ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHER AND TECHNOLOGY: AGENCY | STRUCTURE DIALECTIC INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGICALLY MEDIATED INSTRUCTIONS TO IMPROVE LITERACY BY CREATING COMIC BOOKS IN A SPECIAL EDUCATION LEARNING COMMUNITY

by

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ABSTRACT

ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHER AND TECHNOLOGY:
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Eydie Wilson

Adviser: Professor Kenneth Tobin

The United States Department of Education is increasingly looking toward technology as a means to improve student academic achievements in schools. This auto/ethnographical and auto/biographical brings to the foreground issues of identity, culture, and equity as it documents my collaborative journey as an alternatively certified, highly qualified teacher with Brock and Stewie, students educated in a general education class and receive special education services in a socio economically challenged New York City District 75[1] school, as they integrate technologically mediated instruction through the creation of comic books as a teaching tool to improve their literacy. By describing and exploring patterns of cultural enactment (and contradictions to those patterns) within our comic book research dialogue group (CBRDG) and school, this study examines how our agency and identity re/construction were afforded or limited

[1] District 75 is a separate school district that provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, severely challenged, and/or multiply disabled. District 75 consists of 56 school organizations, home and hospital instruction, and vision and hearing services. The schools and programs are located at more than 350 sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island and Syosset, New York. The mission of District 75 is to provide appropriate standards-based educational programs, with related service supports, to approximately 23,000 students with severe challenges, commensurate with their abilities.

by communities of practice and school structures. Our experiences were analyzed on the micro, meso, and macro levels using data sources including videotapes, audiotapes, written reflections, and various other artifacts.

In response to two broad questions, I learned that examining technology integration meant addressing the very core of what it meant to be an alternatively certified special education teacher and students labeled with a disability in an urban public school. At times, Brock, Stewie, and I found it difficult to re/construct our identities in settings where we were pulled in different directions at once. As the teacher with strong technology knowledge, skills, and a community of computer users for support, I needed to address urban schooling issues of outdated computer equipment and access to it. As inclusion students, Brock and Stewie had to navigate and function in more than one school to be active members of CBRDG. By utilizing CBRDG (dialogue discussions and technology instructions) as tools for cultural enactment, I show how Brock and Stewie transform and emerge as coteachers. I also began to see CBRDG's members in a new light as they interacted with technology practices to support both personal and collective learning.

Dedication

To my husband, parents, and siblings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Professor Ken Tobin. Without his guidance and constant help, this dissertation would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. David Connor and Jan Valle for sharing their expert knowledge and skills as researchers and educators.

I thank my husband, Eric for always being patient and understanding throughout this journey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

21st Century Problems – Technology and Education

Well the world turns,
And a hungry little boy with a runny nose
Plays in the street as the cold wind blows
In the ghetto
And his hunger burns,
So he starts to roam the streets at night
And he learns how to steal,
And he learns how to fight
In the ghetto
People, don't you understand
The child needs a helping hand
Or he'll grow to be an angry
young man someday
Take a look at you and me,
Are we too blind to see,
Do we simply turn our heads
And look the other way
(In the Ghetto by Thomson William Gunn 1929–2004)[2]

Reflection – March 2008

It was a warm, misty, and humid day as I walked through the school door and away from the building. Many days I hastily exit the building, get into my car, and speed away. However, that day was very different. I stopped at the gates of the school and thought about my journey—from my family life and personal illnesses to working in corporate America. I also thought about how I developed my technological knowledge and skill and academic achievements. Now in my sixth year of teaching—in the South Bronx of all places—I pondered whether my steps were leading me to the field of education. These thoughts are a result of the activities of the day. It was 12:15 PM at PS/MS South Bronx[3] and like clockwork, two of my 8th grade inclusion

[2] The Thomas Gunn song *'in the ghetto'* made famous by Elvis Presley is a sad but poignant socially-conscious song that depicts a type of life experienced every day by young people who just happen to be born into it. It is a song about abject poverty, describing a child who cannot overcome his surroundings and is forced to steal, fight, and in the end turns to crime, which inevitably results in an actual or symbolic death.

[3] The school name has been changed in an attempt to ensure anonymity of participants in the study.

students appeared at the door to my small office to be tutored. (The inclusion program allows students labeled as emotionally disturbed to be educated with the general education population. The District 75 (D75) inclusion program is designed to move self-contained students who demonstrate academic, social, emotional, and behavioral improvements to the least restrictive educational setting.) My students were all in their second year of the program. It was March 2008, and it took these young gents a long time to warm up to me and be receptive to my good intentions and deeds. Keith[4] is a 13 year-old baby-faced, six foot two, Black boy. Keith had been seeking me out for academic assistance and his grades improved during the second and third marking periods. His average moved up to 83%, which placed him on the middle school's honor roll. Keith's buddy, Mark, who is just shy of six feet tall, is a 14-year-old Puerto Rican boy with a long ponytail. I have known both boys from the time I started teaching in the fall of 2002. At that time, we were all at a different school site and they were about 8 years old.

When I first encountered these boys, they were in the self-contained classrooms and considered both dangerous and disruptive. The self-contained classrooms are a therapeutic educational setting where students classified with the same disability (e.g. emotional disturbance, learning disability, autism) are placed with a special education teacher and support staff. I never knew kids could curse worse than adults curse and fight without reason. I recalled the way they walked around the class and school together with angry looks on their faces and always without school materials. However, I never believed them to be truly angry; rather, they seemed to be mimicking facial expressions of gangster rap stars. Then I met their families during parent-teacher conferences. The parents seemed to have a hardened outlook on life. They conveyed an overall negative view of school along with personal worries on their shoulders. I recognized the

[4] All names within this study have been changed to preserve anonymity.

stern facial expressions and oppositional body language that I saw in their children. Once the parents got past what they called “differences between us” (teacher and parent) and listened to the positive comments I said about their children, I became a useful resource for them. I was granted limited access to their lives and began to understand, without judgment, lives unlike mine.

Keith’s and Mark’s conduct, attitude, and posturing are parts of their identities that have been shaped by the neighborhood where they both live and attend school (Turner, 2002). Now, at a different school site in the same community, at age 13 or 14 years old, they call themselves men. Having been around them for the past several months, I have noticed that they have come to trust and respect me from a distance .They tell me that I am not like their mothers since I do not yell or curse at them, and because I am not from around there I do not speak like them. I am not cool. I am not ghetto. I am a nerd. Yet they tell me, “But we like you a lot because you don’t yell at us or curse us out.” They refer to themselves as “ghetto, gangster, and bangers,” but at the end of the school day, I make sure they get on the yellow school bus. Turner (2002) defines what makes individuals “themselves” are the sub-, role-, and core-identities that are produced in interactions throughout their daily lives. Like my students, my identity is a composite of my life experiences, moral values, and cultural, political, socio economic, and class positions. My identity, although a Black teacher, makes me an outsider in this particular community (see Chapter IV). However, my position as a teacher gives me a limited amount of acceptance as an insider because my students need me.

I was abruptly brought back to the present when a group of youngsters rushed past me rapping and talking. At my car, I looked around and absorbed the urban life. A background cacophony consisting of the chatter of school kids, the din of streetcars and trucks, and the

unforgettable sounds of police cars screaming towards the projects across the street from the school. At that moment, for the first time, I wondered about these kids who hung around the school until the last possible moment. I wondered if they went into these buildings that are always teeming with police officers. As I looked around, I noticed the same group of kids who lingered around my car. I do not know their names, but I knew their faces. I eventually made my way over to my car while acknowledging them by saying "good-bye." I thought it was important to let these youths know that I see them both inside and outside the school and, most importantly, I am not afraid to talk and chat with them. There were very funny and interesting things about these kids. In school, they are somewhat childish individuals who need nurturing and protection. Once outside the building, they become the nurturers and protectors. As I began to motion with my keys toward the driver's side lock, a frequent and familiar conversation starts.

Young girl: "Yo Teach, I mean Ms. Wilson We really like your car."
Wilson: "Thanks."
Young boy: "Yeah, it's tight, but mad little."
Young girl: "That's aight 'cause she ain't got no kids. I want to be like dat."
Young boy: "What kids got to do with it? You always talk about kids and sh**."
Young girl: "You know, she don't like to hear cursing."
Young boy/girl: "Sorry, Ms. Wilson"
Wilson: "Thanks."
Young girl: "How fast do it go?"
Young boy: "She got to go. You always be asking questions."
[*The conversation continues out of my hearing.*]
Wilson: "Bye guys"
Kids: "Holla"

I settled in my car, turned on the ignition and the radio, opened the windows, and drove home. Stopping at the light, I looked at my reflection in the mirror. I saw myself, a well-traveled Black woman with a successful life and a future without obstacles. However, when I looked at my school's community and my students' faces I was unable to project the same future hopes. I am not passing a *condemned to failure* judgment because everyone and anyone can achieve

greatness. Nevertheless, there are people who judge individuals harshly based on the combination of race, culture, socio economic position, disability, or education. Thinking of these students (my students and the others about the school community) made me ponder my own personal history. I looked at the path that led me to the field of education. I examined how things unfolded in my favor from the perspective of education policy, technology, my education, and my skills. I surmised that the currently changed education policy in favor of technology in education, my unique combination of technology knowledge and skills along with my corporate exposure made me an ideal candidate for teaching, at the turn of the 21st century. The New York City Teaching Fellows (NYC TF) (The NYC Teaching Fellows is an alternative certification program that was founded in 2000 in response to the large teacher shortage in the NYC Department of Education. The program's goal is to raise the quality of education in New York City Public schools by attracting professionals from other fields into the classroom as teachers. Many accepted Fellows have almost no teaching experience, and accepted Fellows include recent college graduates as well as former accountants, nurses, chief executives, secretaries, artists, journalists, and retirees. (http://www.nycteachingfellows.org) The program outfitted me with the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills to transition into the role of a teacher now referred to as one of "New York's Finest."

The Juxtaposition of a Teaching Fellow and Technology Reform for Education

When President George W. Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind 2001 Act* (NCLB) education standards around the nation were questioned. Then, the *Individuals with Disabilities Act*[5] (IDEA) 1997 was reviewed by the federal government and reauthorized in 2004 to be in compliance with NCLB. As defined by the mandates in NCLB sections 1111(b)(2)(B)

[5] This Act may be cited as the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA). In this dissertation, I use IDEA 2004. Public Law 108-446 108th Congress. http://idea.ed.gov/download/statute.html

1111(b)(2)(C)(v) (2001) which direct the IDEA section 111(b)(2)(G)) (2004), student academic achievement is viewed as a priority and necessary to produce a competent workforce to meet global demands (Spring, 1998). Moreover, NCLB and IDEA are aligned in the following ways: 1) technology is highlighted as a tool that, when utilized, is capable of enhancing academics and closing the achievement gap between the races; 2) the term "highly qualified" teachers (HQT) is introduced to refer to certified and technically skilled individuals; 3) scientifically-based research methods (that are considered best practices) must be included in teacher training. These three methods combined, which are enforced by the "state educational and local educational agencies" into "teacher education programs," qualify an alternatively trained teacher as "highly qualified."

This issue of "highly qualified teachers" is of interest to me for a number of reasons. I am an alternatively certified teacher, a New York City teaching fellow who graduated from a City University of New York (CUNY) teacher education program with a Master's Degree in Special Education. I am titled as a highly qualified teacher because I have met the requirements—passed three New York State teacher examinations for certification, completed a Master's Degree, received satisfactory teacher ratings during my probation period, and demonstrated technology knowledge and skills. It is worth noting that in the two-year curriculum at CUNY *only* one educational technology class was offered within the special education graduate program. If teachers are to be technologically prepared, teacher education programs must provide sufficient classes in technology. Fortunately, prior to becoming a New York City public school teacher in fall 2002, I was a financial research analyst at two well-known brokerage firms. Additionally, I have a Bachelor's and a Master's in the field of Computer Science and Information Systems. The combination of being a certified teacher with corporate work experience and a technology foundation enables me to integrate technology into my teaching. In this sense, the government is

not concerned about teachers like me, but is concerned about others who need to acquire a similar skill set to mine.

IDEA/NCLB – A Hegemonic System of Imbalance

Educational policies are rooted in Euro-American values and culture. Urban students frequently struggle because their cultural experiences differ from those of their White general education peers (Harding, 1998). There is a clear misalignment between the policy, language, educational mandates, and the student population, which gives rise to the reproduction of social classes and unequal schooling (Skrtic, 1991). Skrtic critiqued the language of the policy and credited it with the uprising of the 1980s Regular Education Initiative (REI), which criticized the practices of special education as "lacking ethics and efficacy." I assert that the policymakers in power, symbolizing the White middle and upper social classes (found in general education), create educational policies (e.g., NCLB/IDEA) that embrace their cultural standards and work to inhibit the learning of those not traditionally represented by society (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). In this sense, a White middle class culture is viewed as dominant and having all the power to dominate other cultures within and outside the classroom. In fact, since NCLB dominates the educational field, and IDEA mirrors the language and goals, I argue that they are products that enforce hegemonic practices that promote a system of imbalance. On one hand, IDEA, in theory, is a policy designed to provide a free and appropriate public education to students classified with a disability. However, the alignment with NCLB subjects special education students to standardized curriculums and exams. Researchers who study academics results and test scores have found them depressing (Hanushek, 1997). The test results have caused urban students and particularly students who receive special education services to be labeled as failures or incapable of learning. In this sense, self-contained students classified as disabled, are *equally* and unfairly

required to be subjected to the same curriculum and state standards as the general education students, but relegated to a *separate* self-contained educational setting. In other words, it structures the field of special education and the classifications of students with disabilities. When the stereotypes are presented in fields like special education self-contained classrooms, teachers who believe them to be true may replicate the hegemonic practices that control the ways of knowing of a population traditionally represented in society.

The various tools that government policy uses are scientific research-based and stipulate technology use as a tool in education, highly qualified teachers to execute the mandate, and how the two together in this equation will be instrumental in improving student academic achievement.

Purpose, Focus and Design of the Research

In conjunction with the educational policy push for highly qualified teachers who can utilize technology as an academic tool, I commenced a six-week qualitative auto/ethnographical and auto/biographical study to examine how I, a New York City teaching fellow, integrated technologically mediated instruction to improve literacy skills through the creation of comic books. Each chapter is meant to stand alone, yet adhere to the common themes of culture, identity, equity, and improving teaching and learning with technology. As such, the reader may experience redundancies in the presentation of methodology. To foreground the common themes, I examine the dynamics of the relationship between the new entities (technology, the research group, alternatively certified teacher) through multiple theoretical frameworks and methods.

I believe teaching and learning carry equal weight, their dynamic interplay facilitated by self-reflective critical pedagogues who guide students to engage in critical inquiry. I explore the relationship between macro-, meso- and micro levels to bring to the foreground the top-down

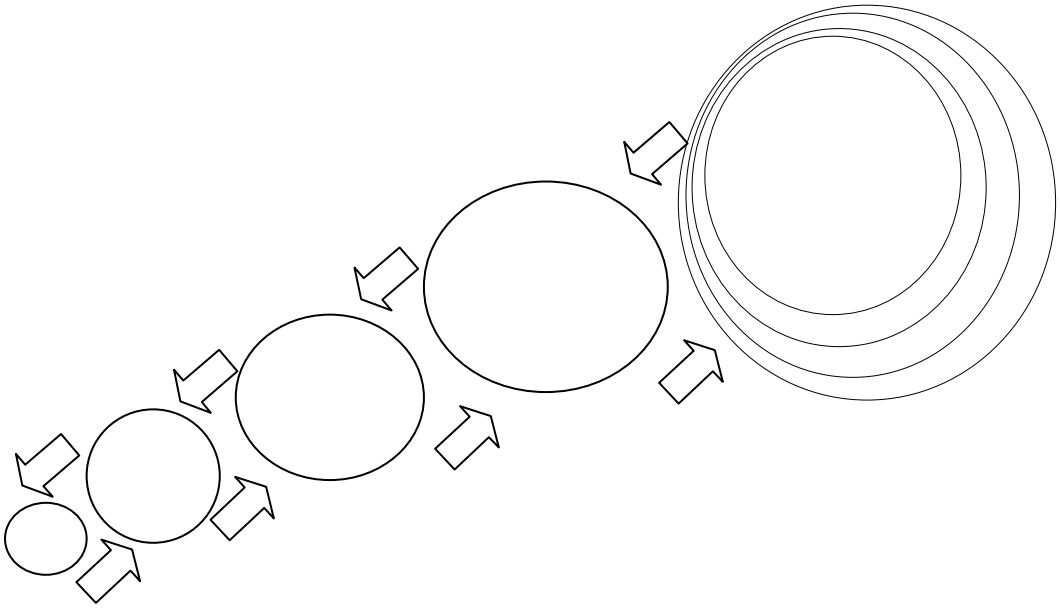
impact of national and local educational policies that enforce technology as an academic tool upon the local school structure and ultimately upon the individual learner. For example, the macro, top-down shift mandates greater incorporation of technology into education. Although, I contextualize at all three levels, my research is concentrated at the micro level because I am able to explore how the participants and I engage in teaching and learning activities without the top-down structured curriculum.

Focus of Research

As the teacher/researcher, I utilized critical autoethnography informed by Bourdieu's (1997) and Sewell's (1992) *agency|structure dialectic*, Lave and Wenger's (1991) *learning communities*, and Collins' (2004) *emotional energy and interaction rituals* to navigate across multiple cultural fields structured by race, social class, and policy. (I will provide a more in-depth discussion of these theorists and the application in Chapter two). I offer comprehensive accounts of the structures and cultures that the student participants and I encounter within the school and our experiences interacting within the research group called "Comic Book Research Group" (CBRDG) I consider the CBRDG to be a field of study in which participants, unconstrained by disciplinary and specialty boundaries or dominant theoretical frameworks or methodologies, employed multiple theoretical frameworks, multiple methodologies and multiple sources of evidence to understand the complexities of social life (Kling, 1989). The CBRDG provided me with the opportunity to 1) conduct interpretive research 2) build a deeper understanding of theoretical frameworks and other professional activities 3) share what has been learned from school-based research activities. Specifically, I look at the ways in which technology mediated instruction is implemented and how it constructs or reconstructs the identities of a teaching fellow and students within the culture of the special education

community. My experiences within the CBRDG shed light on the significance of a community of practice in learning how to utilize and integrate technology into daily teaching and work practices.

Diagram 1.1 The diagram is a visualization of the complex interplay between multiple fields and descriptions of how fields created on the local, micro level like CBRDG stand as independent, but are inevitably part of the larger global field.



The local fields: Sub-Micro: CBRDG --> Micro: Schools, City --> Meso: City, Districts, State --> Macro: US Government --> Nested Global Fields

Sub-Micro Fields: a created field like CBRDG within a school field overlaps culture, identity, and access.

Micro Fields: City, District - enforces State policies into schools, NYC Teaching Fellows, revised curriculum and teaching standards, home communities.

Meso Fields: State enforces macro policy- alternate teacher route, standardized testing, technology standards.

Macro Fields: Government and the top down policy push, scientific research, highly qualified teachers, testing, and technology in education.

The diagram above describes leveled fields (micro - the comic book research dialogue group (CBRDG), meso - schools, communities, state, and Macro – government and national policy) to show how culture, identity, and issues of equity overlap, interact, and come together to form other fields. Each of these fields are defined by separate circles which indicate that each field has within them activity, culture, and identity that is dependent on the other fields and revised due to overlapping and interacting.

When I look at NCLB/IDEA and the negative impact (white middle class standards and culture) on self-contained students, the application of Giroux's (1997) *critical pedagogy* and

Skrtic's (1995) *immanent critique* are salient to understanding special education. Critical theory examines the relationship between ideology, power, race, and class struggle as ways to expose the relationship between different governing and cultural organizations. Such theories can be helpful in understanding the hegemony associated with special education. Additionally, the culture (traditional teachers, White America, special education, schools) of the dominant group and their influence on an individual's identity, access, and equity, provides a foundation for me to introduce a new term "*deceptive accessibility.*" I define deceptive accessibility as the psychological underpinning related to the dominant cultural groups (government leaders, business leaders, parents, traditional teachers). Deceptive accessibility identifies the group that maintains the power to control and marginalize the less powerful and their ability to present the illusion of fairness, equal access, or equality among all. It foregrounds the dominant group's behavior, thinking, motivation, and relationships along with their tools of control (i.e., educational policy, membership, information) to grant or deny access. The term "stakeholder" is used to identify a group of prominent individuals in any cultural field. The stakeholders in any setting are able to impregnate structures with their values, culture, and goals.

Design of Study

The timeframe for the research group, CBRDG was six weeks. During instructional sessions, I created a lesson plan to guide the structure and development of technology and literacy learning (see Appendix A). I videotaped, interacted, and observed the participants in the CBRDG as they adhered to the rules of dialogue, respected the computer lab, and utilized technology to the point of becoming peer-to-peer tutors. Over time, the members developed and discussed tech-informed approaches in combination with the literacy component to create and finish their comic books. Throughout my work, I was guided by the following questions:

I. How will my technologically mediated instructions based on the government's mandated standards contribute to the production of culture and construction or reconstruction of identity into the special education learning community?

II. How will the introduction of a new field, the CBRDG, serve as a catalyst for inventing culture that could be brought back into the larger learning community to aid in the creation of highly qualified technologically equipped, culturally responsive special education teachers?

To capture the significance of enacting cultures within a learning community and the integration of technological mediated instructions by a teaching fellow and researcher, the following sub questions were used to guide my inquiry, which focused on my teaching experience and the participants in the school environment:

1. What aspects of CBRDG's participants (e.g., students' and teacher's) cultural capital are helpful in accomplishing the goals of successful integration of technology as a teaching tool for learning and connecting what students know and are able to do?

