms. Glen, another Manchester High School ninth-grade teacher, and her seventh-period language arts students also took part in the research. Ms. Glen has a master's degree and 25 years of high school teaching experience. Manchester is in a high-achieving suburban school district in the Midwestern United States. Manchester pupils are mostly White (76%), Asian (18%), and Hispanic (2%). The majority of pupils come from middle-class or upper-middle-class backgrounds.

Table 1. Class demographics and teachers

	Ms. Foss, 9th-grade class	**Ms. Glen, 9th-grade class**
Class demographics	24 students: 20 White, 2 African-American, 2 Hispanic	24 students: 18 White, 3 Hispanic, 2 Asian, 1 African-American
Teacher demographics	White, Master's degree	White, Master's degree

3. Data collection

I utilized an ethnographic approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the classroom circumstances and practices that happened to explore the classroom culture and instructional strategies for writing in these two separate classes. I monitored each teacher's classroom on a regular basis to document the variety of patterns and routines teachers formed in their classroom settings for teaching and learning writing. I gathered recorded video/audio files, teaching resources, student work, and interviews with teachers for each instructional unit. These data manifested teaching practices by two teachers with differing epistemologies for teaching writing. I organized all data and transcribed key events chronologically.

During both instructional units from the late-August to the mid-October, daily observations of the 50-minute classes were conducted.

Observing these two different classrooms, I wrote field notes, noting (1) each lesson's routines and patterns, particularly for writing instruction; (2) emphasized areas of writing; and (3) each teacher's orchestration of activities/materials, such as modelling, teacher conferences, small group works, and worksheets. I also observed how students interacted with the teaching, assignments, activities, and supports in the classroom. Any prospective course of action that seemed to have an impact on writing habits was highlighted. A description of each instructional unit is included in Table 2.

Documents of the writing tasks, the student works produced, and any supplemental materials were collected. These data were examined in order to comprehend instructional assistance, instructor feedback, and levels of intellectual difficulty. In this study, I analyze how different writing-teaching epistemologies were used by teachers to plan activities and resources that students used to practice writing.

Interviews with teachers were conducted to explore their instructional decisions and instructional practices occurred during the classroom observation, to understand what next steps they might use for student writing development, and to comprehend how their various writing instruction epistemologies operate. These four 30-minute interviews revealed each teacher's teaching philosophies for writing instruction, understanding of their students as writers, and their underlying assumptions behind their instructional supports.

Table 2. Characteristics of Instructional units observed

	Ms. Foss	Ms. Glen
Epistemology	Presentational	Natural process
Length of unit	Twenty-five 50-min. periods	Twenty-nine 50-min. periods
Writing task	Argumentative essay	Narrative essay
Instructional focus	Including textual evidence in a paragraph	Developing writing habits Demonstrating understanding of stories using literary devices

Emphasized areas of writing	Prewriting Drafting Publication	Prewriting Drafting Publication
Instructional supports	Brainstorming Mini-lessons Models Guided practice Teacher conference	Brainstorming Teacher conference Providing academic language

IV. Findings

Key moments from each class are presented to explore two classroom contexts comparatively. These moments illustrate how two teachers construct classroom culture for writing instruction, aligned supports, and activities for students' writing development. As noted in Table 2, both teachers led students engaged in prewriting, drafting, and publication phrases, using brainstorming and sharing. Along with these practices, different instructional supports were provided in each class. These structures and practices of teaching and learning writing were consistent across instructional units, allowing students to feel comfortable and become familiar with these practices. Ms. Foss stated that her goal of these practices and structures was so that teaching 9th-grade students this year would;

> Ms. Foss: I don't know how well it will work for argument but I need to think about it. A little bit of writing based upon the *Notice and Note*.[1] I'm hoping that kind of ties that when if, like so with the *Notice and Note*, have them realize that we're studying this to help understand the plot and what's important out of a story, and then kind of use that.

