Annotated Bibliography
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Research Question: What approach(es) to writing instruction are most effective for multicultural classrooms?

Ball, A. F. (2008). Teaching writing in culturally diverse classrooms. In MacArthur, C. A., Graham, S., & Fitzgerald, J. (Eds.), *Handbook of Writing Research* (p. 293-310). New York: Guilford Press.

The author presents a review of literature, including over 50 studies conducted since 1980 that examine writing instruction for diverse populations of students. Ball notes that the focus of writing research has changed over the years from product to process, and ultimately (recently) to context. Accordingly, Ball highlights what recent studies have contributed to our understanding of how social and cultural elements impact writing instruction and development for diverse students. Specifically, Ball examines the impact of classroom context, home language and culture, and teacher pedagogy on effective writing instruction for diverse populations, highlighting strategies and elements that support positive writing development for these students. Also, Ball acknowledges that significant gaps still exist between the writing performance of marginalized ethic groups and their white peers, and outlines gaps in current research.

This article directly addressed my research question, and suggested that understanding a student's home culture, language, and discourse, and then affirming and building upon those home fonts of knowledge is fundamental to effective writing instruction for diverse populations. Ball wrote often about creating "bridges" between students' lives at home and the classroom, and using students' home discourses to strengthen their academic writing and to develop their mastery of Standard English. Instead of viewing home discourse and school discourse as two completely separate entities, Ball seems to suggest that teachers integrate the two, and bring the home discourse into the classroom as a resource. Also, Ball addressed the issue of skills instruction, and concluded that skills ought to be taught in context and in ways that call upon higher order thinking (rather than drills or worksheets that isolate specific skills and separate them from larger purposes of writing). Additionally, several studies discussed by Ball identified that including opportunities for collaboration and extended writing are key for diverse groups of students. Finally, Ball noted the importance of teachers explicitly stating their expectations and assessment procedures, and providing explicit instruction and modeling of writing forms and structures.

Crotteau, M. (2007). Honoring dialect and culture: Pathways to student success on high-stakes writing assessments. *English Journal, 96*(4), 27-32.

Crotteau detailed her experience teaching a remedial writing course to a group of high school students who spoke a nonstandard English dialect and who had failed a high-stakes writing test. The approach that she describes aimed to include and affirm students' home dialect, culture, experiences, and values, while also helping them master Standard English in order to pass the standardized test. Crotteau achieved both goals by inviting students to study and explain their home dialect and the ways it differs from Standard English, and by encouraging students to thoughtfully alternate between their home dialect and Standard English depending on the context. She stated that she believed that writing instruction can be meaningful as well as effective in preparing students to pass gate-keeping exams. This belief seems to be supported by the fact that the students in her remedial course successfully passed the high-stakes test on their second or third attempt.

This article emphasizes the importance of respecting, including, and even studying home languages and literacies in the multicultural classroom: home languages are included because they are

valuable in their own right, but also because they can be used as a resource when learning Standard English. Empowering students to draw upon different dialects in different social contexts helps students navigate our multicultural world and maximize their personal, educational, and professional opportunities. Crotteau challenges readers to believe that "authentic writing instruction and test preparation are not antithetical," and that teachers need not choose between creating affirming writing opportunities and preparing students for success on tests (p. 32). The strategies discussed in the article were used in a class that all spoke the same nonstandard dialect, and I wonder how these strategies might be adapted or implemented in a class where many different nonstandard dialects or language backgrounds are present.

Delpit, L. (1995). The politics of teaching literate discourse. In *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom* (pp.152-166). New York: The New Press.

In this chapter, Delpit insists that minority students (and other students whose home discourse differs from the academic discourse at school) can learn the dominant academic discourse, and that teachers ought to teach these students the dominant discourse. Delpit reflects that some teachers and scholars fear that teaching the dominant discourse is unjust, forcing students from marginalized groups to learn the language that has been used to oppress them. However, Delpit argues that this dominant discourse, as problematic as it may be, must not be ignored in the classroom, because mastering this discourse enables access to economic and political power. Also, Delpit believes that by learning the dominant discourse, minority students can transform that discourse and be positive change agents in academia and beyond.