2. In what ways did the culture of my school contribute to my ability or inability to use technology as a tool with my student participants?

3. In what ways does the introduction of new fields (teaching fellow and CBRDG) serve as foundations for new culture that could be brought into the classroom to help with the technology integration process?

4. How did participation in the research group contribute to the reproduction of culture and construction of identities as the students became technology users?

Location of the Study

The study focuses on the experiences of the members of CBRDG. As the New York City teaching fellow, an alternatively certified teacher, and technology instructor, the research and group is situated in my home school building in the Bronx, New York City. Thus, my research is driven by the events that occur within the school learning environment. My school, PS/MS South Bronx, is an elementary and secondary special education school (grades kindergarten to eighth)

in District 75, the New York City Special Education Division, in the Bronx, New York City. The school is located in the South Bronx, a high poverty area. According to the 2007–08 schools' report card[6] (New York City Department of Education, 2008), this D75 school is attended by more than 371 students of poverty-stricken or working class families. The student population is 70% Hispanic and 30% African American extraction. The gender breakdown was 60% males, and 40% female, which is a typical gender composition of most urban special education school settings in New York City. The annual attendance rate was about 84%, which is below the city average of 90%. Poverty, disability, and high incidences of absences are factors affecting their academic abilities.

The students of PS/MS South Bronx are classified with emotional, behavioral, and/or learning issues. In the school building, the research group met in the computer lab located on the fourth floor, designated for the self-contained students once a week during lunch. The computer lab is split into two sections: one half has 12–14 desks and chairs to facilitate discussions and simple instructions, and 12–14 individual computer terminals on the other side. Arrangements were made to have the computer lab available for the student participants to use during their lunch and the last periods of the day to work on their comic books.

Participants

The CBRDG participants included me (PI/researcher/teaching fellow), and a group of five (four boys and one girl) D75 students. However, due to absences of others and the steady attendance of Brock and Stewie (self-selected pseudonyms), I chose to follow their development. The other participants are KayKae or KK, Daniel, and Elliot. Since we used the computer lab, the technology teacher, Mr. O. was a non-active, silent member. Additionally, Mr. O. provided

[6] NYS testing and accountability reporting tool. Information retrieved online on January 13, 2008, from the New York State Education Department Web site: https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb

access and adult supervision to Brock and Stewie as they worked independently in the lab to complete their projects during non-group meetings. All student participants have a few things in common. They attend a D75 special education middle school in their home community. They are all classified as "standardized." (In D75, students with disabilities are separated into two strands: Standardized or Alternate Assessment. Although, both groups in D75 self-contained educational settings are identified as "disabled," students who are labeled as emotionally disturbed and learning disabled as well as high functioning students with autism are required to take the New York State standardized exams with modifications as outlined on their IEPs). Stewie, Brock, Daniel, and Elliot are 12-year-old boys in the 6th grade and educated with general education students. KK is a 13 year-old girl educated in a D75 self-contained class. Elliot is Nigerian and the others are of Hispanic extraction. These students expressed an interest in creating their own comic book and learning the functions of technology.

In creating the research group, I adhered closely to Guba and Lincoln's (1989) suggestion on permitting participants to volunteer to avoid coercion. To limit any potential harm to the participants, I focused on the Belmont Report's (1979) recommendations and found another teacher to facilitate the recruiting. I sat with the teacher recruiter and explained the functions and details of the research, the student population, and grades permitted to sign up. At the end of two weeks, there were five students who signed up to participate in the group activities. The students selected their own aliases[7] and I was surprised to hear normal sounding names and not more hip nicknames.

[7] All teachers' and schools' names have been changed in an attempt to ensure anonymity of participants in the study.

Time Frame and Compensation

This dissertation describes a six-week study that began in November 2007 and ended in January 2008. The participants met as a group once a week in the school's computer lab during the students' lunch period to receive instruction, see demonstrations, and discuss their projects. The first 15 minutes were used to review and introduce new skills, the second 15 minutes consisted of open shared dialogue, and the remaining time was used to observe the students working, creating, and using their newly acquired technology skills. Although the project was scheduled to meet once a week for a six-week period, Brock and Stewie were diligent and excited about their progress and requested more time to work in the computer lab, either with me or independently. Over the six-week period, there were six full group meetings, and an additional four meetings were scheduled at the students' request. The additional meetings were held on Wednesdays during the students' lunch period.

Overview of the Dissertation

Through my experiences with Brock and Stewie, I had to acknowledge that what I believed was integral to building the relationship between teacher and students, student to student, and student to technology. In addition, through my exposure to inclusion students, Stewie and Brock and self-contained student KK, I attempt to shift the negative portrayals of special education students by highlighting their lived experiences as achievements in CBRDG.

Chapter one introduces the macro level issues of policy reform to infuse technology into education, employ highly qualified teachers, and adopt positivistic research that supports these changes in both special and general education. I discuss ways that the dominant policy NCLB suffocates the IDEA with its language and goals of compliance. On a meso level, New York State has incorporated the mandates of federal policy into teacher certification requirements. I

highlight how the local micro level is feeling the impact of the changes. In favor of these changes to education, what is overlooked are issues related to educational equity, financial distribution and integration of technology in socio economically deprived urban areas, particularly students in special education. I therefore foreground the implication of the dominant groups by introducing a new term *deceptive accessibility.* Finally, the purpose of the study is delineated, contextualized elements are introduced, and the events of fall 2008 are summarized to provide a micro view of what occurred.

Chapter two provides the foundation for the remaining dissertation chapters. I situate myself as a researcher to examine my own history with technology and education in order to simultaneously foreground the historical evolution of the US government's interest to prioritize technology in education. I contend that it is important to consider the intermingling relationship between education policy, technology standards, students with disabilities, and highly qualified teachers as the foundation to investigate the interactions between the members of CBRDG. The theories that comprise my methodology include critical auto/ethnography informed by agency|structure dialectic, culture, learning communities, immanent critique, and identity. As the teacher and researcher in the CBDRG, I used cogenerative dialogues as the tool for teaching, learning, and expanding the agency for all participants. To capture how culture is enacted in this group on the micro level, I video and audio taped the interactions and activities. I outline my research methods including data sources, analysis, and authenticity criteria.

Chapter three delineates my experience as an alternatively certified, highly qualified, special education teacher by examining my history with technology and interactions with self-contained students and the members of CBRDG to understand how my cultural identity affects my teaching and learning. I explore the dominant school culture and discover how my

experience was deceptive. The combination of theoretical frames—Bourdieu's field and capital and Sewell's culture and agency|structure—highlights the difficulties I face constructing my identity as an alternatively certified teacher and enacting my culture as a technology user in a climate of fear and structured by the dominant cultural group, traditional teachers who are resistant, non-technology users. The use of agency|structure and capital and fields enable me to understand that on the micro level the school's culture is created by the traditional teachers who can permit or deny access to other teachers. At the school level, the traditional teachers enabled me to understand how I experienced deceptive accessibility.

Chapter four examines the relationship among CBRDGs' participants and the culture and structure of different schools in one building, general education and special education, and its surrounding community. I describe PS/MS South Bronx's external and internal communities and the structures within the building. Utilizing micro-analysis of videotaped segments in conjunction with Bourdieu's field and its capital, Sewell's agency|structure and culture, Collin's emotional energy, and Lave and Wenger's learning communities, I lay the foundation for deceptive accessibility. I elucidate the struggles of access and identity the CBDRG members face navigating the halls of different schools to become part of this group. A very important point is the development of CBDRG into a space where classifications, stigma, and stereotypes are not found. In this new field, new cultures, identities, and roles are constructed and reconstructed as members' interactions and involvement allowed CBDRG to evolve into a community of learners, co-teachers, and practitioners of technology skills and literacy knowledge.

Chapter five demonstrates that when students and teacher plan together and share the control of a field it can result in a spirit of collaboration that assists in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Specifically, I focus on the CBDRG as a community of learning and

practice and cultural re/production of identities. Brock and Stewie's experiences as they enact newly acquired knowledge to enhance the cultural dynamics of the group also changed their identities and expanded their roles in CBDRG. This ethnography follows Brock and Stewie's participation and changes as they moved from novice learners of literacy and technology functions to knowledgeable users, and the construction of their identities as peer tutors.

Chapter six examines the mandate of IDEA that focuses on the reliance of scientifically based research to promote technology as an educational tool to improve academics. The scientific research tools include curriculum, testing, and attendance to measure achievement and promotion. I use critical theory to argue that these measures are used to sort students based on their disability and academic ability. In this sense, it is difficult to include students' lived experiences in a self-contained environment. In this chapter, deceptive accessibility is used to unearth the stakeholders' abilities to infuse NCLB/IDEA with their economic, cultural, and social goals disguised under the rubric of child interest. In CBRDG, deceptive accessibility enables me to explore the lived experiences of the members as a way to understand the positive and negative influences of segregated educational settings. By interpreting their lived experiences based on the policy tools, I refute the scientific research that justifies segregation.

Chapter seven summarizes our stories consisting of polyphony of voices—the participants', urban students classified with a disability and mine, an alternatively certified teacher. In this section, I revisit my initial research questions from chapter one, discuss the limitations and lay out the implications of this study.

Significance of the Study

Research on schools and teaching has suggested for decades that students' academic successes and future achievements are intricately associated with certified or "highly qualified"

teachers (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). It is noteworthy that the available literature primarily focuses on certified general education teachers who integrate technology as a tool into the curriculum and the positive academic outcomes (Rundle, 2004). There is a deficiency in the literature in regard to addressing the relationship between technology as a tool in special education and its impact upon the teaching and learning of a diverse population. I highlight the inclusion of cogenerative dialogues into the active research and the theoretical frameworks of CBRDG as tools for democratic research practice. While cogenerative dialogues have been used in urban science education, practices, and education research (Tobin, 2005), they have not been utilized as an approach to technology integration in special educational settings. In this research, the practices in CBRDG and enacted roles coteaching, leadership, membership, and positive socialization are not readily associated with students classified as emotionally disturbed.

Technology and Usage Defined

In order to clarify the difference between technology, its artifacts, and function, it is necessary to define technology, its devices, and its usability. Today, most people think of technology in terms of its tangible or intangible artifacts—computers, printers, SmartBoards™, applications, and software. In schools, it appears that technology is rather ill-defined, resulting in confusion about how it should be used. Furthermore, the blending of the terms “assistive” with “instructional and educational technology” is problematic. The US government in the IDEA (2004) section 20 U.S.C. ‘1401(1) defines “assistive technology” as any piece of equipment or device that can be used to increase independence of children who have physical and/or cognitive, learning, speech, visual and/or hearing disabilities by allowing the individual to live a more independent functional life. The following are among the examples of “assistive technology”: auditory materials, motor aid devices, tactile materials, positioning systems that allow access to

educational activities, computer access including switches, modified hardware, accessible software, and Internet access.

In essence, technology can be described as the process by which humans modify nature to meet their needs and wants. Postman (1993) separated technology into two distinct categories of manmade creations: invisible “high” and visible “low.” In the educational realm, we are clearly referencing the computer and its backend “high” or invisible creations of software programs including complex programs such as Visual Basic, C, JAVA, and complex business applications such as Microsoft™ Excel macro and Access Database (Marshall, 2002). The front-end “low” or visible technologies are the physical and easily manipulated tool-based application products such as books, SmartBoards™, web browser, Microsoft™ Word, PowerPoint, and other media products. The visible also includes hardware like monitors, laptops, printers, projectors, handheld devices, and all other tangible components.

While many are preoccupied with the appearance, importance, different technologies, and characteristics that make technology important for education, Lave and Wenger (1991) are concerned with the degrees of transparency. The more integrated technology is in communities of practice, the more transparent and accessible it becomes to the current and new members. Wenger (1998) said communities of practice are “… 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). In this sense, technology is the focus of learning and interest in the community. Lave and Wenger (1991) refer to technology and its use in degrees of transparency. In other words, when technology is integrated into the practices of a community it becomes transparent. In other words, Lave and Wenger are stating, that in a community such as CBRDG, social interaction is a critical component for learners to become

involved in the community which embodies certain knowledge to be produced and enacted (e.g., schemas and practices). The mechanisms that produce society is the stuff that holds it together. Collins (2004) refers to this type of community of practice as "pockets of solidarity" within interaction rituals. As explained by Collins there are four basic ingredients necessary to accomplish interaction rituals: 1) two or more people in co-presence 2) a boundary that demarcates insiders from outsiders 3) all parties to the encounter "focus their attention upon a common object or activity with mutual awareness of each other's focus of attention," 4) participants share "a common mood or emotional experience" (p. 48). When these elements combine successfully, the outcomes are discernible solidarity, emotional energy, the generation of collective symbols, and righteous indignation towards transgressors.

The Context of Special Education in New York City

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) is home to 1.1 million students. The NYCDOE provides academic supportive services to the almost 137,930 students classified with disabilities. However, of this number, approximately 23,000 students receive their education and other services away from the general student population in District 75 (D75), the citywide, self-contained division for the severely disabled (see Diagram 1.2). In D75, Hispanic students followed by Black students are the largest groups in the city's schools at slightly greater than 39% and 32%, respectively (see Table 1.1). Interestingly, these two student groups are profiled as living in poverty and represent a high percentage of the population classified with the most severe disabilities in the self-contained division. According to the United States Census Bureau population profile, the presence of a disability is associated with lower levels of income and an increased likelihood of being in poverty (see Table 1.2). The IDEA (1997), reported that

poor students of color are 2 to 3 times more likely to be identified by their teacher as having emotional disorders or mental retardation than their White counterparts.

Disability Defined

The IDEA defines an individual with disability as having mental retardation, hearing, vision, speech, orthopedic or language impairment, serious emotional disturbance, autism, traumatic brain injury, specific learning disorders, deafness, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, and other health impairments (IDEA, 2004, section 602). However, IDEA states a person is not defined by his or her disability, rather it should be considered a characteristic of his or her person. Therefore, the law guarantees a child with a disability should be served in a regular classroom with as much interaction with his or her non-disabled classmates as possible. A child with a disability may only be removed from the regular classroom when the nature or severity of the disability is such that the education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily, even with the use of supplementary aids and services. For example, a child with a speech disability may appropriately be educated in most academic areas in the regular classroom, but it may be necessary to remove the child from the classroom to work in small groups or one-on-one, specifically in the area of reading.

The Individualized Educational Plan and NYC Educational Strands

Students classified with a disability are educated based on their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). The IEP, a legal document, stipulates the educational criteria (setting, goals, and modification), types of additional support services (counseling, occupational therapy), and assessments the student must receive. In New York City, students in D75 self-contained classes are classified into two educational strands—Standardized Assessment or Alternate

Assessment—based on the severity of their disability (see Glossary). The Committee on Special Education (CSE) (see Glossary), including the student when appropriate, and the student's parents/family/guardians, make these educational and supplementary support decisions. Standardized Assessment classes are generally 12:1:1 or the more restrictive 8:1:1 setting—12 or 8 students, 1 teacher, and 1 paraprofessional. The students assigned to these academic settings are considered to be capable of taking the New York State Standardized Examinations (with testing accommodations) as the general education population. The academic program for the Standardized students is geared towards earning a regular high school diploma. Alternative Assessment classes are generally 12:1:4 and 6:1:1 to accommodate students with multiple disabilities (such as mental retardation, blindness, and orthopedic impairment).

According the New York City Department of Education website, Alternate assessment students also classified with multiple disabilities (also known as "multiply-challenged"). It refers to a student with concomitant impairments, such as mental retardation and blindness, mental retardation, and orthopedic impairment. These combinations may cause educational needs that cannot be accommodated in a standardized special education program solely for one of the impairments. Most students with multiple disabilities are educated in 12:1:4 classrooms—12 students, one teacher, and four paraprofessionals. The Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills is a series of assessment tools for use with alternate assessment students (http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/District75/Departments/MultipleDisabilities/default.htm).

Resources Input, Academic Output

In my school PS/MS South Bronx, I have noticed teachers using the computer as a behavior management tool. They often reward unruly students who exhibit good behavior with time to play games or watch videos. In this sense, computers and technology are given

entertainment value. Thus, technology is regarded as a source for games, not as a tool that can be used to acquire knowledge or research things of interest. The full benefit of technology as a tool has yet to be realized in my school. In 1982, the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) published a landmark report, "*Technology and Handicapped People*" that highlighted the potential of assistive technology to compensate for functional limitations and extend the capabilities of people with disabilities (Galvin, 1997). However, according to Galvin, there were problems related to the development of accessible and assistive technologies as well as the presence of other social issues, such as financing, ill-defined technology standards, and uncoordinated teacher education programs.

Resources

Money is the primary resource needed to fulfill NCLB/IDEA's requirement to use technology as a tool to improve academic achievement. Money for schools translates into computer equipment, Internet access, and certified teachers capable of interweaving technology into the curriculum. According to *Technology Counts* (2008), results of the annual survey in Education Week revealed that the number of computers in public schools has increased steadily since 1998, leading to virtually no difference between poor schools and their wealthier counterparts. Likewise, the National Center for Education Statistics (in Parsad, 2005) reported that public schools in the United States have made progress in expanding Internet access, demonstrating an increase in Internet installation since 1996 when only about two-thirds of public schools had Internet access. Nearly 100% of public schools in the United States had access to the Internet and no differences were observed based on school characteristics. In 2005, the ratio of students to instructional computers with Internet access in public schools was 3.8 to 1, a decrease from the 12.1 to 1 ratio first measured in 1998.

However, technology availability and technology access in schools are not the same. In many poor urban public schools, even if the student to computer ratio is the same as in more affluent schools, teachers unskilled in technology can hinder student access to technology. In 2004, the National Education Technology Plan for the U.S. Department of Education identified lack of teacher training as a primary obstacle to integrating technology into the classroom. According to this report, teachers have more resources available through technology; however, they lack sufficient training in effective use of technology to enhance learning. In other words, providing the hardware without "adequate training in its use - and in its endless possibilities for enriching the learning experience" will result in the unrealized powerful combination of technology and teaching ability to transform the educational experience of the 21st century student (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 10).

The allocation of financial resources within school districts reflects location and political positions. There is extensive literature about how the allocation of financial resources within public education affects student achievement and other student outcomes. For example, Picus (1995) looked at the past 35 years of per pupil revenue for K-12 education and found that a dramatic increase in funding has occurred. He referenced different authors who agreed that more money in education provides better opportunities for learning and higher student achievement. On the other hand, one of the earliest studies on the allocation of financial resources within American public education, *The Coleman Report* (1966), concluded that "school input did not exert a very powerful influence on student achievement by race" (Hanushek, 1997, p. 141). The Coleman report also cited social input factors such as family background, education, the characteristics of teachers, and other students in the school as influential factors upon the educational process. Approximately three decades after the publication of *The Coleman Report*,

Hanushek (1997) and Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald (1994) examined the relationship between school input and student output. In part, their studies acknowledge the claims of the Coleman report while also acknowledging that schools differ in quality, but experience conflict knowing how to measure quality.

Despite many extensive studies and analyses conducted over the last 30 years (by Coleman, Hanushek, Picus, and others), researchers have not been able to settle the debate over whether there is a positive relationship between school resources and student achievement. Although, this relationship has not been statistically confirmed or unanimously accepted, I am of the opinion that students who have access to basic educational tools (better schools, qualified teachers, functional technology, and educated parents) will ultimately achieve better than their less privileged peers.

Academic Output

Many researchers view test scores as one indicator of output measured against input indicators such as money, teachers, technology equipment, and textbooks (Hedges, Laine, & Greenwald, 1994). Test scores are an important criterion for high school graduation, college selection, and the quality of the university attended. Hanushek (1997) attributes the decline in student achievement and test scores to unskilled teachers. Like *The Coleman Report*, Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald (1994) attributes the decline in test scores to lack of financial resources. Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald stated that "relying on the data most often used to deny that resources are related to achievement, we find that money does matter after all" (1994, p. 13). In this sense, the combination of one's family, social economic standing and the school's financial position are factors that affect student achievement.

Additionally, Hedges, Laine, and Greenwald (1994) placed greater emphasis on the decline of test scores to the changing student population. Interestingly, the revised policies have not accounted for the changing racial profile. According to the United States Department of Education, the rate of increase in population of White Americans between the years of 1980 to 2000 was 6%, while the rate of increase for racial and ethnic minorities was much higher: 53% for Hispanics, 13% for African-Americans, and 10% for Asians. The American government's solution to the growth of minority students and decline in test scores is the combination of highly qualified teachers and technology. In other words, a skilled teacher who utilizes technology can improve student achievement in elementary schools and secondary schools (NCLB, 2001). As an urban public school teacher of color, I believe that technology integration has far greater potential than implementing policy goals or improving classroom instruction. Teaching with technology is a way to motivate young urban, socioeconomically disadvantaged, special education students to perform better in the classroom. At this time, it is the most equitable way to prepare students for a life outside the school walls.