Ms. Foss wanted to move beyond what she did last year by drawing on structured-process principles suggested in the book, *The Dy-*

1 *Notice and Note* (Beers & Probst, 2012) introduces strategies for close reading.

namics of Writing Instruction by Smagorinsky and his colleagues. Before reading this book, she repeatedly stated that she had no pedagogical knowledge about writing instruction, as she had no opportunities to learn how to teach writing during her teacher preparation program. Reading this book and sharing principles constructed by Applebee and Hillocks (Applebee, 2000; Hillocks, 1986), it seems that she began to make sense of the processes and features of writing instruction as a social practice. During the tragedy in the bathroom activity,[2] she and her students worked to co-construct understandings of how basic elements of argument functioned. These initial activities emphasized the importance of basic elements, forms, and preset structure for the writing task. Highlighting the significance of the textual evidence, Ms. Foss provided multiple opportunities to her students to gather textual evidence for their writing tasks and to organize their collected textual evidence using a graphic organizer worksheet before drafting. After students worked in small groups of two to four to share pieces of their evidence and initial ideas, they wrote their one paragraph essay independently as a practice for a major argumentative writing assignment they will be assigned.

Compared with the previous year's, Ms. Foss focused more on writing as a social practice.[3] She noted that:

> Ms. Foss: I'm going to introduce argumentative writing and claims with the short stories. But really, the first major one in the way I want to change that is like I want them to do the thinking in the groups like where there's a lot of group work, where they're talking through the arguments with group members, and to kind of try to make the writing more social. I think they [book authors] do pay attention to the different

2 This is an activity for teaching elements of the argument such as thesis, evidence, reason, counterclaim, and rebuttal. Like a lawyer presenting evidence to a jury, students learn how to support their claim with facts.

3 It should be noted that I already observed her instruction for a year before this project.

ways of writing, also establishing the rubric for each of the assignments and kind of giving the sort of example papers having kids you know use the rubric to look at the example papers.

She stressed the need for a changed direction to facilitate group works to capitalize on the beauty of collaboration and scaffolding among group members. I hoped these group activities also functioned as an audience for students' navigating texts, opinions, and ideas for writing. It is true that the students were given more opportunities to share their ideas within small groups than the students Ms. Foss taught last year. However, only a few students engaged in exchanging their ideas, and others stared at their books and didn't talk as Ms. Foss expected. Although argumentative writing is a major task for this Autumn semester for Ms. Foss's 9th-grade students, she appeared to have much more confidence and comfort in teaching reading. To her, writing might be a tool for demonstrating an understanding of reading texts rather than a way of constructing new knowledge because Ms. Foss targeted instruction on short stories and literature using writing as an explicit space to evaluate students' understanding:

Ms. Foss: At least for the first semester, I am hoping to do the *Notice and Note* for literature, argumentative writing, *Of Mice and Men* with a big argumentative writing, and then, we'll see how much time we have left and I'm going to try something new with independent reading. I think argument goes well with the *Notice and Notes*, and I think argumentative writing goes really well with *Of Mice and Men*. I think there's just so much to argue in that book, and its short, so I think the kids can really get into it, and there are so many great discussions like, I feel like I've kind of started, you know, like every year I feel like I get a little bit better facilitating the discussions.

What literature will be taught functioned as a beginning point for Ms. Foss to plan lessons? Writing might play an important role, but this could be used just as a tool for checking students' understanding.

Ms. Foss focused on the same strategies from the book, *Notice and Note*, across reading and writing lessons and orchestrated materials and activities in order to optimize learning by repeated practices and exposures.

Ms. Glen, on the other hand, acted more as a facilitator to create a setting where students could write every day and feel at ease as writers. To provide appropriate one-to-one conferences to each individual student, for the first three weeks, she focused on figuring out her 9th-grade students' status in terms of writing skills.

> Ms. Glen: Some kids will come in being able to write a pretty strong, four to five paragraph essay. Other kids I can see straight away, they only wrote a paragraph. So, at the conference, I will say "I noticed that you wrote a paragraph. How do you normally approach essays? Is it successful for you, what do you think?" As a result, it provides me a chance to assess, and typically, those students who dislike writing the most are weak in this area, so it gives me a chance to assess what they already know before having a serious conversation with them about it.

She emphasized the value of student voices and the facilitator. Another noteworthy is that she identified herself as a writer, not just a teacher who evaluates students' writing. Therefore, the writing activity in her classroom is valued in students' development as writers.