In regards to practical ideas about effective literacy instruction (or for the purposes of this inquiry project, writing instruction), Delpit suggests that teachers must accept that in order to have access to the broadest array of opportunities, diverse students need to "have access to many voices" (p. 161). I like the idea of being honest with students about the injustice in our society and arming them with the skills to navigate that society, including the skill of "code switching" or speaking in many voices. To this end, teachers ought to affirm students' home discourses, but also provide explicit instruction on the norms of the dominant discourse. Delpit also acknowledges that some students may disengage with academic discourse because they feel that it conflicts with or rejects their identities, so it is important to create opportunities for students to see themselves and their heritage in the academic writing tradition.

Early, J. S., DeCosta-Smith, M., & Valdespino, A. (2010). Write your ticket to college: A genre-based college admission essay workshop for ethnically diverse, underserved students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(3), 209-219.

This article described a genre-based writing workshop on the college admission essay that was facilitated with a group of diverse, low income, and low-performing high school students. The workshop intended to demystify the elements of a successful college admissions essay for these students, many of whom did not have previous exposure to the genre or family members who have experience with the genre. The authors recognized that the admission essay is a "gate-keeping genre" that can influence students' access to higher education, and they worked to explicitly name and teach the key elements of the genre, provide students with model texts, and then lead them through the brainstorming, drafting, and revision process. The authors found that the students felt great anxiety and a lack of confidence about this writing task and about college in general, and this impacted students' initial engagement in the workshop; accordingly, the authors and the teachers who led the workshop made time to directly address students' concerns, and the authors concluded that students' sense of efficacy must be addressed if writing growth is to be maximized. Ultimately, the authors found the genre-based workshop to be effective in improving student writing and confidence.

In relation to the question of how best to approach writing instruction in diverse classrooms, I noted that the authors presented a model that both honored the stories and experiences of students *and* prepared them to be successful at writing tasks in the traditional academic world. The workshop explicitly taught the elements of the genre at hand—a genre that is important for students to master in order to access opportunities. At the same time, the workshop leaders did not attempt to influence the topics or stories students chose to tell in their essays, honoring their experiences and trusting that their stories can be told in this genre and can be valued. This fusion of traditional academic genres (genres of those in "power") and students' authentic lived experiences is exciting to me, and I am curious about how that type of fusion can be replicated in other academic genres. Also, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing students' insecurities and perceptions about writing tasks: their perceptions cannot be ignored if teachers are to be most effective in supporting writing growth for diverse students.

Fernsten, L. (2005). Politics and the teaching of writing: The silencing of diverse populations. *Teacher Education & Practice*, *18*(2), 185-199.

Fernsten contends that too often in traditional academic settings, students whose home discourse differs from the academic discourse are viewed (and come to view themselves) as simply "bad writers". She provides an overview of her theoretical stance, which is that discourses—which include language, but also ways of thinking—are political, and shape identities. The article also includes a description of an ethnographic study that Fernsten conducted in order to deepen her understanding of how negative writing identities are constructed. Fersten suggests that teachers should share "metaknowledge" about the politics of discourse with students, informing them about how and why certain discourses are privileged above others; in doing so, students can understand that academic discourse is one of many discourses, that their own discourses are valuable, and that when they write imperfectly in the academic discourse it does not mean that they are poor writers. The article ends with practical recommendations for teachers of writing, including employing a process-focused approach to teaching writing.

This article makes a strong case for the argument that effective writing instruction in a multicultural classroom must explicitly acknowledge and confront with students the facts of how and why the dominant discourse is privileged. To me, this means talking with students about academic language and conventions, and recognizing with them that this discourse is no more valuable than their home discourses inherently, but that we live in a world where mastering this discourse will increase access to certain opportunities. As a result, it is important that educators in multicultural classrooms teach students the dominant discourse, but not *only* teach the dominant discourse: the article suggests that writing tasks that allow students to write in their native discourses and focus on expressing ideas about things that matter to them empower students and help them develop positive writing identities. Perhaps these positive writing identities and greater sense of efficacy in writing lead to increased motivation to write and greater growth. Fernsten also suggested teaching hybrid forms of discourses and genres, and while I think this is interesting, creative, and potentially engaging, I am still convinced that it is important to—among other things—teach clearly and completely the conventions of specific gate-keeping genres (no matter how arbitrary or formulaic they may be) in order to avoid placing our students at a disadvantage. Finally, Fernsten wrote that a process-focused approach to writing instruction that includes brainstorming, multiple drafts, and workshops/structured peer feedback can support both writing skill development and positive identity development in students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Johnson, L. P., & Eubanks, E. (2015). Anthem or nah? Culturally relevant writing instruction and community. *Voices from the middle, 23*(2), 31-36.