Diagram 1.2

Number of District 75 and Non-District 75 Students with

Disabilities ages 6–21, overall and by setting: 2003

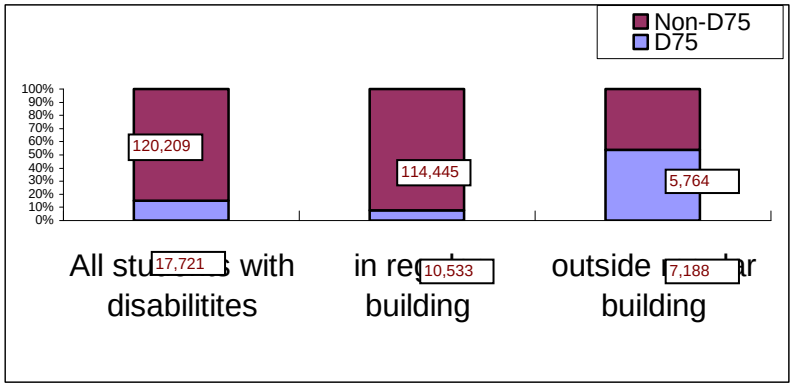


Table 1.1

New York City Department of Education Statistical Summaries Home: 2006–2007 District 75 Citywide School Region breakdown by ethnicity and gender as of 10/31/2007

		American Indian	Asian	***Hispanic***	***Black***	White	Total
Region 75	Male	131	749	***5489***	***7396***	2224	15,989
	Female	48	329	***2104***	***2573***	856	5,910
Manhattan							
Region 75	Male	15	74	1058	944	148	2,239
	Female	7	30	433	357	61	888
Bronx							
Region 75	Male	33	77	2002	1474	122	3,708
	Female	11	28	731	490	55	1,315
Brooklyn							
Region 75	Male	47	148	1183	2919	642	4,939
	Female	21	76	459	1013	265	1,834
Queens							
Region 75	Male	31	410	1050	1774	743	4,008
	Female	8	180	412	597	288	1,485
Staten Island							
Region 75	Male	5	40	196	285	569	1,095
	Female	1	15	69	116	187	388

Data Source: New York City Department of Education Statistical Summaries Home District 75 Breakdown by Region, Race, and Gender http://schools.nyc.gov

Table 1.2

New York State and City Population, Racial Break, Income, and Poverty information

(By major racial groups)

New York	New York State	NYC - Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Staten Island
Population	19,190,115	1,564, 798	1,361,473	2,472,523	2,255,175	459,737
Persons under 18	4,739,958	262,886	401,635	665,109	502,904	117,233
	(24.70%)	(16.8%)	(29.5%)	(26.9%)	(22.3%)	(25.5%)
White	13,030,088	851,250	178,353	1,018,679	714,890	356,756
	(67.90%)	(54.4%)	(13.1%)	(41.2%)	(31.7%)	(77.6%)
Black	3,051,228	272,275	578,626	899,998	475,842	44,594
	15.90%	17.4%	42.5%	36.4%	21.1%	9.7%
Asian	1,055,456	147,091	46,290	185,439	471,332	26,205
	5.50%	9.4%	3.4%	7.5%	20.9%	5.7%
Hispanic	2,897,707	425,625	698,436	489,560	588,601	55,628
	15.10%	27.2%	51.3%	19.8%	26.1%	12.1%
Person per household	2.61%	2.0%	2.8%	8.8%	2.8%	2.8%
Median household income	$43,393	$47,030	$28,173	$32,135	$39,649	$55,039
Persons below poverty	16.6%	20%	28.2%	25.1%	15.0%	10.0%

Note. The numbers in parentheses represent percentage. U.S Census Bureau State & Country Quickfacts http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3651000.html retrieved November 16, 2007

CHAPTER II

THE RESEARCHER'S EYE ON TECHNOLOGY IN [*SPECIAL*] EDUCATION

Theoretical Frameworks

> "I don't think any of us can do much about the rapid growth of new technology. However, it is possible for us to learn how to control our own uses of technology. The "forum" that I think is best suited for this is our educational system." (Neil Postman, PBS Newshour Interview, 1996)

Reflection – Fall 2007

At the end of the first session, I took the students of the comic book research dialogue group (CBRDG) back to their classrooms. I stepped off the elevator onto the fourth floor and walked the usual route to my little office. Passing the classrooms, I looked inside each and recounted the teaching items—little desks for students, big desk for teacher, book shelves, and blackboards. Some classrooms had Smartboards™ while others had more than one old Dell or Apple computer. I was not shocked that the computers were either turned off, unplugged, pushed to the side, or in pieces. My exposure to the students in CBRDG awakened in me different thoughts about the teachers in my school. I recalled that the teachers in my school are not as concerned about technology in the classroom because there is always Mr. O, the technology teacher, and the computer lab filled with functioning units. Unfortunately, only students receiving special education services categorized as "standardized" get to benefit from the technology in the computer lab at my school. I wondered if permitting the students to destroy the technology equipment was a way for the teachers to demonstrate their apprehension to teaching with technology. Then again, if the computers are broken, they do not have to use it as a tool to

teach. I thought, maybe the teachers' resistance to technology could be mediated by a disconnection between it and how it can function as a tool in education.

Researcher's Life Accommodates Technology

The 1990s were an interesting time for me. As a young adult, I had a great corporate career as a financial analyst and researcher in investment banking and the equity market. I worked in a busy environment that embraced technology and envisioned it as a necessary tool for communication and economic growth. I remember using the Internet and researching information on Nexis-Lexis and Bloomberg. Given that I was a quick learner comfortable with technology, I was often plagued by the task of acquainting new secretaries with the new technologies. However, instructing others on technology use was a seed that was planted many years ago. My father, a pivotal figure in my life, gave my siblings and me the confidence to not be afraid to try something new. Although technology had always been present in my life, I did not acknowledge it until the computer came home.

In the late 1970s, my father, a Naval Engineer familiar with the newest electronic gadgets (such as the HiFi stereo system, microwave, and movie camera), believed our social life would be enhanced by learning how to use these devices appropriately. With the advent of home computing, he introduced our family to the TRS-80 computer. The TRS-80 had programming software, spreadsheet, and word processing applications. Although games were available on the computer, he made it clear that there was more to the computer than just entertainment. Interestingly, my father took the time to identify the parts of the system, explain how the computer worked, instruct us on the applications usage, and demonstrate how we were to respect the computer. Thinking back, my father's computer orientation was reminiscent of my

Introduction to Computing class at the university level. Technology became commonplace in my life.

My foundation knowledge, experience, and exposure to technology continued to unfold as I entered high school and used the word-processing application to type my book reports and term papers for school. My teachers could not grasp the concept that I wrote my papers in a word processing application at home. They often thought someone else completed my work because it was error free of smudges and eraser marks. Through my early exposure to technology, I came to understand the backend of software processing by learning how to write programs for front end users. I learned how to program in COBOL, Pascal, C++, HTML, and other languages. In addition to learning how to program, I learned the frontend application aspect and how to run basic macros in MS Excel.

As a result of this early exposure, I understand how to make technology work for me. Moreover, my interest and exposure to technology fostered a social network that includes my siblings, colleagues in the Math and Computer Science department at two universities, and technology educators at the department of education. My membership in these communities of users provides me with a vast amount of human and non-human resources.

Technology in Special Education – Macro Push

Current school policy has engendered many changes that relate to our country's political position and ability to compete in the global market as the economic superpower. America is now an efficient, fast-paced, digital economy. This fact has caused the government to view the structure and content of teaching as inadequate to meeting future goals for our country. In Chapter one, I described the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) 2001 as the guiding educational legislation over the *Individual with Disabilities and Education Act* 2004 (IDEA). IDEA has

significant implications for K–12 special education as well as teacher education programs. NCLB states that all teachers hired after the first day of 2002–2003 school year who teach core academic subjects in a program supported with Title I funds must be highly qualified. According to *Enhancing Education Through Technology* (E2T2), one of the identifying marks of a highly qualified teacher is the ability to integrate technology as an academic tool into the curriculum to improve student achievement (NCLB, 2001). At the state and national level, policymakers have acknowledged the importance of incorporating technology into the K–12 curriculum. In conjunction with educational policies, the drive to have technology in teacher education is promoted by organizations such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). In 1999, ISTE developed national technology user standards with three iterations: 1) NETS-S for students (including six broad competency categories) 2) NETS-T for teachers and 3) NETS-A for administrators. These national technology standards identify the need for “highly qualified” teachers to learn and apply strategies using technology to support learners with diverse needs and backgrounds.

In our society, institutions such as business, religion, and government are the under the cultural and ideological domination of a privileged few. The curriculum and structure of our urban public schools are no exception. Giroux (1997) writes that, "the dominant school culture generally represents and legitimates the privileged voices of the White middle class and upper classes” (p. 141). The top-down push for technology in education, highly qualified teachers, standardized exams, and revised curriculum is reinforced by scientific research that excludes the lived experiences of students classified with a disability (van Manen, 1990). These revisions to education policy devalue the needs of students classified as requiring special educational services

in favor of aligning the teaching standards to the dominant social group. The hegemonic nature of schooling that privileges one voice is intolerant of diversity. Giroux delineates hegemony among a number of concepts (rationality, ideology, problematic, and culture) that are crucial to the way schools are structured and defined. Special education services in the American public schools represent powerful stakeholders' frameworks that equate students' knowledge and achievement with standardized curriculums and exams.

In order for researchers and educators to demystify the dominant culture and to make it an object of political analysis, we need to master the language of critical understanding. If we are to understand the dominant ideology at work in schools, we need to attend to the voices that emerge from three different ideological spheres and settings: voices from schools, students, and teachers. As a cultural critic, Postman (1993) said culture is subservient to and controlled by both invisible (I.Q. scores, statistics, polling techniques) and visible (television, computers) technologies. As evidence of this, one needs only to turn to the local news for sound bites regarding testing, standards, and accountability. As observed by Bourdieu (1977), culture is inextricably linked to power. In the same vein, illuminating the relationship between culture, knowledge, and power by discussing how the collective voice of those in authority actively work to construct particular associations between teachers and students, institutions and society, and classroom and communities (Giroux, 1997).

Critical Ethnography – Sanctions Research

The nature of this ethnography increases research reflexivity as I engage in an investigation of shared culture and experiences in CBRDG. As the teacher researcher, I focus upon 1) the experiences of Brock and Stewie (see Chapter one for reasons why I decided to

foreground the experiences of Brock and Stewie) to provide clear images of the social and historical contexts of lived experiences, 2) teacher and student practices in a special education learning environment, and 3) integration of technology as a tool for increasing fluency in literacy and usage. In this research, I offer comprehensive accounts of the structures and cultures the student participants and I encounter within the school and CBRDG. According to Tobin (2006), I have a responsibility to educate and inform all participants "in ways that afford improvements in regard to what is learned from a study" (p. 27). In this way, critical ethnography enables the researcher to go beyond a description of the culture to action for change by challenging the ideologies exposed through the research. Therefore, in this study, critical ethnography makes obvious power, race, and class struggles while exposing the tension created by education policy implementation that affects students receiving special education services.

Understanding that I will never be able to interpret and articulate my experience as a teaching fellow and researcher or to nuance the practices of Brock and Stewie accurately, hermeneutic-phenomenological lenses are utilized to enable me to elucidate with a great measure of clarity the shared lived experiences of Stewie and Brock; allowing them to speak for themselves. According to van Manen (1990), hermeneutics and phenomenology are ways of processing our experiences and finding meaning through interpretation and reflection. Van Manen states there "are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena" (p. 180). I explain the stories and situations and offer analyses of the activities as one form of truth. To provide an honest review of one's agency, actions, and practices, I acknowledge emerging patterns and contradictions in cultural enactment within and across the different fields in Brock and Stewie's lives, as evidence of reproduction and transformation of culture (Tobin, Elmesky, & Seiler, 2005).

Auto/Biography and Auto/Ethnography – Cultural Tools for Examination

Auto/biographies are narrative forms that tell who someone is in terms of strings of events that together constitute a singular life. My autobiography is rooted in the scholarly personal narrative methodology labeled as auto/ethnography. As a genre, this methodology encompasses the ethnographic interests of the researchers with the lived experiences of the participating stakeholders to use the life experience to generalize to a larger group or culture (van Manen, 1990). According to Roth, it is virtually impossible to "separate the observer from the observed" (2005, p. 8). As the teacher and researcher who uses technology and has membership in CDRGD, I am both researcher and researched, as well as teacher and researcher. Although, it is clear that I reflect on my own experiences with education and technology, I should not take my own assumptions for granted since they are coming from within a culture where technology was commonplace. Situated in the scholarship, I narrate my personal experiences with technology integration, as a teaching fellow and researcher in special education, and as a member of CBRDG in conjunction with academic research to support the questions posed and to examine something larger than my individual story (Collins, 2004).

CBRDG's Ethnography and Ontology

Auto/ethnography is used to explore ontological authenticity. Guba and Lincoln (1989) define ontological authenticity as the way we expand and mature as a result of how we analyze and interpret the elements of our environment. I use this to explore and show the changes in my ontological stance with respect to research. It shows that my theoretical and empirical arguments change as the research questions become nuanced over time. As the teacher, researcher, and subject, I am conscious of how my cultural, socioeconomic, and lived experiences play a role in construing the different pieces of evidence that will support my claim. I found a way to

understand my experience with technology and teaching from the perspective of an alternatively certified teaching fellow by approaching the story through an auto/ethnographic narrative lens. In this process, I subjected my claims to radical doubt (Roth, 2005) because the experience as a technology user and teaching fellow is contingent upon my prior knowledge and experiences. Respecting that research and writing is an evolutionary process; my story is not represented in a linear manner. Throughout this work, non-sequential narratives of my past and current experiences with technology in CBRDG are punctuated in order to highlight my position in the multiple realities. For the students and me, our histories, our present circumstances, and the various communities in our lives help shape the activities in which we engage.

Educational Fields: Identity and Capital

Bourdieu (1997) defines *fields* as systems of objects with differential relations between properties of capital. In a field, capital is defined as worthy only to the extent that possessing it incurs the ability to profit or access profit specific to the field. Fields have internal and external influences that set the stage for struggle and direct actors towards specific forms of struggle through the structures. Acquiring cultural capital is essential to developing and expanding agency in a field. Teachers and students have the opportunity to acquire a variety of capital as they participate in various fields. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, I refer to a social space in which culture is enacted as a field (Swartz, 1997). It is necessary to create a new space free of boundaries that could suffocate the cultural enactment and natural creativity of individuals. The introduction of a new teaching and learning field like CBRDG to encourage the use of technology can aid both teachers and students in obtaining the cultural capital necessary to integrate technology into their curricula and schoolwork.

Identity

As an educator and researcher, I had to establish my identity within CBRDG to gain the participants' respect, trust, and permission to become a member of their group. I had to reassure the members, although I am a teacher and researcher as well as a participant, I was not passing judgment or grading their work. I believe since we were on school property, the transition was easy because the students still viewed me as a teacher. However, once the students understood that their participation was voluntary and our meetings together were not part of the school's curriculum, I felt they were more at ease. Hall (1990) mapped out two ways to understand how cultural identity is formed. The first position defines cultural identity in terms of "one shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self,' hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves,' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (p. 394). The other position defines cultural identity in terms of change that responds to specific historical contexts. In other words, the identity belongs to both the past and future because it is incomplete and is constantly evolving. Hall's notion of cultural identity formation through transformation works well with explaining students classified with a disability and alternatively certified teachers because it emphasizes the role migration and historical context play in transforming identities. In CBRDG, although a teacher, I was not a formal classroom teacher, but a participant and contributing member.

Meaning of Capital(s) – Cultural, Social, Symbolic

Capital or a person's knowledge of practices and schemas within a particular field varies in type—cultural, social, and symbolic. It is both embodied and socially constituted, and sometimes people are aware of the capital they possess while at other times they are not. On the days when I had to retrieve the participants of CBRDG from the cafeteria, I always had time

between the pickup and destination to engage in interesting conversation with them. I did not carry any recording devices with me. Rather, I took it to the lab prior to picking up the students because I found it easier to navigate the halls without fielding inquiries from others. These urban youth are amazing, perhaps because they were volunteers for this project and not assigned students. Accordingly, I found the members of the group, particularly Brock and Stewie, to always be pleasant and excited about the next session.

As a new public school teacher, working with difficult self-contained students as my first teaching experience, I admit to the development of adverse thoughts of poor urban youth who are labeled as emotionally disturbed. However, my weekly exposure to the CBRDG's members became the catalyst for changing my opinion and renewing my hope and spirit as a teacher. Upon entering the computer lab, we convene for a collective and specific purpose of learning technology and creating a comic book. I am no longer a teacher in the self-contained division and I no longer view the students by their classification or educational setting. There were times I would be completely involved in the transition that I would forget the recorder, and although conscious of the devices, the students would remind me to switch it on because they liked to see themselves in replay. For example, at the beginning of week two, we sat in the lab and I began speaking about the previous discussion and activities and the current session topics to be covered. Stewie stopped me to say, "The recorder isn't on." Then Brock looked at me and said, "The recorder isn't on. What! We are not being recorded? We can start again, right?" For me as a new researcher, the presence of the recording device perhaps became a symbol imbued with mildly positive emotional energy. The students' acknowledgement and positive emotional response demonstrates a fortified collective energy that Collins (2004) describes as "pockets of solidarity" (p. 15). During the replays of the session, I did not realize that, unconsciously, I relied

heavily on the recording device, which is symbolic of our activities together (Collins, 2004). In other words, if I did not have the recorder, I could have missed the little nuances of our interactions.

Cultural capital is comprised of the skills, knowledge, behaviors and dispositions acquired throughout a person's life as that person participates in cultural practices (Elmesky, 2001). Bourdieu (1997) stated that cultural capital exists in three distinct forms: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. 1) Cultural capital is embodied in the individual. It is both inherited (culture, tradition) and acquired (gestures and manner of dress) properties of one's self. 2) The objectified state of cultural capital refers to tangible goods (i.e., money, pictures, machines), and includes possessing properties that are defined and transmissible in materiality within the relationship. 3) The institutionalized state of cultural capital is the individual's educational qualifications, which confer on the holder a "conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to the culture" (p. 50). It is a measure of the possessor's degree of ownership. Bourdieu (1997) further defines the notion of *habitus*, as a set of subjective structures that are associated with a field (social, political, economic) and within which the individual's acquired interests and position are defined. In other words, an individual's habitus is his or her knowledge in action. In this study, habitus is used to describe the part of cultural capital that is cultivated throughout the individual's lifeworld and unconsciously enacted. Part of my habitus might be the unconscious disposition to move closer to first observe a student participant in CBRDG who might appear to have difficulty with writing or technological functions before offering assistance.

Social capital involves a person's ability to interact in or form social networks. Social capital involves who you know rather than what you know. It is linked to cultural capital, since a

person's ability to interact within various social circles is dependent upon his or her knowledge of the social norms of the group to which she wishes to gain access (Bourdieu, 1997). *Symbolic capital* is the status one achieves; it can involve earning respect or trust, or looking good to peers. Symbolic capital involves the labeling of an object or attribute as valuable. Tied very closely to social capital, symbolic capital can be earned through the way you dress, look, speak, or the material possessions that you have. It can also be linked to a person's race, ethnicity, gender, or economic background (Bourdieu, 1997).

Schema, Resources and, Agency|Structure

There are various types of schemas that create structures (e.g., person—student or sister, self, role—teacher or doctor, event—school or hospital.) Sewell (1992) defines schemas as rules, procedures, and ideas that are general and contribute to either the production or reproduction of social life. Within these structures are social elements that contain both valuable and invaluable rules and resources. Sewell believes that human and nonhuman resources can be viewed as schemas that obtain meaning and value through social context and relationships. The resources, both human and nonhuman, range from tangible objects (computers, printers, and paper) that are available in a particular field to the knowledge and teaching skills of an individual (Elmesky, 2001). Schemas and resources are dialectical in that "schemas not empowered or regenerated by resources would eventually be abandoned and forgotten, just as resources without cultural schemas to direct their use would eventually dissipate and decay" (Sewell, 1992, p. 13). Schemas and resources mutually sustain each other while they work together to either reproduce or transform culture.

Agency and Structure

Agency is one's ability to exert direction over social situations. Additionally, Sewell's theory views structures as interconnected with human agency, because actors transpose rules. In education, structure can take many forms such as language, policies, and political power (Sewell, 1992). The structure of language is prominent because how it is used can unconsciously shape the disposition of a person. For example, the common use of terminology such as instructional technology, educational technology, technology integration, mediated instruction are schemas or mutually reinforcing rule-resource sets that constitute teachers' understandings and experiences in the field. A person's agency, or ability to act or exert direction in a given situation, is shaped by and simultaneously shapes structure and culture (Sewell, 1992). Giroux (1997) argues that students should develop a counter-discourse that challenges and critiques the models of Western school culture. The ability of an individual to exert direction over social actions and interactions, or agency, is crucial to this study that hopes to contribute to the agenda of interrupting the reproduction of stratification.

New York City's public schools, as of 2003, are mandated to teach a *Balanced Literacy* curriculum. The curriculum is designed to control the functions of the teacher by providing prepared lesson plans and a month-by-month course outline. The curriculum aims to make teachers better prepared while addressing the student population with the most essential academic material through reinforced rote learning of facts and formulas specifically to enhance performance on the New York State standardized tests. However, in special education, we must modify the curriculum to the needs of each student while still preparing students adequately for New York State standardized tests. In addition, based on the results of the practice exams, my local school administration requires all teachers to focus their teaching upon deficiencies

revealed in the test results. As a teacher of special education, I am both enabled and at the same time constrained by the rules of the city, state, and school administration. According to the *Balanced Literacy* curriculum, students must be immersed and exposed to a literature rich environment for all subjects (e.g., classroom libraries, wall words, posters, bulletin boards, and other like items). In fact, the word *literacy* has been attached to math, science, social studies, and technology. Unlike the normal 40-minute periods of teaching to the entire class, *Balanced Literacy* enforces small group learning and double periods for each subject with a preferential stress on English, Language Arts, and Mathematics. Considering I only had two computers in my classroom, the small group afforded me the time and teaching abilities to effectively integrate aspects of technology into the students' writing components. Although confined by the leveled structure and rules, I, a human resource for technology, was able to expose my students to using the computer as a tool to read, write, and conduct simple research, thus transforming the structure of the classroom and empowering the agency of my students (Tobin, Elmesky & Seiler, 2005).