Ms. Glen focused on teaching literary terms across reading and writing lessons and encouraged her students to present their analysis and understanding of stories by using the literary terms they had learned. Both teachers, Ms. Foss and Ms. Glen, attempted to combine reading and writing in their instructions. Many participatory classroom practices were orchestrated to engage students in sharing their ideas as a prewriting activity in both classrooms. These practices allowed students to have repeated opportunities to practice pre-writing skills such as brainstorming, outlining, and collecting evidence.

Both teachers' instructional practices looked similar in that they

focused on literature across the first two months of this semester. On the other hand, Ms. Foss identified herself as a reading teacher and revealed less confidence in teaching writing, while Ms. Glen identified herself as a writer.

> Ms. Glen: I think the biggest impact for me in writing was working with the National Library Project, because my viewpoint on approaching writing as a writer and not as a teacher was changed as a result. I reflect on my writing process and how I may improve. Compared to simply reading academic material and trying something out, it puts me in a different position. I consider how I might accomplish this and how, if there are issues, I could resolve them. How can I improve as a writer?

Ms. Glen's epistemologies for teaching and learning writing were influenced in different ways by the aforementioned views about teaching writing and identity, especially when compared with Ms. Foss. Ms. Foss provided formal writing instruction, focusing on appropriate forms and structures explicitly. However, Ms. Glen focused on eliminating psychological barriers that keep students from beginning writing.

> Ms. Glen: So, starting a piece of writing is one of the challenges that young writers face. I will thus devote a class hour to various brainstorming tactics, merely a list of ideas that they can discuss and perhaps work on in small groups. I have a lot of creative ideas that I could use to get them thinking about a narrative themselves.

Without given explicit writing instruction about forms and structures that would be accepted, students in Ms. Glen's classroom had to guess appropriate forms and textual features through analysis of exemplary writing samples. Another reason Ms. Glen lets her students to expand in their ways in terms of writing development is that she believes mimicking in writing is an essential aspect of students' writ-

ing development.

> Ms. Glen: I gave instructions but it's not so structured. I said go to these websites, check out what the obituaries look like, and they're from New York Times and Chicago Star which tend to be very detailed and for more obituaries the celebration of somebody is death not quite long. I think mimicking in writing is important for freshmen. It seems to me that a lot of them just not a lot about many times they, writing is really hard to get started. So, the mimicking I found very useful. And I think it's less scary for students. Even if some students still ask, "How many sentences are in the first paragraph?", I won't even attempt to respond to them because that doesn't align with my philosophy. But I get the usefulness for some kids. And I understand why teachers use it.

As students began working on a narrative essay, Ms. Glen focused on constructing writing culture that students could feel comfortable with writing every day. Instead of gradual release of responsibility to identify proper textual features of writing as a final product, Ms. Glen wanted her students to practice to improve their writing by providing many opportunities to work on writing in the classroom period. Although she gave a sort of freedom to her students to write as they wanted, students demonstrated their understanding in the way that would meet academic standards school district intended since Ms. Glen planned her lesson and developed her rubric based on Common Core State Standards.

V. Discussion

1. Benefits and challenges of literacy instruction from situated learning

The aim of this paper was to demonstrate and exemplify the role,

value, and epistemologies of qualitative inquiry in literacy education. In order to achieve this aim, two English language arts classrooms were used as case studies in which students acquire literacy by participating in activities and by interacting with teachers and classmates (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Reading and writing practices varied across classroom settings (Orellana, 1995), and community members, including the teachers and students, constantly negotiated and reviewed their positions, meaning of rules and practices (Smagorinsky, 2009). Through an analysis of the teachers' approaches to teaching and learning writing, it was found that theoretical frameworks, situated learning, and community of practices were useful in understanding the two English language arts classrooms. However, due to the nature of social sciences, which allows for fresh insights and understandings from many aspects regarding the same event, contradictory theoretical frameworks are widespread in the field of education. Therefore, in order to avoid failing to embrace the wealth of other theoretical frameworks that might be effective, the theoretical framework discussed in this paper was considered to be tentative. By evaluating how the different occurrences are connected to the overall unit, ethnography might increase our knowledge of the diversity of literacy practices among the two English language art courses. Lastly, the methods of data collection and analysis were outlined, and the classroom experiences I had during the instructional unit were also shared.