This article outlines a case study of the use of an "anthem essay" assignment in an 8th grade class of predominantly African American students. The authors positioned this assignment as a positive example of culturally relevant writing instruction, highlighting how the assignment centered students' voice, inviting them to connect and apply their own personal and community experiences and to hear the perspectives of their peers. Johnson and Eubanks also pointed out that the assignment created opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, allowed for student choice, and made use of traditional and modern model texts. The assignment was presented as a method of both teaching traditional dominant academic norms and skills (e.g. the analytical essay) *and* incorporating student perspective, inviting students' critical thinking and critiques, and including texts and issues that students' find relevant.

This article seems to suggest that effective writing in a multicultural classroom features projects and assignments that are hybrids of traditional dominant forms/texts/approaches and forms/texts/approaches that are reflective of students' lived cultures and experiences. This particular example fuses a traditional academic analytical essay with students' lived experiences and values; it also features a canonical text but with a critical eye. The authors recommend that educators in diverse classrooms prioritize student voice and choice over adherence to traditional forms and conventions. Also, the authors emphasized the importance of classroom community, and encouraged educators to invite students to speak, to listen to one another, to co-construct meaning, and to incorporate that co-constructed meaning into their own writing products.

Kirkland, D. E. (2004). Rewriting school: Critical pedagogy in the writing classroom. *Journal of Teaching Writing, 21.1&2,* 83-96.

Kirkland advocates for a critical pedagogy in writing classrooms in lieu of traditional pedagogies that privilege white, middle class students and disadvantage students of other ethnicities, classes, and language backgrounds. Kirkland writes that teachers should recognize, include, and celebrate students' multitextual and multilingual lives, building upon literacies from students' home lives while still teaching (but not privileging) traditional standard academic language and forms of writing. In this way, teachers can challenge dominant and damaging ideas about what does and does not count as a text, affirm students' identities, reduce dissonance between home and school identities, and improve writing performance. Specifically, Kirkland names three types of expression that he believes have the potential to be more meaningful, inclusive and equitable: visual expression, musical expression, and multilingual expression.

Kirkland argues that traditional pedagogies do *not* represent an approach to teaching writing that is effective in multicultural classrooms. He argues that teachers who hope to best support diverse student writers must respect and incorporate all types of texts and language use into their classrooms. Kirkland provided concrete examples of types of texts that ought to be welcomed and valued in a writing classroom, including digital texts, videos, and texts that allow students to use multiple languages or dialects. These types of texts may be more consonant with students' home literacies than traditional five paragraph essays and standard academic English. I was particularly interested in research Kirkland cited that suggests that teaching and incorporating a student's home language or dialect as well as standard English creates greater improvements in writing performance (even in standard English). This reminds me of something I learned in a literacy class: that literacy in one's native language supports literacy in any additional languages one learns. It is the task of writing teachers, then, to think about how we can not only tolerate, but embrace and support the development of students' multiple literacies, languages, and texts.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher 41*(3), 93-97.

Paris provides a review of evolving attitudes in the field of education and education research towards the home languages, literacies, and cultures of students from marginalized groups. The review critiqued the "deficit approach" and "difference approach" prevalent in the past, and detailed the emergence of resource pedagogies that value students home language and cultures in the classroom and align with a movement towards "culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy." Paris argues that culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy does not go far enough: it tolerates, respects, and includes home literacy practices, but does not explicitly include the goal of actively sustaining those practices. Since national and state policies and attitudes seem to support monolingualism, monoculturalism, and deficit approaches in many ways, Paris insists that pedagogy must prioritize sustaining students' heritage and community practices alongside dominant academic practices. It is only through helping students develop "linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality" that we can prepare students to live in a global, pluralistic world and give students' native languages, literacies, and cultures the role they are due (p. 95).

In regards to my research question, this article suggests that merely making connections to students' lives, languages, and cultures—and perhaps even including those practices—is not "enough." Paris makes clear that he believes educators must actively work to help students sustain those practices. I am uncertain about what, exactly, that looks like, and how it differs in practice from culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy. I also am uncertain how educators can best support the maintenance of these practices. Perhaps this pedagogy in practice could include affording students the ability to make choices about what form, language, and style they use in writing tasks, including a wide array of model texts that feature diverse literacies, bringing in varied community members that are experts in specific forms of language and writing, and allowing students to serve as experts and collaborators in the classroom.