Members' Agency

It was important to provide a space within the school environment that was mentally separate from the school's culture and policy. In my school, the students labeled as emotionally disturbed are constantly reminded of their difference due to separate educational settings and being physically separated from the general education student population (see Chapter IV). The separation afforded the members of CBRDG from different educational settings to come together as one group of students. As a group in a new field, we were liberated from the different schools, classrooms, and teachers rules and regulations. We were free and without restriction to explore the functions of technology in conjunction with literacy and enjoy conversations about their

work. All individuals have agency and can change the patterns of their actions as practices unfold and culture is enacted; thus, individuals' actions can be unpredictable. Therefore, it was necessary to work together in a space where we all could feel free from the constraints of the school environment. Giroux (1997) suggests that students must also be given the opportunity to challenge disciplinary borders, create pluralized spaces from which hybridized identities might emerge, take up critically the relationship between language and experience, and appropriate knowledge as part of a broader effort at self-definition and ethical responsibility" (p. 263). In CBRDG, Brock and Stewie's membership enabled them to structure the field to accommodate their learning of technology and to enact cultural practices.

Group Dialogue

The use of group dialogues was a way to create an intangible space free of standard rules and restrictions. The format allowed the free production of newly acquired cultures (e.g., talking without raising hands and exploring the environment) not permitted in the formal classrooms. The practice of dialogue is based on Tobin and Roth's (2006) *cogenerative dialogue*, as a way for students and teachers to distinguish between a formal classroom and create a space where talk about teaching practices and learning can take place. Roth and Tobin (2002) used cogenerative dialogue in their classrooms to inform how instruction was planned, delivered, and ultimately enacted. In my research, I use the practice of dialogue as a way to produce a new learning culture that allows the students to align teaching and learning. The dialogue group became an area for CBRDG to meet and mutually share information, ideas, and culture with each other, learn technology, and act out new culture. When I instruct the CBRDG members in technology, the structure of the field is different from when I am conducting my own class. Outside of this group, I am a classroom teacher. The students and I are regulated by school

policy and rules that are reinforced by classroom rules. Although, I include dialogue format in my classroom, the cluster teachers who instruct my students use the traditional direct teaching method. As a result, students who are accustomed to exploring their classroom and sharing without raising hands become confused when the traditional direct teaching method is used. I, therefore, must use the methods sanctioned by the administration.

Learning Communities: Individual/Collective and Identity Re/Construction

Social interaction is a critical component of learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe learning as an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world. As learners become involved in a learning *community of practice* and acquire the embodied values, beliefs, and behaviors, they move from the periphery to the center—they become situated in learning. The involvement in the community, or situated learning, becomes intentional. Learning is viewed as a trajectory of development leading to competence through a process of guided participation in which newcomers participate in attenuated ways in the practices of a particular community, or legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). LPP is used to describe participants' engagement in the practices of a community where participants have different degrees of familiarity with these practices. Participants may be experts or novices, or what Lave and Wenger call old timers and newcomers. It may be noteworthy, however, that the notion of socialization into a particular community in this conception does not imply homogeneity or assimilation. Instead, Lave and Wenger recognized that old timers and newcomers have different opportunities for access to participation and to community resources. In addition, they are differently empowered, are variously involved in negotiating legitimate activities for the community, and are simultaneously in conflict and affiliation with one another.

Like Hall (1990), Lave and Wenger (1991) agree that identity is not stable, but is a constant work of progress. Therefore, learning and a sense of identity are inseparable. In other words, when one acquires new knowledge, information, or a skill, the identity changes to accommodate for necessary changes. In the CBRDG, learning not only involves teacher-to-student but also student-to-student interactions, and devices from the electronic world community. Further, the CBRDG learning communities are dynamic in that members assume various roles at different times depending on the needs of the learners.

Research Methods Capture Practices

My orientation toward technology comes from an interest in doing a better job at my life's work. I can say, "Technology has always been part of my life." Moreover, my father's words constantly resonate with me, "Technology will improve your life and work." In my school, I had the opportunity to train the teachers during our professional development sessions on various ways to incorporate technology into their teaching. However, I found the teachers' blatant resistance and sour attitude towards technology directly related to their inability to make the connection to the curriculum. Additionally, my desire to insist they learn technology left me feeling disillusioned. At that point, it was very clear that the adults in the classroom structured learning and how it was introduced. Since they were not using technology, the learning environments were qualitatively impoverished. I wondered if an alternative way to infuse technology into the curriculum might be through students' practices. I turned my attention to the students, and worked on developing their relationship with technology. My inquisitiveness about students' abilities and desires to learn far outweighed the obstacles presented by adults. I believe the student learner is capable of becoming engaged in a process of deep exploration and project production rather than an exercise in memorization. This study uses a variety of data resources,

including videotapes, audiotapes, teacher/researcher field notes, and artifacts such as students' writing samples and finished comic books. In so doing, I endeavor to capture teaching and learning with technology, nuances of interactions, and cultural enactment in a field especially designed for this research—the CBRDG. While cogenerative dialogues have been used in urban science education, practices, and education research (Tobin, 2005), they have not been utilized as an approach to technology integration in special educational settings. In this respect, I anticipate that the use of small group and open dialogue or cogenerative dialogue could be used as a way for teacher and students to learn more about each other. In addition, as a teaching method, dialogue discussion groups that permit students to take turns speaking without raising their hands might be a way to awaken their spirits to embrace a different way of learning.

The Comic Book Research Dialogue Group

In late October 2007, I began designing this study. As a teacher in District 75[8] (D75), working with students classified with a disability from different educational settings meant the students had to navigate through two different school structures (rules, time, and lunch sessions) in one building. I planned to look at CBRDG members' progress as they integrated technology skills and literacy over a six-week period. I wanted the participants to be able to explore the reading and writing process through the creation of their own comic books. Therefore it was necessary to focus on the most efficient and effective technological applications to facilitate the CBRDG members' learning while allowing them to enjoy the process. In addition to learning the writing process and terminology associated with it, the students learned how to navigate the

[8] District 75 is a separate school district that provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, severely challenged, and/or multiply disabled. District 75 consists of 56 school organizations, home and hospital instruction, and vision and hearing services. The schools and programs are located at more than 350 sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island and Syosset, New York. The mission of District 75 is to provide appropriate standards-based educational programs, with related service supports, to approximately 23,000 students with severe challenges, commensurate with their abilities.

desktop environment to locate and use Microsoft™ office applications to create their story lines, upload and manipulate images, and publish the finished product while simultaneously learning basic technological terms.

My hope was to collect data on individual student experiences to compare and analyze for patterns within group interactions. However, when filming commenced in November 2007, I soon realized that of the five participants, only Brock and Stewie were regular in attendance. In poor urban schools, absenteeism is high and normal. Influences such as illness, unsteady home life, lack of educational role models, and low parental interest are some of the catalysts that negatively impact the lives of PS/MS South Bronx students (Wilson, 1996). Nonetheless, as Brock and Stewie became central figures in the study, the shape of my research manifested greater depth of knowledge about potential relationships between teacher-student and student-student. During our short walks to the computer lab, we had time to talk about different topics of interest. Brock and Stewie expressed their interest in technology, school, and comic books. I believe their own desires to do well in school and interest in technology fostered their regular school attendance. As the two more stable members, Brock and Stewie expressed an interest in learning more than creating their comic books. They wanted to learn how to use technology to type their homework, do research, view movies, and play games. In hindsight, to perform micro-analysis of a group would have been an enormous task. Fortunately, my research scope and selection was narrowed for me. Nonetheless, throughout the research sessions, I was able to collect data from all members of the group.

Fall 2007 – The Research Subjects

The main purpose of CBRDG is to examine the ways each participant makes choices specifically around the use of technology as an academic tool to enhance the way I teach and

students enhance their literacy skills. Within CBRDG "social action and opinion are locally distinct and situationally contingent" (Erickson, 1998, p. 1155) upon the elements of that field. Moreover, to capture the essence of ethnographic research it is necessary to "document in detail the conduct of everyday events and to identify the meanings that those events have for those who participate in them for those who witness them" (p. 1155). All of this work is focused on creating a transformative learning culture so that students labeled with a disability could use their produced culture to improve their educational experiences.

The School's Community

PS/MS South Bronx, the school where my research takes place, is located in the highest poverty section of The Bronx. The South Bronx is synonymous with low educational expectations and images of destroyed buildings, drug infestation, rampant poverty, and gang activity. These structures are part of CBRDG students' lives and influence their academic performance. In the South Bronx, the 2007 Point2Homes reported the population as 522,412 and the dominant racial groups as Hispanic at 60% and Black 39%. These numbers are mirrored by the teacher population that reflects the surrounding school community. I am part of the minority of teachers who live outside the school's community. In 1979, my family moved to Riverdale, Bronx where I am currently *still* a resident. Interestingly, the South Bronx community is juxtaposed to Riverdale community. Based on its location, historic homes, private schools, socio economics, and prominent individuals, Riverdale is described as affluent. In 2000, the United States Census Bureau reported the median income for New York City's five boroughs as $37,000. However, separating the boroughs changes the income levels significantly. In the Bronx, it is $27,611. Interestingly, in Riverdale, Bronx the median income is $52,000. When I look at the financial structure within the Bronx communities, different levels are apparent. In the

South Bronx, 39% of the residents are living below the poverty line. Poverty and living conditions can impact academics. In the South Bronx, despite the efforts of the parents, teachers and school community as a whole, the students scored 49%, below the national average in Math, and 64% in Reading. Only 40% of the students met the State standards in reading and less than a third in math. Unlike the South Bronx, in Riverdale more than 90% of the students in the public school community meet the State standards in reading and math for their grade level. Unfortunately the association of poverty and disability manifests itself in below average reading and math scores. (See Diagram 2.1)

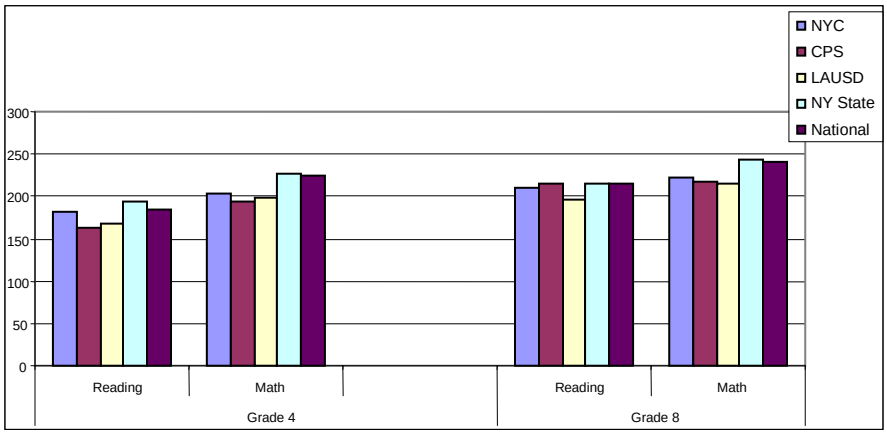


Diagram 2.1: Average scaled NAEP scores for students with disabilities, by grade and subject, for New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York State, and the Nation: 2003

The numerous structures (e.g. poverty, classification, policy, and curriculum) that impact students with disabilities academic performance are reflected in the above table. Students with disabilities in New York City schools standardized exam scores are lower than the average for all students with disabilities in the state and nation. Additionally, when I look at the self-contained students' academic performance in my school, I realize that grouping students by disability classification is not educationally beneficial to the student. In addition, since NCLB and IDEA

states that students should have fair and equal opportunities to become academically literate in all subjects, the data demonstrates that the students' self-contained setting is unfair.

Data Sources

A central focus of the study is cultural and identity re/production and enactment. The tools necessary to gather and capture the qualitative data for an interpretive descriptive approach are real time audio and video recordings of the dialogue group, conversation analysis, audio, and video reflection of the comic book, and student artifacts. Kling (1989) believes that to make or support an argument in qualitative research it is necessary to employ multiple theoretical frameworks, multiple methodologies, and multiple sources of evidence. Erickson (1998) affirms that use of a variety of data resources is a necessary characteristic of ethnographic research.

> Looking and asking in a setting can produce differing sources and kinds of data ... field notes written by an observer; interview comments; machine recordings; and site documents, including demographic and historical material. An effective data collection design includes as many of these different sources as possible... (p. 1158).

Informed by Guba and Lincoln (1989), I blend multiple methods and data sources to increase the reliability and validity of my interpretation as well as to establish trustworthiness of the data.

Videotapes and Audiotape

Guided by Sewell's (1999) ideas on culture, I collected a variety of data to identify and isolate enacted culture as patterns that have thin coherence and associated contradictions. I videotaped all group dialogue sessions, which included the creative writing process, peer-to-peer dialogue interactions, technology training, students' interfacing with technology, and coteaching. Initially, there were two cameras used – one on a tripod and the second hand held by Elliot, a

participant who was not permitted to be video or audio taped. Both cameras were equipped to capture still and moving images along with sound. Once Elliot stopped attending, I decided to continue with one camera. I recorded all sessions so that I could view the data multiple times and at various speeds, enabling me to identify patterns, contradictions and interactions (Sewell, 1999). The videotapes were transcribed using the conventions of conversation analysis employed by Roth (2005). Cultural enactment became evident as I listened to and viewed the discussions. I noted eye movements, hand gestures, body movements, and head nods that represent a group in concert and solidarity (Collins, 2004). I used two editing software packages to analyze the data on the micro level. First, I viewed and listened to the clips in InterVideo, WinDVD, or Apple QuickTime to isolate vignettes. Then I used Windows Movie Maker editing software to split the larger video clip into smaller more manageable data clips for coding, identifying individual and group interactions and to capture photographs of different activities.

Artifacts

The participants of CBRDG were there to improve their literacy skills through technology as a tool. The end product was the creation of a personalized comic book. Therefore, I collected their handwritten concepts or story summaries, character descriptions, drawn images, and comic strip story outlines. Since the students were not under pressure to complete the comic, only Brock and Stewie finished their comic. I have included a copy of both comics as artifacts as well as Stewie and Brock's individual presentation (see Chapters V and VI) of their comics to the group. Such data afforded invaluable insights into the processes used by students during the project. I also collected partial work from Daniel and KK. Elliot had difficulty working on his comic because he was not able to participate in the dialogue or technology practices. However, his position in the background allowed him to fully observe and absorb technology from the

perspectives of his peers. Additionally, he learned the technical aspects of the video equipment. As a result, he was free to walk around the lab and record various interactions and activities between the other members. In this sense, I am grateful that Elliot took an active interest in learning about the equipment because I would not have the wonderful data on Stewie and Brock's emergence as skilled learners, users, and coteachers in the group.

Research Quality

Trustworthiness and authenticity criteria (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) represent two distinct means for judging the quality of research that is not of the positivist genre. This critical ethnography is best described as one that has ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), *ontological authenticity* relates to ensuring participants own emic constructions of social life are altered and the researcher documents the changing perceptions. *Educative authenticity* means ensuring that the stakeholders in the research are informed and understand the study and learn from it and appreciate the constructions of others. As the result of the study these are expected to change over time as adjustments are made, *catalytic authenticity* focuses on the researchers' obligations to provide information that can work to expand and enhance the stakeholders' agency. *Tactical authenticity* obligates the researcher to provide additional support to participants who need help. In the following sections, I also include research trustworthiness and authenticity as other criteria.

Research Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, I considered fairness, credibility, dependability, and transferability as important ingredients in this unfolding research process

(Guba & Lincoln, 1989). *Fairness*, as laid out by Guba and Lincoln (1989), entails recognizing stakeholders and their value systems. This means identifying potential stakeholders, seeking out their opinions and constructions. At the start, I had concerns that the length of time for the study would not be sufficient for me to recognize stakeholders' positions or to establish the relationship and build the trust necessary to permit immersion of oneself in and building an understanding of the context of culture. However, this study reveals findings that indicate an establishment of rapport and trust with the CBRDG student participants. In fact, due to the multiple roles the students engaged in, there was a variety of context in which the members and I interacted and from which data resources and research findings emerged. For example, in chapter four, five, and six, Brock undertakes coteaching with other members of CBRDG. Having previously learned how to use Microsoft ™ Word, and steps to scan images, Brock offered assistance to Daniel and KK. Stewie also assumed different roles, as he became a solicitor of information and coteacher. He would constantly ask members of the status on their work and offer help with reading, editing, and fluency. As students of the school, and participants in CBRDG learning community, of which both fields have schemas and resources (human and non-human), Brock and Stewie had to learn how to utilize aspects of their capital in order to exert agency in ways that resulted in new learning and teaching. As a result, their identities changed continuously through their active participation.

Throughout the CBRDG project to completion, the *credibility* of the research findings was confirmed, denied, and altered through the member checking process. A valuable research tool, member checking, is a technique used to lend credibility to the development of profiles. The participants were reassured that I was neither evaluating them individually nor identifying them by classifications or programs. To keep track of Brock and Stewie's expanding roles (e.g.,

coteacher, leadership) and thought processes, it was important to check my own evolving constructions. I had formal and informal conversations with Brock and Stewie regarding their perceptions of video vignettes, dialogue sessions, technology instructions, and artifacts produced. In doing so, I hoped to be able to identify the students' underlying value systems and honor them within my analysis, while also ensuring that the four authenticity criteria were also being met. *Dependability* refers to whether the research has taken into account the expected instability of the phenomenon in question, as well as the potential change that may have resulted from the study design itself. *Transferability* refers to the possibility of this research being transformative for both those involved and those who will engage in reading it. I address the transferability of this study in the concluding chapter (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Research Authenticity

Urban students classified as disabled probably know that "it is quite possible to want, even to need, to act, but to lack the power to do so in any meaningful way" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 250). This study is concerned with catalytic authenticity, which I define as action and change in the social transformation of student agency and group members' identity re/construction. During my research activities with the CBRDG, and more specifically with Brock and Stewie, my primary concern was that the data collected and analyzed would potentially improve students' immediate lifeworld conditions. It is through participation in this study that knowledge of students' agency can increase.

To ensure the authenticity of this study, I was bound by fairness, ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical criteria (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). As a member in the research process, I tried to ensure that my participation within the group helped each member to become more aware of our own constructions and how they differ from or are similar to the constructions of

others and how our considerations, actions, and identities are shaped by the forces of social, cultural, and political structures. The video data of the group during dialogue discussion and technology instructions and my reflective journal entries recorded Brock and Stewie's enacted expanded roles. To illustrate, due to Brock and Stewie's participation and desire to learn technology, they acquired expert skills and emerged as coteachers in the group. The enactment of expanded roles is a marker of catalytic authenticity demonstrating that our cooperative work was a form of authentic research.

Based on my exposure to CBRDG, I was able to reflect and record my own changing constructions as a teacher who recognized Brock and Stewie's abilities and allowed them to enact new culture in their expanded roles. I solicited feedback and input from the group members so that I could alter my teaching practices that students found to be constraining. For example, when instructing MS Word, I allowed the students to decide whether they wanted to continue practicing with me or work on their own dedicated machine. Their decision to work independently allowed me to understand that students need the space, time, and opportunity to enact culture within CBRDG and the classroom.

Researcher's Eye on Technology in Education: What I Learned

When we change the structure of an onion by cutting it, it makes us cry. However, it has become a necessary and tasty ingredient in some food preparation. In a similar way, the educational changes to include technology into the curriculum have caused teachers in my school distress. Postman said there is not anything that can be done about the rapid growth of new technology; the best forum is our educational system. As an alternatively certified teacher well versed in technology, I see the possibilities for academic growth when technology is introduced and used properly. In CBRDG, technology was used as a tool to improve literacy skills. It was

essential to provide the students classified as disabled with access to the school's computer lab so they could learn to use technology (machines and applications) and incorporate with literacy activities to create a comic book based on their own ideas. My technology foundation knowledge and strengths as a teacher enabled the CBRDG participants to acquire skills necessary for academic success in their classrooms and home lives. Additionally, access to the computer lab allowed the students to practice on dedicated machines and an opportunity to build their knowledge, skill, and confidence. The structure and use of technology in CBRDG created the occasion for the students and me to relieve ourselves of our traditional student–teacher roles. In CBRDG, technology use offers the opportunity for role change that teachers and students have traditionally played. As technology was dispensed and learned, I was free to coach and facilitate student learning. With technology monitoring learning, students can become active learners, working to effectively acquire new skills as they solve problems. Reflecting on my journal notes and video data, I observed my implementation of technology and the impact on student learning. The stimulation I experienced from the group enabled me to present more complex tasks and material. As time passed, their independence grew and my position changed from the dispenser of knowledge to a coach. The students were motivated to attempt harder tasks and to take more care in crafting their works. This was the most salient observed behavior.

As a teacher/researcher/participant of CBRDG, I witnessed the positive impact of technology as an academic tool. As a small research group not controlled by school policy, classroom politics, teachers' views, or the school culture, the students and I freely used technology and enacted new culture. Being part of this action research, I could document the teaching and learning activities and culture enacted to make sense of its patterns of coherence and contradictions within the group and how it relates to the school system and society at large.