2. Implications for Teaching and Learning

What are teaching and learning? How do teachers teach? How do students learn? These are important questions because we can illustrate why and how we orchestrate details of the educational curriculum with concrete concepts of teaching and learning. Without an understanding of teaching and learning, however, we would choose whatever strategy with no reflection. Multiple definitions of teaching and learning have been proposed for classroom contexts (Langer,

2011). In this research, I restrict the discussion to the narrow context of an instructional chain that is a small portion of my one academic year long observation with an ethnographic eye.

Traditionally, the concept of teaching reading and writing in the classroom is to give students opportunities to restate someone else's understanding or to emulate good examples of sentence patterns (Duncan, 2007; White, 2008). Within this concept, learning means to gain knowledge to transfer what they acquired into different situations. Different researchers, of course, view teaching and learning in the language arts classroom differently. For example, according to Flammia (2015), teaching language arts is to prepare students for their future careers as professionals in any field, and as good citizens. Downs and Wardle (2007) argue that teaching writing should facilitate students' understanding of the nature of writing. In that sense, from a student's perspective, learning literacy is to correct misunderstandings about literacy practices.

VI. Conclusion

This study takes up where Applebee and Langer's indication. Applebee and Langer (2013) identified problems with even teachers in today's classroom; many language arts teachers still heavily rely on traditional teaching methods for reading and writing by conveying subject knowledge rather than by providing opportunities to construct new knowledge. Many teachers showed a lack of content knowledge about argumentation and feared the workload of scaffolding and feedback for teaching argumentation (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009).

Considering the fact that many teachers still prefer to use traditional teaching methods, I am also left with these important questions: How can educators encourage in-service teachers to adopt and adapt new ways of teaching in their conservative teaching practices?

What kind of impact do these developmental stages of expertise have on the new and more experienced teachers? How do different developmental stages of expertise influence teachers' instructional choices? On this basis, further research incorporating a similar design would be of value. The question of how much direction and structure a teacher provides students in terms of language use would also be beneficial, because it would be capturing a more comprehensive overview of students' developmental processes. Additionally, in the Korean context, further research on professional development for in-service teachers, to create a contextualized discourse community in their classroom, is definitely needed.

Essentially, as we shift paradigmatically, the role, scope, and nature of literacy education are not eternal, fixed, and universal. In other words, its objectives, roles, and natures are changeable, relative, and conditional. The layers of social transactions require thorough observations and descriptions to understand what's going on. Thus, acknowledging that a shift in methodology leads to different views, interpretations, and analytic methods, is critical. In contrast with quantitative and quasi-experimental approaches, qualitative inquiry is impelled to discover, understand, and share instead of verifying a hypothesis. The curiosity, knowledge, and reflections of the researchers' are key in communicating with participants. Without a doubt, reliability and validity are important factors, albeit in different ways. In qualitative inquiry, specific, systematic, and verifiable means of interpreting and presenting data support reliability. Alternatively, validity is not connected to generalizability in qualitative inquiries, but to explainability and usability.

With the advancement in qualitative inquiry, the field expects that an increasing number of scholars will investigate and identify social dynamics within literacy practices, which were previously marginalized. Various forms of cultural, social, and critical views will also be employed to explore the landscape of literacy classrooms. These expectations will require researchers to perceive socially transformative

research that extends the frontiers of literacy inquiry.

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ABSTRACT

The Roles of Qualitative Inquiry in Literacy Education
: A Discussion with Case Studies

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To illustrate the roles, values, and epistemologies of qualitative inquiry, this study discusses the features and pursuits of qualitative research using the case studies of the lessons in writing conducted by two language arts teachers in English language arts classrooms. Using an ethnographic view, the study conducted an analysis of classroom observations and interviews to explore the scaffolding of experienced language arts teachers on lessons for teaching argumentative writing. Drawing on the perspectives of Lave and Wenger, lessons for language arts classrooms represent a telling case for demonstrating the manner in which qualitative inquiry supports further understanding of the complexity of literacy education.

KEYWORDS Writing, Literacy, Language arts, Classroom, ELA