However, whenever attempts are made to study the culture and inner workings of a school system, political opposition is ignited over issues such as the use of technology, how to integrate it into the curriculum, and its general uses in the classroom. It is the responsibility of educational researchers, like myself, to conduct research appropriately frame studies in a way that makes sense to the community. For example, critical ethnography highlights the important ingredients of power, race, identity, and class struggle as a way to understand what is occurring in schools. As the researcher, I look beyond the classroom and see the schools from various levels of penetration—macro, meso, or micro. In this study, urban schools are understood as sites where systems of cultural practices and symbols lead to the oppression of students, particularly ones similar to the members of CBRDG who are classified as needing special education services. In order to be emancipatory in this research, I closely examine and isolate the hegemonic practices that are embedded in teaching and replicated in the classroom, such as the rules that confine students to their seats, require them to raise their hands to be heard to name a few. The use of cogenerative dialogue as a tool to improve teaching and learning enable me to explore the intersection of choice and constraint within the culture of CBRDG and reject the oppressive teaching practices that are commonplace within the traditional classroom.

I learned that culturally grounded understanding should be taken into consideration in an effort to develop the practice of using technology as a teaching and learning tool that is equitable, liberating, empowering, and inclusive, rather than oppressive and reproductive of the hegemonic society. I also acknowledge that learning entails practices that include micro level acts that lead to the participation in central aspects of the culture. Therefore, it is crucial to provide students with different opportunities to enact new roles in order for them to learn new skills and new ways to interact effectively in any learning situation. Since students either must

know or learn culture that is specific to their classes, CBRDG became a social space for practice. Therefore, during this project, the members were fully engaged in the technological learning process, which allowed them to become vocal and active, thus building a sense of empowerment so that transformation could be an option for them.

CHAPTER III

THROUGH THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION:

A Teaching Fellow and Technology Integration In a Bronx School Examined Through Agency|Structure Dialectic

> The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man. (George Bernard Shaw 1856–1950)

Reflection – Technology Conference Spring 2007

In late spring 2007, I had the opportunity to attend the "*Media Overseas Conversation (IV) – An International Conference on Media Literacy-Ecology-Studies-Education"* sponsored by Fordham University. Technology in education as a tool to improve literacy skills was the hot topic. Over the course of the conference, I listened to the proponents and opponents for technology in education. The individuals who praised technology expressed how they see it as a vehicle that can close the achievement gap between the races and offer equity when used properly as an academic tool (Cowie, 1995). Of course, the discussion on technological equity, as usual, was geared toward students in general education. As a special education/inclusion teacher, I know that urban, poor students in my school are faced with issues of equity because they do not have the same exposure to technology as their general education counterparts nor do they share the same knowledge of how technology relates to learning. I feel that some of these hindrances to technological equity can also be traced to teachers' lack of technology skills and training as well as the impact of their home community's economic structure upon the school and students' personal lives (Cuban, 1986). Applying both the tangible obstacles and knowledge acquired at the conference about technology to my school enabled me to understand the teachers'

fears, feelings of inadequacy, and unfamiliarity with technology. I believe the biggest fears could be associated with lack of training on how to infuse technology into the curriculum (Cuban, 1986). Moreover, the traditional teachers and I must contend with challenging impediments that directly impact our abilities to integrate technology into teaching—such as broken classroom desks, outdated equipment, behavioral problems, and peer rejection. (In this dissertation, I use the word traditional with teaching, teachers, and school to refer to my school and my experience. In terms of teachers, I use traditional to make a distinction between those who received formal teacher training, unlike myself and have an undergraduate degree in education.) Cuban (1986) found that the greatest obstacles to technology integration are associated with cost, equipment failure, and maintenance of equipment security by teachers and administrators, management of warrantees by administrators, and lack of familiarity in using the equipment.

It is interesting to think, if teachers embrace technology and are given functioning equipment, appropriate training, and support, they might be able to utilize technology in the classroom. I think when teachers are given these opportunities, they are able to release feelings of apprehension, embrace technology, and reconstruct their identities as users. I recall my start as a teacher and reconstructing my identity to become a special educator who utilizes technology in the classroom. I too experienced intangible and tangible obstacles to my teaching style in the form of outdated equipment, negative critique, and opposition from traditional teachers, students, and their parents.

Becoming a Teacher

I entered the educational field through the New York City Teaching Fellows Program (see Glossary), an alternative route to teaching certification that recruits and hires highly qualified professionals. I enjoyed the entire rigorous process. I attended The City College of New

York (CCNY), a City University of New York senior school for my formal teacher education, and met others who transitioned to the teaching profession. I interned at a school in midtown Manhattan. I felt the classroom setup, students' disposition, and teachers were similar to my childhood school. The rooms were equipped with enough desks and chairs for the students. The structure and displays appeared to embrace teaching and learning. The students had textbooks and newer, updated, working computer equipment, software, and printer. The school's community was clean possibly due to the mix of expensive residential high-rise buildings, businesses, and high-end department stores. I felt comfortable and safe. I worked well in the school and enjoyed the community. When the administrator of this school left to work at a new school in the South Bronx, she asked if I would consider working for her. I liked this administrator's work ethic and decided to make the move to an uptown school. I soon experienced a disconnection between what I knew and who I had to become.

My physical, mental, and emotional transition into the actual school building and surrounding community was (and continues to be) difficult. I experienced the location of PS/MS South Bronx, a District 75 (D75) (see Glossary) school for students with multiple disabilities, as a clash of culture and identity. As I walked to school on the first day, I felt an internal shock to my system. I had to walk through the unavoidable underpass that smelled of urine and liquor and was heavily littered with garbage, pigeon droppings, and abandoned cars tagged by the police. The underpass opened to reveal the scenery and sounds of the neighborhood. I noticed the six-story buildings, police station, store on the corner, carpet store, and the little bit of greenery in this part of town outside of the Botanical Gardens. Approaching the school, I was greeted by the unmistakable sounds of people walking in a rush, children's voices as they played, and the school bus beeping as it held up the flow of traffic. Soon thereafter, I realized that five days a

week I would have to make a personal transformation. I would leave the comforts of my residential and safe community to teach in an unsafe school in an uncomfortable environment. As a resident of Riverdale, Bronx and employed in the same county, I continue to notice the prominent financial, educational, and cultural dichotomy between the two sections of each community which are separated by a little over 5 miles.

My first day in the classroom at PS/MS South Bronx presented a host of challenges. I recall opening my classroom door to examine the space that I would prepare for my new students. I did everything I was taught to do in graduate school, such as having a well-lit room, shifting the desks, cleaning up, and turning on the computers. Although the computers were dated, they worked and I knew what to do with them. Stepping into the position as a special education teacher, I felt both confident in my teacher training and somewhat worried and anxious about my lack of experience. Nothing could have prepared me for the first day in class. I had entered a new world that was defined by the culture of the community. My greatest fears were confirmed once I witnessed and experienced my share of classroom management issues – foul mouths, fights, property destruction, and other disruptive behaviors. My class was a bridge-class of self-contained special education students in grades 3–5 labeled with emotional or behavioral disturbance, learning disabilities (LD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and mental retardation. It appears that disabilities were often used as excuses for teachers' comments such as, "They can't learn" or "We are just overpaid babysitters." It makes me uncomfortable to hear such comments. I think, as a result, the teachers in my school grew more reliant on classroom behavioral disturbances as a way to avoid teaching, particularly with technology. In this way, the classroom environment is similar to what some students experience in their homes and daily lives – noise, disruption, arguments, and fights. It would have been easy to sit back and

let the kids take over, but I was motivated to try various behavior management techniques to occupy minds, hands, and mouths. I did not believe that they were lost children or incapable of learning. In my school, the various tools (e.g., token economy system, school store, playtime, treats, and food) utilized did not work as well as academics when infused with the dynamic power of technology. I found instructing with technology to be useful as it created ways to educate and entertain at the same time. The students were excited that they learned to type, conduct research, and create iMovies™ in their own classroom. The acceptance of technology as a teaching tool by some students remarkably manifested in changed behaviors. Out of the 12 students, maybe 1 or 2 on various days would have an outburst.

As a new teacher who demonstrated self-control with a "difficult" class and promoted student appreciation for learning, I was unaccepted by my colleagues and some parents. In regard to parents, their concerns appeared to center around money received for children labeled with a disability or Social Security Income[9]. In the South Bronx, most parents rely on money from social programs for their disabled children. They have been told by the teachers, in my school, that if their child is decertified from D75, they will no longer receive the disability subsidy. As long as the child continues to be eligible for special education services, the disability subsidy for families continues. In regard to my colleagues, their fears appeared to center around job security. I often think and ask – How unfair it is that students classified with disabilities who are learners remain in the self-contained educational setting with limited exposure to educational technology. In a fair educational situation, could D75 be potentially dissolved in favor of collaborative team-teaching (an inclusion model in which a general education teacher and a special education

9 The United States Social Security Administration provide supplemental security payments to people with low income and limited resources, including parents of children with disabilities Website: http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10029.html

teacher team-teach)? On the other hand, these educational setting changes could result in a loss of employment for some special education teachers.

Interestingly, parents and teachers in my school community use scaled down versions of technology in their day-to-day lives such as copiers, ATMs, and cellular phones. Moreover, special education teachers are required to use a particular software application to create IEPs. Many teachers who rail against technology in the classroom use the IEP application with ease. The appearance of technology in my school seems to frighten the majority of teachers who see it more like an obstacle rather than an educational tool. As a teacher who uses technology and views it as a major aspect of everyday life, I have noticed that my colleagues do not feel the same about it. Given that they use scaled down versions of technology like copiers, ATMs, iPods, cellular phones, and even E-Tickets, it appears that teachers appreciate technology in terms of personal use but not as an instructional tool. These teachers often say that technology in education is non-essential and express a lack of appreciation for my implementation of technology mandates in the classroom. In my school, I believe that teacher resistance to technology is associated with anxiety about or being deficient in using computers in their classrooms. In addition, teacher training and/or staff development around these issues is negligible. Teachers usually have to be self-motivated and proactive in seeking courses, skills, experiences, and workshops. These teachers are comfortable using technology to make their lives more efficient, but have difficulty understanding how, when used properly, technology can positively impact the educational lives of our students. This can be viewed as a disconnection between how technology functions in our personal lives and as a tool in education. When I entered the teaching profession, I was able to rely upon my previous knowledge and experience with technology to learn how to make technology work in my classroom.

The Challenges

In my school, the majority of teachers tell me that technology does not belong in the classroom and if I continue using it, they will be forced to use it also. I believe their opposition to technology could be based on lack of exposure and training on how to integrate it into the curriculum and teaching. Moreover, I have been told that the students do not understand me because Black people do not really speak the way I do. I have been accused of bringing my "White corporate ways" into their school culture. I have been told that I do not fit in with the "way things are" and that I am disrupting "their culture." The teachers pressed me to speak in a way they could understand and to curtail my use of technology. At the time, I did not realize that the teacher created the dominant school culture. I could not oblige my colleagues. I understood the fear that accompanies change because I made a transition into a new field. I realized that to adapt to the culture of the field would mean dissecting the part of me that favors the government's mandate for technology in education. In my opinion, in order to support the evolving educational environment that now favors technology as an academic tool, teachers must be willing to adapt their teaching skills to the new policies. Deep within these changes are potentially solutions to unlocking educational opportunities for urban students through technology.

Personal Conviction

Witnessing the positive academic impacts on some students' academic improvement in my classroom, I continue to embrace technology as a way to level the academic gap. Unfortunately, I know these self-contained students do not have adequate access to technology, knowledge, or understanding of the relationship of technology to learning because teachers resist integrating it into the curriculum. I believe that urban teachers have a responsibility to adequately

prepare students to meet future challenges. However, in the middle and upper class school districts the teachers are given financial support and the teaching tools (curriculum, computer equipment, and training) to incorporate technology into the classroom. Therefore, they are able to fortify their technology skills and impart the knowledge required by prescribed educational standards. Yet, in the urban poor community school districts, this same opportunity has not been realized. Both, NCLB and IDEA mandate the integration of technology into education and view it as a revolutionary academic tool. However, in the poor school communities this idea is illusive and access is deceptive due to high cost and maintenance associated with technology and training. I understand technology-driven instruction as more than a motivational tool for students. Teaching with technology provides urban students with access to the world of information, equitable schooling, and preparation for life outside of school walls. I think it can enhance ways teachers endeavor to bring the world into the classroom.

Levels of Education – Colliding Structures and Overlapping Fields

Various educational concerns can be found within the hierarchal structure that stretches from the highest level of policy decision-makers in the United States to the lowest level of the individual classroom teacher. In the local context, my immediate goal as a classroom teacher is to prepare my students to pass state standardized exams. At the local level, schools are structured by many rules and regulations concerning student achievement, educational policy, teacher qualification, personal safety, curriculum, and time schedules. Much of what occurs in PS/MS South Bronx can be traced to external cultural structures defined by business, government, and the community. While some rules are constructed at the macro level and mandated at the meso level, other rules are created at the micro level by school districts, school administrations, and school faculties.

My school can be understood as a product of the dominant culture that is comprised of multiple layers, overlapping structures, and porous boundaries filled with a variety of activities and rules (Sewell, 1999). Bourdieu viewed culture as a type of "capital with specific laws of accumulation, exchange, and exercise" (Swartz, 1997, p. 66). Moreover, Bourdieu defined fields as arenas of production, circulation, and appropriation of knowledge that institutions use to hold individuals and groups in a competitive mode and self-perpetuating hierarchies of domination.

It is useful to think about public schools in terms of Bourdieu's notion of fields. As explained by Swartz (1997) in conjunction with Sewell (1999b), culture can be defined as socially structured spaces dominated by schemas and resources where culture is enacted and capital is exchanged amidst a struggle for power (Sewell, 1999b). The administrators, teachers, staff, and students within the school field access other fields to acquire their resources in order to meet their goals and to either reproduce or transform the structure and culture of the field. In all fields participants both access and appropriate schemas to meet their goals and to either reproduce or transform the existing structure of that field. An example of a structure with embedded rules that meets the school's goal is the time schedule for teachers. The schedule not only indicates a start time, but also designates the number of minutes dedicated to class periods, lunchtime, and dismissal. In the larger picture, the schedule works by keeping everyone on track. At the same time, a time schedule controls teacher movements and imposes time limits upon classroom instruction

Agency|Structure: Computer Lab's Outdated Equipment Impacts CBRDG

The outdated computer equipment is an example of how structural constraints can lead to cultural conflicts that have the potential to slow down or halt computer use. The computer lab in my school is fully equipped with outdated Apple™ and Dell™ desktop computers and software

applications, two printers, and a Smartboard. In fact, at any given time, you can find two or three computers not working. As noted previously, I conducted the CBRDG research in my school's computer lab. As an individual who understands technology, keeps up with newly released technology, and believes in the potential power of technology, I was concerned about the functioning of the dated equipment and software. It turned out that the very slow start-up, the running of multiple programs, saving of documents, and spontaneous shut down due to overheating did become sources of irritation for the participants. To address these concerns, Mr. O, the school's technology teacher, informed the participants about the software and how to work with the slow computer system. In particular, Mr. O explained that the PCs were prone to slow, spontaneous shut down. It is worth noting that this little bit of information made the students very conscious of the computers' slow response time when they tried to open, type, or save their files. In the beginning, the students were easily frustrated, highly impatient, and very vocal about their irritation with the slow system. As we pressed on with the work, they became more relaxed about the speed of the available technology, acknowledging that the pace of it was out of their control. It is worth noting that the outdated computers represent more than an isolated incident. They reflect the long-standing issue of inequitable resources in urban schools. It is one example of how structural constraints can lead to cultural conflicts that can slow down or deter technology integration and use in any school.

Cultural Solidarity Usurps Old Technology

Once CBRDG members were "in the groove" of working on their comic books, they became more aware of the slowness of this outdated technology upon opening applications and processing work. For members of CBRDG using technology for the first time, the structure of this particular field proved detrimental to the immediate goal of creating a learning environment

within which they could work effectively. Thus, the participants' first priority in this situation was immediate action. Using their newly acquired capital (knowledge of the functions of technology application) and exerting their agency to restart the computers, they were able to alter the structure of the lab to suit their needs as learners. However, having to constantly restart the computers meant significant downtime, particularly when the members were not yet accustomed to constantly saving their work. During one session, as Brock was typing in MS Word™, his PC shut down. He became angry and banged on the table. Although I repeated the necessary instruction to "save your work" several times, it finally registered with Brock during this last shut down and having to restart his computer. Once his machine was in the running mode, he opened MS Word™ and noticed his work was not recovered but saved. Following this experience, Brock would periodically call out to the others, "Everyone, remember always save your work so if you have to restart the most recent work would be there." The others began to build solidarity from Brock's words and positive emotional energy. Saving their work reduced their anxiety and built patience with the old equipment. Soon the CBRDG members demonstrated solidarity as they began to constantly remind one another, "Don't forget to save your work!" This newly acquired capital knowledge (Bourdieu, 1990) became a rule for working with the old equipment in the computer lab.

In the beginning, the outdated PCs proved to be time-consuming because they reduced student agency and work production. The old, slow PCs reify the power dynamics within the school structure, a reification that summoned within students both negative energy associated with an unfair learning environment and positive energy to overturn oppressive unfair structures in the computer lab. For example, Brock embraced the knowledge of technology that enabled him to use the lab equipment. In enacting his newly acquired knowledge, Brock chose to share

what he learned with the group. In this manner, he shifted from being positioned as a victim of old equipment to exercising agency by anticipating the shortcomings of the lab's technology and finding ways to compensate. Brock's actions helped create a comfortable learning community of practice within the larger school structure. Brock was able to change the functionality of the computers to perform for him as well as the others. As a result, all students were able to manage their frustration to work on their projects by making the micro-structure flexible to their needs. Instead of the heavy sighs or outbursts that usually followed the computers' slow response or spontaneous shut down, the students would echo "Save" or "Thank God I saved my work." The positive energy that accompanied the optimistic learning environment encouraged the students to continue with their projects.

Overlapping Fields

Given that fields operate concurrently, various intersecting levels manipulate and impact one another. For example, macro structures (US Department of Education) delegate to the meso levels (state and city Departments of Education) that, in turn, impact the micro level (classroom practices). Fields are sites where culture gets enacted, and these sites overlap because of their boundless continuity. For example, on the micro level, there are sub-level structures (such as, school districts, school administrations, and classroom coaches) that can either constrain teachers or enhance and support teachers. These fields have dynamic structures that at times do not support the goals defined at the macro and meso levels intended for teachers and students at the micro levels. The educational structures cannot account for differentiated learning, nuances, and the flux of daily practices in a special education classroom (Skrtic, 1995). For example, although all teachers (regardless of credentials or how one made it to the classroom) have specific teaching and learning goals, expectations, perceptions, and preferences, they are eclipsed by the

broader macro policies that demand immediate changes (such as technology integration) without support. Since a teacher is both an individual and part of "the socialized body," we do not stand in opposition to society because we cannot escape the laws that govern education (Swartz, 1997).

According to Bourdieu (1977), a field is the site of struggle for power between the dominant and subordinate classes. A field is structured by the power, capital, and position of plays in the field. The school system is created around a dominant cultural hegemony that holds white middle class culture to be the norm and does not acknowledge cultural differences (such as race, dialect, disability) (Ferguson, 2001). The culture of education is political in nature and the larger dominant group that controls the field is general education. The macro culture secures predominant social practices and functions to stabilize the existing order. The obvious result is a top down macro structure that establishes embodied power relations that oppress and restrict teachers' and students' agency within the bottom level field, thus making teaching and learning goals obscure, decontextualized, and fragmented. Bourdieu stated that it is the culture that "contributes to the maintenance of an inegalitarian social system by allowing inherited cultural differences to shape academic achievement and occupational attainment" (Swartz, 1997, p. 190). In other words, the established culture of education maintains social hierarchies and unequal social relations. In my school, the traditional teachers who resist technological changes in education find themselves in an evolving environment filled with schemas that criticize them for lacking the ability to integrate technology into their teaching (Cuban, 1986). Their *habitus*, according to Bourdieu, calls them to think of action as engendered and regulated by fundamental dispositions that are internalized primarily through early socialization processes that are resistant to change (Swartz, 1997). I often wonder if the students' disability classifications are the focal point of special education teachers. Therefore, I think their teaching revolved around the

students' behaviors in class and not on teaching to change the behaviors. These types of contradictions (focusing on the students' behavior rather than teaching) coupled with an evolving policy complicate the process of technology integration and the construction of teachers' identity as educators and technology users.

Micro Level Gatekeepers, Border-Crossing

Just as the social categories of race, class, level of education, and disability are clearly visible in urban areas such as the South Bronx and Riverdale, they are also distinct within the larger region of New York City. The New York City 2000 Census reported the population at 8,008,278, and the dominant racial groups as White, Black, and Hispanic at 37%, 28%, and 27% respectively. This racial distribution is associated with education, income, housing, and neighborhood that range from highly educated, luxurious, and safe, to uneducated, constrained by poverty, and crime related. Where there are boundaries, one will inevitably find border patrols or gatekeepers who create additional rules in the form of cultural schemas and practices, which structure the agency of participants (Swartz, 1997). Intertwined with the concept of boundaries and border-crossing are issues such as closure and access. In education, strategically positioned between the borders of alternatively certified teachers and traditional teachers' cultural domains are gatekeepers who control access into and out of their particular domain. In this respect, the cultural schemas are classified as deceptive accessibility. The gatekeepers will grant or deny access to individuals based on their fit. In my school, the educational authorities or traditional teachers serve as gatekeepers and the school policies either permit or deny access to "highly qualified" teachers. As a new, alternatively certified teacher, who tries to enforce educational policies, the traditional teachers who dominate my school community, vehemently use their

position and power as an obstacle. My first days of teaching at PS/MS South Bronx confirm this thought.

The traditionally trained veteran teachers and students at my school viewed me as different from themselves. The teachers said I was “inexperienced, lacked pedagogical knowledge, and classroom management skills.” They believed that I passed the state teacher certification exams on the first try because I came “from the outside, corporate.” Students also saw me as an enigma, somewhat indefinable. In their eyes, I was a teacher, a woman of color like them, but I did not sound like them or really look like them. Over the years, I have been told by students that I “speak funny” mostly because I do not use slang or engage them in verbal cursing confrontations. But, the kids also tell me that I am “not cool” because I am “not ghetto” and I am not like their other “school mothers”—teachers and paraprofessionals of color who tolerate their behaviors and verbal outbursts or treat them like babies. I was called an outsider and often felt like one. I continue to wonder how I can instill the value of education within my students (ages 5 to13) who are the children of teenage, single, uneducated, poor mothers whose own mothers were also teenage mothers who did not finish school. I think the mothers’ daily struggles to survive appear insurmountable and cast a shadow of doubt on their children making thoughts of education unattainable. This was a social fact that I pondered from my outsider position that helped me to constantly look at each encounter with the students and parents as a teaching opportunity with new eyes. Being a woman, like their mother and aware of the social and cultural differences between my students and me energized me to try and be the best teacher possible.

The Outsider

Within the culture of PS/MS South Bronx, I learned that the word "outsider" is used to refer to individuals, groups, or ideas not indigenous to the poor, Black, and Hispanic school or home community, and at times can be viewed as a potential problem. An outsider can be the government, policy, an individual of any race who is socially and economically middle or upper class, highly educated and working in a White profession, or, in my case, an alternatively certified teacher from an upper middle class social background. The residents of the community proudly call their community "the ghetto." As an outsider who is not familiar with ghetto mentality, culture, language, style, and way of life, my presence is a threat to my students and colleagues. As a new teacher not enmeshed or familiar with the existing school culture, I endeavored to implement the mandates of educational policy into the classroom teaching. I was made aware on several occasions that my way of teaching with technology was not appreciated and caused a disruption in the "way things are." In this sense, my access was deceptive. On one hand, although the government granted me permission through certification to enter the educational domain, the teacher created school culture denied me equal access.

Throughout my life, I have resisted placing labels on myself, which has allowed me to move comfortably among different fields and communities. Interestingly, I never knew I was different until I entered this urban poor community. The Black veteran teachers in my school share in common the same school/home community. They anticipate that incoming Black teachers will share their values and oppose any changes to the schools' culture and teaching styles. Since I did not relate to or understand the personal struggles of the teachers and parents in my school community, I had to respect the strength of their unity. My sole mission was to be the best educator possible by respecting the cultural boundaries of my students' cultures and home

community. My focus was to work within those fields and find ways to enhance and empower students without stripping away their core culture.

Inside Education – Internal Hegemony and Reality

As a public school teacher, I participate in two different worlds. My role requires that I cross borders between two hegemonic cultural domains—namely an upper middle class home community and a poverty dominant, urban work environment. Although my school and home life reflect the two dominant societal cultures, there are particular worldviews and ideologies that oppose each other (Villanueva, 1993). For example, I embrace the government's mandate to use technology as a teaching tool because technology has always been in my life as part of my home culture. In contrast, many of my colleagues who are new to technology resist its use in the classroom. This opposition has become part of my school's culture. Outside the school, I am a member of a different dominant culture (in terms of social and economic classes), the one who create and implement educational policy. In my school, I represent that dominant external cultural group by perpetuating and maintaining its ideological domination because I embrace the mandates of the policy and integrate it into teaching. According to Bourdieu, culture is "not devoid of political content, but an expression of it" (Swartz, 1997, p. 7). Therefore, it is impossible to abandon personal beliefs because they are linked to who we are and what we do.

In the process of border-crossing, I encountered the boundaries of race and class from my own people who viewed me as a minority. I was under the impression that I would be accepted and because of the easily identifiable commonalities (such as, appearance, race, credential, teaching desire). To the contrary, on the micro level, I fully experienced deceptive accessibility from the dominate culture in my school, the teachers. Negotiating this field and learning how to act and function in two different cultural domains had a profound effect on the way in which my

teaching identity developed and emerged. My identity as a teacher is a composite of my education, technology experience, culture, and class position (Turner, 2002). As a teacher from an upper class social background, I had to learn how to be a teacher in an economically poor school environment. In the school setting, I had to accept that the teachers' dominant culture is the driving force behind the opposition to technology, which also contributes to the shaping of the school community. In this sense, the teachers perpetuate hegemony of their own including ideologies concerning education and technology. Therefore, during my drives to school (or away from my home) were opportunities to contemplate and mentally prepare my approaches for the day. While in transit between borders, I transform into an urban special education teacher who works in the South Bronx.

In my school, the shared linguistic practice against technology covertly complicates teachers' identity construction processes and prevents them from integrating technology into their curricula. Villanueva (1993) states, "Hegemony exploits language and the worldview it contains…If reality, or at least a view of reality, a worldview, is linguistically defined then alternatives to that reality in the absence of alternative terms becomes a problem" (p. 124). Based on my experience, I believe that along with the low usage of technology, the teachers also discourage talk about technology among each other. For example, my school has a computer lab and a technology teacher who hosts the school's yearly debates via video conferencing. Teachers praise the technology teacher's use of technology. It might appear that the worldview within my school supports the use of technology. Yet, when I utilize technology outside the computer lab and within my classroom as a teaching tool, teachers frown upon and criticize my activities. Thus, the cultural attitudes and behaviors of teachers in response to my technology use contribute to shaping my identity as a teacher.

My Cultural Identity – Fragmented and Repositioned

My approach to the cultural behaviors in school, my identity formation, habitus, and the use of hybridity or heterogeneity and diversity is influenced by Bourdieu, Swartz, and Hall, respectively. Hall (1990) uses hybridity with identity to foreground that it is constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. According to Bourdieu, habitus is the part of cultural capital that is cultivated throughout the individual's lifeworld and unconsciously enacted (Swartz, 1997). As I transitioned into teaching, I had to learn to negotiate and renegotiate my understanding of my culture and my identity as a teacher. Hall argues that there are two types of identity: 1) identity as being (unity and commonality, a shared culture) that provides us with stable unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning; and, 2) the individual's experience of his or her culture, identity as becoming (a process of identification, which shows the discontinuity in our identity formation). My identity is framed by my national, political, religious, educational, and business affiliations, which can be described as habitus. Whenever I enter a new environment, my cultural position and identity are challenged, fragmented, and repositioned as new cultures and identities are produced to respond to the environment.

In examining my cultural identity, I understand that it is comprised of different encounters and moments of cultural exchanges in school and my personal life (Hall, 1990). My identity has been shaped by the various cultural fields in which I have existed and participated. I grew up in a two-parent home with educated parents and siblings who valued and appreciated life, conversation, education, high culture, discipline, and technology. As a result of my formative experience, I found it easy to function in corporate America because I was prepared for the culture of a fast-paced, technologically driven environment. I was allowed to be myself

without suppressing parts of my identity. Being part of the New York City teaching fellows program, I again found myself around like-minded individuals. I had a feeling of togetherness in my home as well as in corporate and educational settings because of shared culture and experiences (Hall, 1997). The imprints from these different life experiences helped to reshape my identity as a corporate employee, student of education, and special education teacher and negotiate the different fields. I thought my position in the educational community would be the same as my social experience in the corporate field or the teaching fellows program in college. I truly believed all teachers were of a similar mindset with respect to educating their students. I accepted without reservation the overall top-down schema and culture of education imposed by the government in regard to teaching, technology, and student achievement.

Identity: Fragmented

The school's culture is part of my identity as a special education teacher. However, as a teacher who used technology and refused to conform to the ways of traditional teachers in my school, my identity became fragmented. According to Hall (1990) when one encounters different situations or fields, his or her identity changes as the individual learns and navigates within them. In a school community with two dominant cultures opposed to each other, the macro middle class and micro teacher culture, my identity is in a permanent process of change and transformation. Being from the upper middle class social setting, my family embraced the philosophy of upward mobility through knowledge and academic achievement. In corporate, I was able to have my work ethic reflected my belief system. When I changed my cultural work setting, my role identity changed also. However, my core identity tried to bring the same ideology to the classroom through my adherence to educational policy, teaching, and use of technology. Turner (2002) defined role identity as a set of connected behaviors, rights, and

commitments as conceptualized by the individual in different fields. It is entangled in structured social relationships governed by reciprocity, which is the underlying base of well thought-out dialectical relationships. In short, my identity takes on sub-roles or shared identities that are appropriated according to the field. Regardless of the adaptation and changes I have made within my school context, I have been referred to and positioned as the outsider or "other" (Hall, 1997, p. 112) by colleagues. When I enter the school community, my shared identity, or the "other," emerges as the special education teacher in the impoverished urban surrounding. I hide the other parts of my identity that are socially and culturally different in this urban setting. According to Hall (1990), the construction of identity is made by the sight of the other. In other words, although I have one identity, it is necessary to change and create different roles according to the field.

Identity: Repositioned

Hall (1990) asserts that identity must be understood not as a process of discovery of lost roots but as the construction of a new or emergent shape of ourselves that are linked at the same time to actual social relations and to contemporary power relations. The process of constructing identity is then based on opposition. For example, as I reconstructed my identity and become a teacher, I was not fully accepted by the traditional teachers in my school because of our social and economic differences. Concepts, such as hybridity and multiple identifies or roles, are also significant in that they open up space for the creation of new combinatory cultural forms (e.g., I am a special education teacher and a technology user.) I contend that hybridity challenges the idea that successful assimilation only occurs in terms of integration into the dominant society (otherwise, the individual becomes stuck between two cultures results in a state of identity crisis.) For example, I constructed a new, shared identity to work within my school community.

Since identity is not fixed and static but fluid and changeable, I was able to reposition myself as a special education teacher by blending my foundational culture into the poor urban school environment.

Rejected Fellow Becomes a Teacher in a Community of Learners

Over the past six years in my own self-contained special education division, I became a teacher. I learned to use my shared identity to adapt to the field of education. I made friends with other, like myself who also felt marginalized by the traditional teachers in our school. I found validation in my personal positive experiences using technology as a tool to facilitate learning, but most of all, I found validation in the way that students have begun to interact with me. Even though they still tell me that I am not cool or ghetto, those descriptions are now followed by "because you are a girl, a lady, soft." I never cared much about how students viewed me because I knew deep down they see me as a person who holds their best interest at heart. That is the beauty of children. Over the years, I have become someone they trust. They tell me things, good or bad, knowing that I will not judge them, overreact, or curse at them like their parents or "teacher mothers." They believe me to be fair, and out of respect, these kids refrain from cursing in my presence. Likewise, I found my experience with the students in CBRDG to be similar.

The Comic Book Research Dialogue Group

In CBRDG sessions, I, an alternatively certified New York City teaching fellow taught my student participants how to use technology as an academic tool to improve their literacy skills. These cooperative students learned how to use different technology applications and equipments are placed in segregated educational setting because of their disability labels. Among the many rules and structures in my school are those concerning silence and orderly conduct.

Silent and still students are considered indicative of a successful learning environment and effective teaching. In traditional classrooms, students are expected to be still, quiet, and attentive. I broke that mold when I introduced CBRDG, which ultimately gave students the freedom and ability to use their agency to promote their learning.

Throughout our six weeks together, my research participants and I had to maneuver through the very busy cafeteria and hallways to make our way to the computer lab. It was necessary that we exhibit a type of silence that would make us invisible and agile as we negotiated the densely populated areas of the school. Simply getting students from one room to another during very busy times without incidents was challenging. Once inside the lab, there were constant reminders to respect the school's equipment. The structure of the computer lab in the minds of teachers and students is a holy place and the computers are viewed as precious china. I had to alter these ideas of the computer lab. To transform the structure of how CBRDG would use technology, I used my agency to change and expand the participants' agency to transform the structure of the computer lab into a place where they could develop their literacy and technology skills.

Week 1: Introductions and Field Structure - (Duration 30 minutes) "The Computer Lab"

In order to carry out this research project, access to the computer and its peripherals (such as lab, keyboard, printer, mouse, and applications) was required. I had to get permission from the school administration and Mr. O., the technology teacher. It was necessary to have Mr. O as a non-active member of the group because the lab is his classroom. In other words, Mr. O was present in the lab and also offered assistance or supervision to the CBRDG members when they worked independently. Mr. O. permitted the group to have access to a fully functioning computer lab. The space is large and structured to accommodate our dialogue discussions, technology

instructions, and hands-on practice. It was ideal to meet in a lab outfitted with two distinct dedicated spaces, SmartBoards™, scanner (to facilitate instruction/discussion), and individualized workstations with a printer for hands-on activities/discussion.

The first four minutes of the first session was dedicated to the introduction of the CBRDG as an official new field. In this new field, we utilized an open dialogue format or a space for the production of new culture aligned with classroom practices and teaching. We had introductions of roles in the group, specific rules on activities within the laboratory, and respect for each other in this field. We all agreed to very basic rules to show respect for each member - when one is speaking we will listen, and if using the technology in the room it must be handled with care. And, since we were utilizing the computer lab, which is also a classroom dedicated to one school, it was only appropriate to have Mr. O., MS/PS South Bronx school's technology teacher and an inactive group member, state his rules for managing the equipment. He outlined a set of directions on how to behave within the environment. He also conducted a tour of the lab. Then, I moved into a discussion of respect for each other. It was important for the members to understand, although rules exist for the protection and safety of the room equipment, we are not confined to typical classroom rules or those imposed by a classroom teacher. In this group, the students are exposed to new fields of learning, have access to more technology resources (both human and inanimate), and each other.

Week 2: Vignette Figure 3-1: Teaching Fellow Instructs Group on MS Word (Time 8 min.)

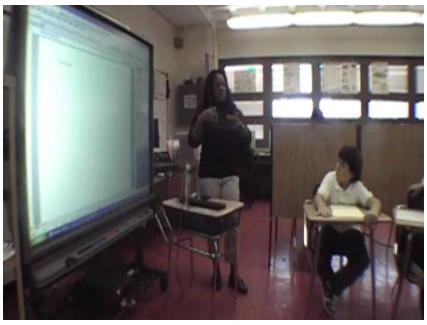
In the following video segment from week two, I instruct the group on the functions of Microsoft™. I focus on the group dialogue to highlight my interactions as well as the responses from students to my technology instruction. It is essential that I bring to the foreground my teaching and technology skills (necessary elements to this group) by analyzing the reactions of

students. I have incorporated still images because they depict the teacher-student interaction and participation.

The members discussed their story summaries and received input from each other. I was conscious not to impose my thoughts and opinions on their storylines. I wanted them to completely express their thought and ideas through their writing and images and not what they thought I wanted them to create. It was important to me not to trample or truncate their agency. Next, I introduced MS Word and some basic functions to complete a document. These steps included – creating and naming their own folders, opening the application, typing their summaries, running a spell check, and saving work to their folders. My desire was to impart technology knowledge and skills in a way that was user-friendly. Over the duration of my instruction, I observed the group's interaction patterns that indicated entrainment, solidarity, and identity transformation.

Speaker	Event - Dialogue Text and Image
Wilson:	"Today you will type your summaries in MS Word. I will show you how to access Word and use some of the features. Okay, I have to walk over to the Smartboard in the front."
	(KK, Stewie, Brock, and Daniel were focused on me as I talked. Then I had to walk to the Smartboard and their heads turned and eyes focused towards the front of the room.)
	(KK and Brock giggle and say "this is going to be cool")
Wilson:	*(I had to pull the table to the side so all could see the board equally.)*
	"All of your screens should look like this on either the Dell or Apple computers. They all have the same desktop."
	(I am pointing to the Smartboard screen. Then I look at the group)
	"So, either you look for the "W" for Microsoft Word. Do you see the W somewhere on the Desktop?"
	(I look at the group)
Group:	*(overlapping speech as they all respond to the question)*
	"Yes, at the Bottom."
Wilson:	"At the bottom somewhere?"
Group:	*(overlapping speech)*
	"Yes, to the left at the bottom."
Wilson:	"Right here? Very good."
	(I look at the group)

Group: "Yes."
Wilson: "The W will either be sitting on the desktop as an icon or if it is not there you would go to the Start and then it should be available on the listing – and it is right there - because it is used frequently.
Does anyone know how we can open the icon? Do we touch it?"
Group: *(overlapping speech)*
"Once, twice, once, no two times."
(Wilson repeats once as a question – then I click the icon once and nothing happens)
Wilson: "That is one time."
(I enter two clicks on the keyboard.)
Group: "It is two times"
Wilson: "Who said two times?"
Group: "Me, me"
Wilson: *(all, but Daniel are focused on the activity and my instruction and gestures)*
"Okay, the two click must be quick."
Wilson: *(Word application opens and the screen is divided in three parts. The menu at the top, the white space for typing, and expanded menu to the right.)*

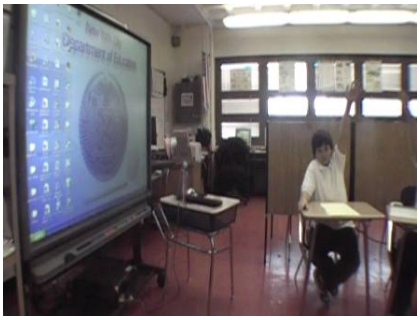


(Ms. Wilson discussing MS Word and all students are focused. Stewie is captured in video.)

"You do not need this part but it does not bother you *(referring to the expanded left menu)*
The few icons you can use are on the menu bar."
(I went through the icons and briefly explained their functions which are also found on the word menu- White paper for new page, folder to open the directory, disk for saving, printer, cut, copy, paste. I also showed them if you hold the cursor on the icon the name will display.)
"The cursor will be blinking inside of the white screen. You can enter a few lines down then start by typing your title."
(I looked at the group for a title and Brock said his loudly "Clash of Ninja")
Brock: "Clash of Ninjas"
Wilson: *(As I focus on Brock as he spoke I began typing his title)*

KK: "Oh, you could do that without looking."
(I laugh and spell out Ninja)
Brock: *(corrects me by saying Ninjas)*
"Ninjas. He is the great warrior."
Wilson: "Is it one person or more than one?"
Brock: "More than one."

Wilson: "So, do we write apostrophe s or just s?"
Brock: "I think….."
Wilson: "Well, if it is plural we use the s at the end?"
Brock: "Right."
Wilson: "After the title you hit enter again to start typing the exact summary that you created last week."
KK: *(Stewie pretends he is typing at his desk)*
"You type fast and without looking"
Wilson: "I have been typing for many years. This is why I type fast without looking at the keys. One day you will."
KK: "Because you remember where all the letters are. But you put clash of the ninjas."
Wilson: "It is clash of the ninjas, right?"
Brock: "No, clash of ninjas."
Wilson: "I am sorry."
Brock: "Ms. Wilson try to remember."
(we all started laughing)
KK: "Why clash why not crash?"
Wilson: "Do we know what clash means?"
(Daniel makes a crashing sound.)
"Not crash as in cars but as in conflict or disagreement"
Wilson: "So who want to come to the front and double click on the W icon to start the application?"
(I walk away from the Smartboard)
(All in the group raise their hand wanting me to select the first person. Here is a picture of Stewie with his hand raised.)



You can go one by one, you decide who will start.
Group: *Each take turns going to the Smartboard to locate the icon and start the application –*

Stewie *Brock*


Daniel *KK*


(Stewie coached Daniel on the steps. While I instructed the group and would face the screen to demonstrate a step, Daniel would write his summary)

Wilson: "The other thing, once you have typed in your document what do you think you need to do next?"
(all are quiet and looking at me)
"Let's say you are finished typing, what do you need to do?"
Group: *(all together)*
"Save it"
Wilson: "Yes, you will need to save it. Here I have clash of ninjas. Then I click on the x to close the document because I don't know what to do next. The dialogue box pops up and wants me to do what?"
Group: *(overlapping speech as they read the information in the box)*
"Do you want to save the changes to document 1?"
Wilson: "What would I do?"
Group: "Click yes and you can click on your name right there."
Wilson: *(I had two Manila folders and a few sheets of paper as the physical component to the visual technology)*
"Yes, the directory appears and you then select our group folder first. Next you will set up your own folder, a sub-folder by clicking on the yellow icon, typing your name, then naming your document. If you forget the steps, I will always help you."
Brock: "Can we do this today?"
Wilson: "Yes you will."

"I will save the folder with my name - enter. Then I will save the Word document with the name Draft1.doc click enter. Now I will close the application.
If I were to go back to MS Word, click, click and I click on the word file, then I click on open – what will I look for first?"

Group: "Group folder then Wilson folder"

Wilson: "That is right, my folder with my work. And what do we see there?"

Group: "Draft1.doc"

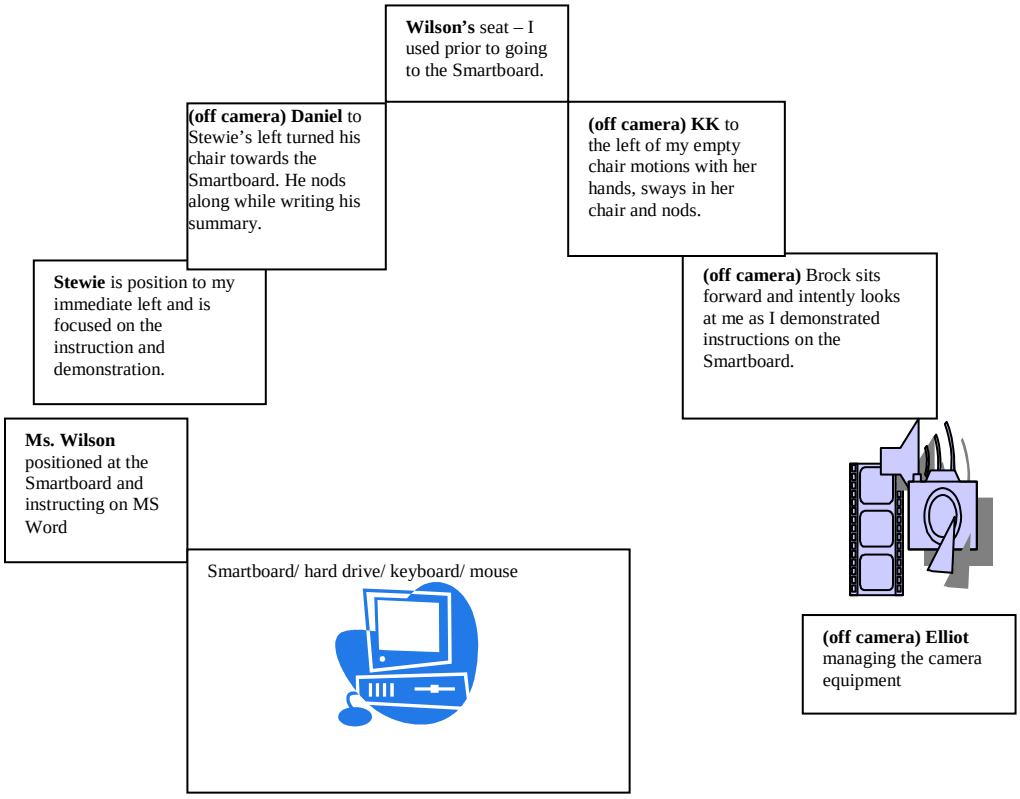
Wilson: "Excellent. Are we okay. Do we need to practice or do you want to start typing?"
(I clap my hands at the end of the demonstration)

Group: *(the students start a rhythmic dance in their seats as they clapped their hands in response to me)* "We want to start typing."

Wilson: "Remember, every time you come to the lab to work you will use the same computer."

In this video segment, I instructed the students on MS Word™ functions in two steps. The first step focused on identifying and opening the Word™ application either by double-clicking on the available icon on the desktop or through the directory using the start button. The second set of functions worked within the open application. Prior to demonstrating a function or explaining the steps, I introduced the elements of the technology environment and the correct terminology. Once I demonstrated a function and explained the outcome, I would go through it a second time using prompts to elicit verbal responses from the students and to reinforce learning. In a way, learning technology is abstract so the use of gestures to point to the screen identified what I was taking about and possibly embedded it into their minds. I often looked at their faces and observed their body movements, which I interpreted as indicators of their understanding. In response to their dispositions, I slowed down, sped up, or moved on. Their eyes were focused on my gestures and me as I instructed the technology functions of MS Word. The position of the camera pointed toward the Smartboard™ and only captured Stewie's eye gaze, body movement, and head nods at me. However, his focus, body position, and head nod are representative of the other members who were eager to learn, signifying entrainment and solidarity. Since the actions of the other participants occurred off camera, I use Diagram 3.1 below to portray the seated positions and describe their activities.

Diagram 3.1 CBRDG's members seated position in the computer lab.



The teaching and learning of technology applications and correct terminology were essential to creating the comic books. I did not want the experience of CBRDG's members to be the same as in the traditional classroom. I did not want to be the teacher in front of the classroom dispensing factoids. Rather, our learning field was filled with dialogue and interaction with each other in regard to technology. Therefore, I limited my time for instruction and explanations to about three minutes. Afterwards, I allowed the students, individually or as a group, to get up and explore the new functions at the Smartboard™. Empowering the students with freedom to move about, explore, and put into practice what they learned enhanced my observation abilities. I discerned that they enjoyed interacting with technology and each other. I believe my instructional format created an eagerness within the students to start their work. During the second part, I had to demonstrate how to save and retrieve a document. Looking around I sensed

excitement and impatience at the same time. The students were fidgeting, shifting in their seats, and practicing typing on their desks. I asked if they wanted to come to the front and practice or get started. A resounding, “We want to start typing” was the response.

Contradictions – When Instruction Does Not Result in Respect

In the first two sessions, we discussed the rules of behavior that govern practices, interaction, and respect for each other. One aspect of CBRDG’s practice and interaction is technology instructions. However, in the above vignette Figure 3-1, Daniel engaged in writing his summary while I instructed the group in MS Word. As a result, when he approached the Smartboard to practice the steps, Stewie coached him through the functions of locating MS Word, opening, and saving the document. In my teacher’s journal, I recorded the way I felt. I experienced a sense of disrespect, not only for myself, but also for the other members of the group. When I reviewed the video, I noticed my eyes looked in a certain direction, to the left but not at Stewie. I also realized that I often closed my eyes followed with a sigh as I turned to look at the others in the group or the Smartboard. After reviewing my notes I figured out my reactions were a sign of displeasure to Daniel’s disrespecting us. I did not consider that while technology driven instruction could be a richer learning experience for some in CBRDG, it might have bored Daniel.

Interestingly, although Stewie coached Daniel with the steps, he still needed further assistance when students worked independently at their computers. As hard as I tried, I am always a teacher in CBRDG. Moreover, as a teacher, I cannot help but carry my classroom expectations with me. In the traditional classroom, I must adhere to the regulations of the administration. My interaction with the school’s schemas and resources continue to shape the

way that I teach. I acknowledged that, at times, clear, direct, teacher-centered instruction is required to target core concepts and skills development before student enactment can occur. In CBRDG, to target specific skills and knowledge, I presented technology instruction in a direct, teacher-controlled manner with clear expectations that viewed student agency as secondary. In this context, Skrtic (1995) argues that my teaching role is that of a technician who efficiently organizes and presents knowledge and arranges environmental contingencies to reward and punish desirable and undesirable responses. The students' roles are passive receivers of factual material and skill training under the conditions imposed by appropriate environmental contingencies. In this sense, if not careful, these procedures can become generalized to a wider CBRDG classroom sociality, thus defining the ways knowledge is presented, discussed, processed, and valued. Being a teacher, I always want the best for my students and, in CBRDG, I also wanted each member to get the most out of our time together while letting them work at their own pace. Therefore, I did not want to unduly influence them. During the instruction of MS Word, Daniel did not fully attend to the activities at the front with me, he wrote his summary instead. I recall from my notes that the fact that Daniel chose to ignore me during instructions caused me to physically react.

Looking over the video segment, I found myself looking at Daniel several times. Once I realized what he was doing, my eyes and breathing sighs reacted to his disrespect toward the group and me. Viewing the tape, I realized that I had carried the traditional classroom ideals with me into CBRDG. Although I did not verbalize my discontent, it was apparent in my eyes and breathing. The look was not one of contempt, but one of disappointment. I realized my non-verbal reaction was a form of disciplinary reprimand. On one hand, seeing my reactions to a student who did not focus on the instruction helped me to be conscious of my future actions. In

this way, my teacher identity was being reconstructed, and, fortunately, the other students did not acknowledge my negative reactions to Daniel. This was evident when Daniel approached the Smartboard and Stewie helped him through MS Word.

Caveat: Technology and Learning Desire

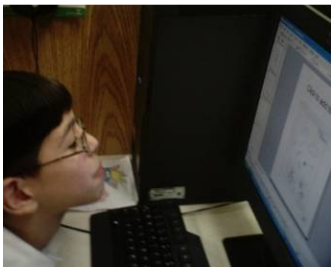
Both, NCLB and IDEA view the integration of technology into education as a revolutionary tool (IDEA, 2004). While in CBRDG the prospect of using technology to create a comic book brought the students together, my experience with Daniel demonstrates that it is incapable of holding all students' attention during my instruction. This idea put forth by education policy indicates that technology might be magical and transformative. This is deceptive because not all students will be charmed by technology. On a small level, Stewie, Brock, Elliot, and KK were fully engaged with technology, but Daniel was not. Therefore, technology and its use in the classroom might not be able to hold all onlookers. I must keep in mind that powerful technological unfolding is that of one person (me in CBRDG) or a group (policy makers) vision that might be embraced the same by other.

Teacher's Cultural Identity Encourages Adaptive Learning Practices

In a video segment that followed scanning, importing, and shared drive instructions, Stewie initiated a discussion with Brock to find out what he was doing and how he was getting his project done. Brock was able to provide a series of descriptive answers about the construction of his comic book that involved technical and writing aspects together while using the proper terminology. The information provided by Brock assisted Stewie in the technological construction of his comic book. Brock showed comfort and ease as he switched between MS PowerPoint, Word, and the directory. Parts of the comic book were located in a different area in

the MS Office environment. In MS Word, Brock created his story summary and the character descriptions. When he scanned his images, they were stored in a folder on the shared directory. He learned how to locate the directory and folder to import his images. The PowerPoint application was used to construct all the components of his comic book. The images that follow depict Brock engrossed in his work. Elliot managed the video camera and focused on Brock's activity. I assume, out of curiosity, Stewie joined the observation and asked Brock about his work. Elliot captured Stewie's initial question to Brock. In turn, Brock responded by describing his comic book creation and the different technology application that were required.

Vignette Figure 3-2: Brock and Stewie (Time 2 minutes and 47 seconds)

Person	Dialogue/Action
Brock:	 *(Brock is focused on his work. His work is guided by the draft writing found on the loose sheets of paper located above his right hand.)*
Stewie:	"What you doing Brock?"
Brock:	"Oh, hi Stewie. Uhm, I am putting my comic together in the computer and I am getting ready to get it all together in order."
Stewie:	"Is it hard? Is it hard?"
Brock:	"Kind of …"
Brock:	 *(Brock is focused on the steps and functions Yet he is able to describe all that is involved to construct his comic.)* "Right now, I am going through my images and getting the comic stuff I have, the comic pages, and well pretty much I am putting them- I am pretty much using MS PP to do my comics and I am putting them in order so when I am done putting them together I already have them in order right there."

Brock: "Okay, okay, well first I go to MS PP and I click on the page, or the slide. Then I go to Brock images, I get the image that I am looking for, and when I find it I click on it, I right click – select copy, go back to the slide, right click on the slide, select paste, and my selection pops up."

Brock: "To get the description I had to go to my thing where I wrote the description. They are not there right now because I cut them all out. Then the bad guy ones which are still there. And I put them into the PowerPoint."

The above transcript enabled me to see how my cultural identity manifested in the production of Brock's adaptive learning practices. In fact, Brock's identity changed from being a student learning technology to being a user of technology. As he described his comic book, Brock also interweaved the names of technology applications and functions. Since Brock focused on me during technology instructions, participated in dialogue discussions, and practiced when possible, he was able to work independently. Going through the presentation of the construction of his comic book in PowerPoint, Brock did not look up at the camera or at Stewie. His eyes remained focused on his work. I realized his repeating of words and sentences signified his concentration on his work and a desire to identify each step correctly. Brock had the PowerPoint application open as he searched for his images on the shared directory. To his right, Brock's hand was on the mouse. Slightly above the mouse were his loose sheets of paper face down. The papers were his story outline with images. They were face down because he located the images and imported them into PowerPoint. His left hand guided him by holding the pages and pointing to the images to be retrieved. Brock had a series of head moves as he tried to locate his images. He either looked down and to his left at the image. Then he looked at the screen to scroll through and match his many images. If he was unsure of the order, he picked up and looked at the previously faced down sheet then back to images on the screen. Finally, once he matched the images – paper to screen – Brock continued with the steps to import it to the PowerPoint application. When Stewie asked him if what he was doing was hard, Brock answered him honestly with, "Kind of." As Brock continued, he demonstrated how to locate his images

from the shared directory and written summary and characters from MS Word. When I asked Brock about his answer, he told me that figuring out how to work in multiple applications and switching between them was difficult. As a teacher, reviewing this scenario, I could see how Brock efforts and diligence helped him to complete the various tasks.

As a result of the success of CBRDG's second session, any doubts that I had about myself based upon the perspectives of traditional teachers who rejected me because of my alternative teaching status began to fade away. Being a member of CBRDG has helped me to see how I am a valued teacher and an agent of change. I am able to facilitate learning through technology as outlined by the government policy in a field with students classified as needing special education services. The creation of CBRDG setting made technology use transparent as it became part of the teaching and learning cycle. Technology faded into the background as it has become part of the students' lives while in CBRDG. My hope is the technology practices enacted in CBRDG would become part of their daily school and home lives.

Through the Levels of Education

In this chapter, I examine the enactment of social life by studying the dialectical relationships that exist between schema and practices and agency|structure within various fields such as, my school, CBRDG, classroom, and also in the related fields of students coteaching. In all cases, I have a concern to understand how culture produced in one or more fields can structures social life in other salient fields.

I reflected back to the first day I entered PS/MS South Bronx. I did not expect the school's culture to play such a significant part in my work and role as a teacher. Reflecting on my journey to becoming a teacher, I am inclined to return to the opening words of George Bernard Shaw about a reasonable person adapt to any environment. Becoming a teacher changed

my identity as I assumed the role and responsibilities placed upon me by the government. I embraced the macro level educational policy and eagerly integrated the technology mandates into my teaching and classroom activities. I did not realize that on the micro level, the school field had a culture created by the dominant group, traditional teachers who opposed teaching with technology. The teachers in my school considered me an outsider and denied my access to the community. I recognized this experience as deceptive accessibility. However, my changing cultural identity enabled me to enact my new role as a teacher and do the best job possible. I realized that opportunity must be provided to everyone, particularly students in order for them to learn how to interact effectively in any field. Just as I learned the culture of my school, CBRDG's special education students learned the culture of our field. I also realized that regardless of how I entered the teaching field, I am a teacher. I am just as effective as a traditionally trained teacher.

For the members, CBRDG, led by a teaching fellow, became a social space field in which we could practice forms of conduct that would aid in our learning about our view of technology, each other, and ourselves. Through the review of the data, I learned about my teaching practices and myself. In vignette figure 3-1, during my instruction of MS Word to the group, I noticed that Daniel was not fully focused on me. I realized that my annoyance with him overlapped from the traditional classroom. The caveat is, technology is not magical and, although the policy mandates the use of technology in education is academically transformative, it might not be able to captivate all students' attention. I also witnessed the capital exchange (learning technology from each other and from me.), technology and individual practice (engaged with MS Office and the Smartboard), and cultural reproduction (Stewie coaching Daniel in MS Word or inquiry). As a group, we had to contend with the slow, faulty computer system in the lab that spontaneously

shut down. Brock enacted his agency and reminded everyone to always save their work. As a result, the group would periodically call out the same directives. By enacting CBRDG practices, they let a new culture re/construct their identities as students who utilize technology.

As a group, we engaged in dialogue discussion about technology and literacy in respect to their comic books. During our dialogue sessions, we made it a pivotal point to let the natural interest in each other's work flourish through questions and comments. Stewie enacted this practice when he inquired about Brock's (vignette figure 3-2). Their interactions are micro level acts that could lead to participation in central aspects of the culture. Specifically, Brock and Stewie's actions can be seen as concrete demonstrations of cultural production and transformation processes that can be replicated in the classroom.

CHAPTER IV

THROUGH TWO DOORS OF EDUCATION:

Re/Production of Culture in the Technology Comic Book Research Dialogue Group

> Another way of saying this is that a new technology tends to favor some groups of people and harms other groups. School teachers, for example, will, in the long run, probably be made obsolete by television, as blacksmiths were made obsolete by the automobile, as balladeers were made obsolete by the printing press. Technological change, in other words, always results in winners and losers *(Neil Postman, 1990)*[10]

Personal Reflection – The First Meeting

I remember sitting anxiously in my hot, cramped office at my oversized desk looking at my monitor trying to finish the six-week project schedule for the comic book research dialogue group (CBRDG), when I noticed it was time to leave. As two copies of the schedule printed (one for myself and the second for the lab teacher), I re-checked the package that I planned to take to the lab for the following: handheld video recorder, batteries, work folder, pencils, paper, colored pencils, storage media, and a copy of a comic book. When I contemplated how to teach this group the various technological applications in conjunction with literacy to build a comic book, I decided that a progressive timeline with teaching points might be the most important ingredient. My detailed schedule included meeting days and times as well as my instructional plans for introducing and teaching five new technology applications and for providing writing time, review, and discussion. Happily, everything was there and I was finally ready. Stapling the sheets of the schedules together gave me a moment to recall the difficulty in trying to convene the disjointed participants into a functioning group. I grabbed a cold bottle of water from my

[10] *This is an excerpt from Neil Postman speech to the German Informatics Society (Gesellschaft fuer Informatik) on October 11, 1990 in Stuttgart, sponsored by IBM-Germany.* http://www.frostbytes.com/~jimf/informing.htm

fridge and closed all applications at the same time. I picked up my keys, shut off my monitor, the light, closed and locked the door with a final thought, “This is a lot of work. Could these kids handle it?”

On my way to meet the students, I continued thinking about the labor behind this small six-week research group. I reflected upon the initial challenge of getting approval to conduct research from the Graduate Center, New York City Department of Education, and the principals from two different schools. Not wanting any trouble down the line, I also secured approval to use the computer lab, remove the students from the cafeteria, bring the students to the computer lab, and walk the students to the lab during their lunch session. However, the biggest obstruction manifested itself before the first session.

I found out that the five participants who signed up for the project did not have lunch at the same time. Although all are in the sixth grade, they are in different special education program settings. As a result, they are segregated from each other throughout the school day. All five students are on District 75’s (D75) (see Glossary) roster, but attend different educational programs. Stewie and Brock are educated with general education students, Daniel and Elliot are in a collaborative team teaching class (CTT), and KayKae or KK is in a self-contained class. All but KK are integrated into the general education population. I quickly realized how schemas are used to separate students within the school building. Walls create sections of the building and security personnel monitor entry into each section; however, schemas are also the invisible barriers used to categorize students by academic ability, classify students according to type of disability, and limit fraternization between students with and without disabilities. For example, the lunch schedules of the general education students and the self-contained division are off by 15-minutes. Fortunately, I was able to work out a partnership that allowed KK to bring her lunch

to the lab. As I worked to create a common time for the participants to meet, I realized that these students face hegemonic forces in school that inhibit their individual approaches to socializing, learning, and expanding agency.

Walking towards the elevator, I passed the main office to notify school personnel about my whereabouts for the next 50-minutes. Considering that I am a specialty teacher without a physical class, classroom, and my lunch schedule that varies, I have found it necessary to always tell someone where I will be. It just kills talk and curiosity. At this school, things are set up in a way to appear as if rules are enforced. There are many big men wandering the halls and questioning students about where they should be. Thus, my participants could not leave the cafeteria unescorted or without a pass. I wondered if the young participants were still interested in being part of this group or even remembered the arrangements. The elevator doors opened. I entered, pushed the first floor button, and watched the doors close while I noticed the sounds of quiet. I thought – you can always tell when it is lunchtime.

The elevator doors opened hesitantly on the main floor as if giving me a chance to change my mind and return to the serenity of the fourth floor. Pressing on almost mechanically, I was greeted by the din of children's voices, adults screaming demands, and stomping shoes and sneakers against the hard cement floors. Having assured my participants that I would be in the cafeteria at 11:00, I walked through the doors and counted only four pairs of eyes anxiously searching for me. Daniel was absent from school this day. Elliot, KK, Brock, and Stewie immediately retrieved their personal items and hurriedly advanced towards me. We journeyed to the computer lab on the fourth floor.

Closing the doors to general education, special education, teachers, students, and administration was symbolic. This was our lunch hour, our time unobstructed by the rules and

policies of the schools. It was euphoric. Sitting in the computer lab, my first thoughts were that I did not want these sessions to feel like a typical classroom with teacher-student instruction, or a computer instruction class, or a group without fundamental rules to govern our behaviors. These thoughts were met with secondary thoughts about my ability to integrate technologically mediated instruction. I wanted my instructions to be coherent, logical, and accessible. Since we were not in a formal classroom, I needed to put my overbearing and impatient teacher culture in the background. As a special education teacher, I worked in self-contained classrooms with unruly, difficult children. There were times when I had to manifest a staunch, impatient, and no nonsense disposition to get the kids to work. Over time, I relaxed because the once disruptive children began to learn and work. In the eyes of administration, they became "model" students. Although the persona worked, I did not like it and I did not want my teacher culture to overflow into our group. I did not want the participants to have a negative experience related to technology. I wanted openness, flexibility, and respect for each other and for the equipment, as well as an enhanced ability to learn from each other's culture and to see how culture can be reproduced in an environment unlike our classrooms. It was also important that we understand the research group as a field *we* created and defined—a field in which we all could feel comfortable, free, and without pressure to discuss our work, enabling us to understand each other and take the learning back to our respective classrooms.

Navigating School's Structure and Capitalizing on Porous Boundaries

In schools, structure can take many forms such as language, posturing, gestures, and power structures (Sewell, 1992).The internal structure of my school, PS/MS South Bronx, is primarily defined by the external culture of the South Bronx community. All students and almost all of the teaching and general staff (e.g., parent coordinators, secretaries, cafeteria workers,

office aids, security guards, and paraprofessionals) live in the surrounding low-income housing or projects of the South Bronx. The hegemony of the South Bronx's community life has encouraged the school's students and staff to incorporate more localized behaviors (speech and gestures) that differ from the traditional school culture. Utilizing Sewell's (1992) notion of the "weakness of boundaries" that contains sets of mutually sustaining schemas and resources which empower and constrain social action, I highlight two examples of cultural practices that are distinct to the neighborhood and overlap within the school—slang language and greetings—used as ways to distinguish between the Black community and White school cultures. In chapter 2 of *"Metropedagogy—Power, Justice and the Urban Classroom"* (2006), Ainsworth discussed the characteristics of the neighborhood (family, community) and their impact on the educational environment. He highlighted Wilson, and American sociologist who indicated that neighborhoods influence and shape the youths who are exposed to it. According to Wilson, neighborhoods with role models who are successful (educated, gainfully employed, stable daily routine, personal responsibility) foster an attitude of success toward education. While in communities with residents who do not work, children "are likely to become conflicted between mainstream ideological imperatives and structural constraints" (p. 56). In short, children replicate the cultures found in their neighborhoods. (In the following section, I isolate language and greeting because the adults in the school interact with the students in the same manner.)

Language and Greeting

The structure of language takes many forms. Language can be written and read, spoken and heard in ways that reflect different meanings and different relationships in social groups (Kincheloe, 1997). Language unconsciously shapes people's dispositions. For example, it is customary in America for people who meet for the first time to extend the right hand for a shake

followed by a verbal introduction. In my school, however, students and teachers shake hands in a way that involves rotation of the hands and a pseudo embrace in which the right shoulders touch and the free left hand and arm tap the shoulder and lower back of the other. The language used during this greeting is slang such as “What’s up?” “Yo,” and “My nigger.” I have observed that aspects of gang-related communication (such as hand gestures, colors, and head nods) gradually increase with the grade level and age of the students. The first time that members of CBRDG met, they exchanged a close-fisted greeting followed by the words, “What’s up?” It was interesting to watch. When I picked up the students from the cafeteria, I told them we would have introductions in the lab. After they put their personal items down, we met in a circle. They all engaged in the same exchange when introduced. Each student took turns extending his or her right arms with a closed fist at the end. After the knuckles touched, both individuals retreated and ended with a two finger peace sign. I was more amazed when KK, a girl, engaged in this greeting with the boys. In a sense, the common greeting and slang among the students was a good way to convene as a group. Away from their respective educational settings, the students appeared to adopt a hybridized identity as a way of dealing with the pervasive White, middle class hegemony found in schools.

PS/MS South Bronx

The neighborhood of PS/MS South Bronx is home to high poverty, crime, teen pregnancy, gang activity, and drugs. The school building has four floors plus a basement level and is home to four different schools ranging from elementary to high school. The top floor is a D75 school of self-contained K-8 grades students. The third floor and part of the second floor are designated for a middle school. The other half of the second floor is allotted for a small middle school that specializes in collaborative team teaching for D75 students. The first floor is home to

the high school, cafeteria, gymnasium, custodial office, and other administrative offices. All students in the CBRDG are D75 students. Four students are from the small middle school on the second floor and one is from the fourth floor self-contained division.

Each school is represented by a different set of schemas in the form of policies, codes of behavior, uniform colors, grade levels, and educational settings specific to its environment. The fourth floor is D75 self-contained division for students who have been classified as emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, and multiply handicapped. The reason for placing the students on the top level is to prevent easy access to the multiple exits on the first floor. On the fourth floor, there are five exits and an elevator bank which requires a key to access. The exits on the floor are secured as follows: 1) locking the entry doors of the two stairwells on the second floor 2) strategically positioning classes with alternate assessment students (whose behaviors are generally less problematic at those exits, 3) assigning three additional male paraprofessionals to sit at the exits. Although the fourth floor has a very negative stigma, it also contains both valuable and invaluable resources (Sewell, 1992). For example, the fourth floor has physical and human capital that the other schools do not have – a dedicated nurse's station (required by law) with three registered nurses, a computer laboratory, a knowledgeable technology teacher, and a large empty classroom that is often converted into a media room. Interestingly, the other schools must share one library which has only a few computer workstations. The capital on the fourth floor often entices the teaching staff and administration from the other schools to interact with my school's personnel. The schools' culture clearly speaks to separation of staff that upholds segregation of students. The physical space is representative of the compartmentalized psyche of educators who function there.

The School's Culture and Symbolic Capital

The segmented nature of schooling often stunts the development of healthy learning communities for students. Skrtic (1995) argues that there are many problems associated with this structure. It distorts how educators view schooling. For example, one building divided to house four schools (each with its own culture, power structure, and policies) isolates students in different schools from each other. These different schools can be considered as interacting fields because they all embody the same characteristics of the surrounding community, yet there exists a great disconnection between them. Staff personnel in the general education school settings interact (luncheons, parties, student sporting events) among each other, but isolate themselves from the self-contained D75 division. A school structure that segregates and isolates students will not meet the needs of children considered different based on their academic challenges due to a disability (Skrtic, 1995). Although these schools have many common traits linked to the community (such as, demographics, poverty, crime, gang activity, drugs), there are more negative stereotypes associated with the field of special education. The other schools' students, staff, teachers, and administration have a very sour opinion about the fourth floor. I think the negative way that students labeled with a disability are positioned as a form of deceptive accessibility. Outside the school, the students and staff are regular residents of The South Bronx, but inside the school things change. The hegemonic group in this school is the general education division and, although the student and staffs' community and external culture bound them together, in the educational setting, the pervasive White middle class structure segregates students. Additionally, the dominant group is permitted based on the classification to scrutinize the less powerful group.

In school, the general education staff never refers to the D75 students by the name of the school. They are called “the students from *that* fourth floor.” According to Bourdieu (1977), a field is the site of struggle for power between the dominant and subordinate classes. In this sense, the dominant class in the building is general education. A field is structured by the power, capital, and position of players in the field. In turn, the cultural capital that each player brings to a social field can be converted into symbolic capital only if that field validates and acknowledges that cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990). It is within the field that legitimacy is conferred or withdrawn in the form of symbolic capital because capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field. Practices and symbols of culture are informed by structures in a dialectical relationship (Sewell, 1999a). Structures are resources and include schemas, also referred to as rules, procedures, or ideas that can either empower or constrain social/cultural actions. The dominant schema circulating in the school culture is achievement, high scores or grades.

The school system promotes the notion of homogeneity, which substantiates the use of standardized testing without regard to the disability of the students or different ways in which students accumulate knowledge (Skrtic, 1995). In my experience, students in the segregated self-contained setting are not as likely to internalize the idealized teacher-student discourse of intrinsic motivation and rewards, yet some may. In contrast, general education students more readily compete to accumulate capital in the form, for example, of good grades, awards, and recognition as a model student. The strategies of domination developed by those in control (such as, policymakers, administrators, and teachers) therefore tend to become increasingly direct or indirect and adopted by the students. In this sense, culture is both a system of symbols and meanings and a system of practices (Sewell, 1999a). In other words, as a practice, culture

comprises the activities that include conscious actions, power relationships, struggle, opposition, and change.

In my special education division, its culture and practical activities are the same as the general education school. However, because the students are classified as emotionally disturbed or learning disabled, the curriculum and teaching is modified. In addition, due to frequent behavioral issues, the disciplinary structure is more stringent. When individuals engage in particular cultural practices, they use cultural symbols to accomplish their goals. The symbols have specific meanings based on their relationships with the symbols that are inherent to the field. In my school, symbols associated with crisis (the crisis intervention teacher, the crisis classroom, and discipline practices) take the form of a male figure, posters with listed rules, and a token economy system designed to curtail negative behaviors and increase desired behaviors. In theory, a male crisis intervention teacher and a crisis intervention room are beneficial because there are times when it is necessary to remove an unruly, physically threatening student from class to prevent injury to other students, the teacher, or himself or herself, and/or destruction of school property. On one hand, the crisis intervention teacher and the removal of disruptive students symbolizes safety and reassurance to the classroom teacher and students and serves as a type of capital for the school administration. On the other hand, if physical restraint is used to subdue an out of control student and injury to the student occurs, the position, gender, and intervention used by the crisis intervention teacher are questioned. As a result, the removal methods and the crisis teacher have symbolically changed from a positive to a negative.

Students Navigate Fields

In order to be regular participants in the CBRDG, Brock, Elliot, Daniel, and Stewie must physically, mentally, and emotionally leave the comforts of their general education environment to enter the computer lab located in the self-contained division on the fourth floor. However, they retain the cultural identity developed in the general education environment as well as their opinions about the self-contained division. Although these students were previously in self-contained classes and are still registered on the D75 roster, they understand the cache of their new setting as a class-privilege position that comes with their association with general education students—a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1990). There is a strong relationship between being educated in a general education class and how they value and see themselves. The D75 students in general education classes have found ways to accumulate these cultural riches to their advantage (Bourdieu, 1977). I have noticed that Brock and Stewie have made a conscious choice to disassociate from D75 and have thus gained the symbolic institutionalized rewards of being considered good role models. Their desire not to be identified as "special education" students or classified as part of D75 is a clear form of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus is the process by which an individual's goals, interests, and position are defined based on a set of expectations and understandings acquired through experiences that have shaped them.

CBRDG's Capital: Bridges Structure and Agency

When the students and I convened for the CBRDG, we divorced ourselves from our respective schools to create a new field. We transformed the computer lab into our new learning community. Through the collaborations with teachers from another school, the student participants are able to gain access to new resources, thus enabling them to capitalize on the

porous boundaries of fields. The CBRDG can be viewed as a field in which the students classified as needing special education services can increase their agency (Sewell, 1992). I hoped that the students newly enacted culture and practices might possibly transform the social structures that hold them and sustain their oppression by a dominant general education culture. It was my perception that these students' lack of exposure to technology resulted from their teachers' inadequate technology skills and unwillingness to integrate technology into the curriculum. The students and most teachers are products of the surrounding economically depressed South Bronx where the use of up-to-date technology as an academic tool may not be typical within their families. The teachers in my school, who are unwilling to become part of a computer training community, might be limiting their chances to transform their teaching and classroom practices.

CRBDG's Learning Structure

Schooling and learning is predicated on the claim that knowledge can be decontextualized (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Yet schools are social institutions and places of learning that constitute specific socio-cultural contexts. The purpose in formatting CBRDG as a learning community was to empower all members to utilize their own cultures and knowledge while creating a space for inter-transfer of cultures. By introducing participants to a different teacher and other students with particular knowledges's, other ways of learning, and cultures, it was my hope that ideas and experiences would be reproduced and transferred back to the participants' home schools as a means of resistance to the pre-existing oppressive and isolated culture. As the teacher and skilled user of technology, my roles in CBRDG as instructor and participant enabled me to teach and learn about the novices in the field. Lave and Wenger (1991) view learning as a trajectory of development that leads to competence through a process of

guided participation in which newcomers participate in attenuated ways in the practices of a particular community—also referred to as legitimate peripheral participation.

CBRDG, a learning community for the acquisition of skills in writing and technology, does not automatically resolve cultural conflicts that arise from navigating the various perceptions of how students learn in each of the schools within this one building. Overall, the educational institution views learning as a process that is separate from one's identity and community. Lave and Wenger (1991) believe learning is a situated activity in sociocultural practices of a community and is a relationship between newcomers and old timers. Learning always involves the construction of identities and those identities change in relation to the communities of practice in which we learn. Based on my teaching experience, I believe that kids, unlike adults, are more amendable to using technology. They lack the fear of looking silly or odd. In my school, students walk around with various technology devices, such as mobile phones, PSPs™, Sidekicks™, and handheld video games. However, I also notice that when students learn to use technology in ways not related to academic function, they appear incapable of transferring these skills to the academic arena (Wenger, 1999). Moreover, I have observed that students associate technology in school with dull, uninteresting, boring content. So, for these students, using the computer is not equated with enjoyable academic pursuits. Students have the dexterity and basic knowledge needed to use technology gaming devices, but seem lost about how to use those skills for academic work.

The introduction of a new community of practice with its own culture created opportunities for cultural transfer. In the CBRDG, technology was the tool used in our practices. As the teacher with technology knowledge and skill, I hoped my practices expanded the students' agency to collaborate with each other. Through the agency afforded in the lab, these

students labeled as emotionally disturbed felt co-responsibility for CBRDG that transformed into a desire to collaborate and help each other. They are afforded new visions for possibilities within their classroom and home.

CRBDG Defined by Agency

As the teacher with technology knowledge and skills in CBRDG, I moved within the different fields to facilitate learning in the group, thereby enabled the members to produce new culture that can be taken back to their classrooms. I am the link within the new CBRDG field that bridged the gap between the students and their respective schools. The benefit of our newly formed community is the sharing and exchanging of knowledge and cultures. In school, students who learn differently are often classified and segregated within "special" settings. In CBRDG, each member exerts his or her agency that is shaped by and simultaneously shapes the structures and culture of our group. The ability of an individual to exert direction over social actions and interactions (Sewell, 1992), or agency, is crucial to defining and interrupting the reproduction of social stratification in our educational system. In other words, when school structures are removed and individuals have the agency to freely collaborate with others without labels, prejudgment, or oppressive circumstances, they come to a new understanding for each other based on acquired schemas and skills. The students also learned about similarities, desires, and interests that they had in common.

Inside the Doors of CBRDG

The CBRDG had six scheduled meetings in which I introduced a new aspect of technology and writing to their projects. All students were excited about creating their own comic books. Our time in the lab was designed for sharing stories and ideas, learning literacy and

technology, and interacting with each other and technology devices. I stressed that their levels of participation were voluntary and not subject to my grading or judgment. To ensure we would all have a great experience, certain parameters had to be set. At the beginning of the first meeting, I went over how the group meetings would function very differently from a regular classroom. For example, the students were not being graded on their work. Their participation is voluntary and they could do as much as little work as they desired. While the students did not have to raise their hands to comment or speak, they did have to respect the individual speaker. In addition, the students had freedom to move about and explore their environment. I explained that while we are in the computer lab we must respect each other. I think my comments liberated them from the feelings of traditional teacher driven rules. I believe, the first few minutes that were dedicated to describing CBRDG's general and non-oppressive rules helped the students become acclimated to the new field environment and to engage in discussion without the rigid rules of a classroom. What was typical at the onset of the meeting was the usual attention to adults. I wanted to work with the students and slowly remove myself from the group so they could hone their new skills while learning from each other. The structure of the comic book took three forms: the writing aspect, the use of technology to construct the comic book, and the dialogue exchange. The activities include discussing ideas for their comic books and developing their ideas, learning and using the writing format, applying literacy skills, working independently and as a team, evaluating each other's work, utilizing technology as a tool to complete their work, and presenting the finished story and product to the group.

Teacher as Member as Researcher

The first week working with the members of CBRDG proved to be challenging. After navigating through the two schools, the lunchroom, security, and administration to retrieve the

students, I felt frustrated and somewhat like the students labeled as needing special education services. For example, we were frequently stopped by security with questions about our destination or the use of the elevator. My interaction with security caused others to take notice of our movement. Although we were not having a teaching and learning session as in a formal classroom, it was necessary to establish some rules and our positions in the new field. I held three intertwining positions - teacher, group member, and researcher. As a teacher, I view students as learning from didactic exposure and I see myself as the catalyst in the classroom (hooks, 1994). I adhere closely to hooks' belief that to educate, as the practice of freedom, is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. According to hooks, to learn ideas that challenges preset values and beliefs is risky. However, as a teacher, she and I see teaching and learning as a way for students and teachers to reinvent ourselves and potentially change structures. Always a teacher, I could not relinquish my position as the bearer of knowledge and skills. I held the responsibility of directing the learning in this group and helping them to master technological literacy skills. Leading the group is crucial as I helped the novice students gain adequate confidence and then expertise with integrating technology skills into their writing knowledge to complete their comic book project. I believe the students' learning would come easiest if I held the vocation of teaching as sacred. In other words, I strongly believe that technology, when integrated properly, can transform the teaching and learning experiences of both the teacher and students. Instructing in CBRDG is more than showing up and dispensing information. In this sense, I am assisting and sharing in the intellectual growth of each member (hooks, 1994). My presence as a group member during the open dialogue sessions was intended to help the students relax and create a level of equality. I shared in the discussions by telling stories as well as by asking and answering questions. However, my added role as researcher meant I was part of the

group dynamics as well as an observer. I found it necessary to remove myself from the equation, thus permitting the student members room to develop skills, enact new culture, and change roles.

Week 1: Literacy and Technology Overview

After the CBRGD field rules and roles were defined, we commenced with the dialogue about why we were in this group – approximately four minutes into the recording. As I talked and asked questions, I noticed that the students were either slightly nervous or put off by the cameras. I tried to ease their fears by saying, "You will forget that it is there once we start talking." I also told them if they felt uncomfortable, they could position their seats with their backs to the camera.

I facilitated the dialogue to get the members to talk about their ideas, opinions, and feelings. The segment below reflects the discussion about the students' selected topics and writing format for their comics. We revisited the writing elements of a story including a summary, characters, title, setting, moods, issue, and conclusion. We talked about how the main idea is expanded into a story by structuring it into three parts – the beginning, middle, and conclusion. The beginning introduces the theme of the story and issue(s), the middle focuses on the characters and problems, and the conclusion details how issues are resolved. I engaged the student members in the discussion through questions that enabled them to recall prior knowledge about the important elements of a story. Then the students had quiet time to write their comic book summaries.

The vignette below, about the writing session, is split into two distinct intertwined parts – dialogue and images. The dialogue described the group dynamics and interaction. I initiated the discussion and encouraged the students to share their comic book story ideas. I analyzed the

video to identify their interests in each other, individual behaviors, and reactions. The still images from the video vignette captured events during the writing component. The two analyses of this one vignette demonstrated the effects of participation in the group.

Vignette Figure 4-1: The Dialogue Session - (Time: 2 min. 18 sec.)

At the beginning of the dialogue session, I was the focal point. As I initiated the discussion Brock, KK, and Stewie listened and participated at the appropriate openings. The only student without consent to be video or audio taped was Elliot. Thus, Elliot, under Mr. O's supervision, was in charge of the video equipment. The layout of the room dictated where we sat. In the earlier tapings, we often had to adjust our seating in order to capture all participants on film. In addition, Elliot chose to videotape while standing in front of the classroom door, so there are sections of the videotape that are jumpy, unclear, and muddled with other voices. At the four minutes and eight seconds mark, I prompted the group with a question about *what* would take place over the six-week session. This shifted the conversation into a new direction. The question created a space for the participants to share their thoughts. As I spoke and shifted my attention between the individuals, there were a lot of hand gestures, head nods, body movements, laughing, and eye gazes. Throughout the exchange, Brock and Stewie displayed signs of synchrony in body orientation, eye gazes, head nods, hand gestures, anticipatory speech, and verbal utterances.

Time	Speaker	Event/Dialogue Text
04:08	Wilson:	"It is an open discussion group about what we are going to do over the next six weeks. What are going to do over the next six weeks?"
04:14	Brock:	"Create a comic" (*sits with his right leg on his left rocking. His right arm is on the desk and his left is braced on the chair as he looks directly at me while I address the group.)*
04:15	Wilson:	*(Stewie also very attentive has his right arm rested on the desk,*

		his left arm on his lap, and is swinging his legs.)
		"Yeah, we are going to make comic books using technology. So in our group discussions we are going to talk about what we are doing as far as the writing process is concerned. We are going to talk about our stories."
		(looking directly at Brock I ask a question while using my left hand to point to KK)
		"So, let's say, you Brock are sharing your story right – would you like KK over here to talk while you are telling us your story – would that be polite, KK?"
		(*I turn my attention to KK and Stewie)*
04:41	Brock:	*(Shakes his head while saying)*– "no."
04:42	KK:	*(Giggles, moves her shoulders and quietly said*)
		"no."
04:43	Wilson:	*(Using my left hand I gesture for KK to speak up. Stewie and I giggle along with her. Brock shifts in his seat. His body is now positioned to face me.)*
		"You have to speak up a little bit, they can not hear you. K, would it be polite to speak while he is sharing? …"
		(As I repeat the question KK answers yeah right away without fully comprehending the words)
04:46	KK:	"Yeah."
04:47	Wilson:	"Is it polite?" *(My tone changed to imply a questionable answer in hopes that she would catch on. KK covers her mouth)*
		(Realizing K did not understand the question I rephrased it using myself, hand gestures, and facial expressions as she looks at me.)
		"If you are sharing your story, would you want me to get up and walk away and do other things?"
04:57	KK:	"No."
04:58	Wilson:	*(repeat – No)*
		"So it is all about respecting one another while we are in this space. Same as if Mr. O. is telling us something that is important. We have to listen carefully to what he is saying."
		(I turn my head to look at each student and they shake their heads to my statement.)
		"So, the first thing we talked about was the main idea of the story. What book do you think you want to create?"
05:26	Brock:	"Ninja."
		(I turn to Brock)
		(Stewie folds his hands in front of him and continues looking and listening to Brock while KK shakes her head and gestures two peace signs to the camera)
05:30	Wilson:	"A Ninja book? Okay, what about the ninjas, what do you think they will do?"
05:32	Brock:	"Battle for world peace."

05:34	Wilson:	"Battle for world peace. That is a good topic right there." *(Stewie and I are looking at Brock. KK looks at Stewie and give the peace signs again to the camera followed by quiet giggle)*
05:38	Brock:	"In Tokyo."
05:39	Wilson:	"In Tokyo, why not New York?"
05:41	Brock:	"'cause ninja's are not in New York," *(Brock points to the ceiling then bangs on the table to make a point)* "they belong in Tokyo, Japan or in China." *(meanwhile KK is making faces and signs at the camera)*
05:49	Wilson:	*[I repeat Brock's words as I turn to look at KK and Stewie]* "Tokyo, Japan, and China." *(I ask KK the same question and all faces are focused on her)* "What do you think you would like to do?" *(KK shrugs her shoulders, giggles, and covers her mouth.)* "Asking the question in a different way." *(KK giggles again. Brock slaps his forehead in frustration)*
6:00	Stewie:	*(Stewie speaks softly in place of KK. I look at him.)* "I think a kid that gets sucked into TV" *(KK turns to look at him then at me as I ask Stewie to repeat)*
06:02	Wilson:	"Say it one more time. No, say it one more time. I did not hear you." *(KK clamps her mouth to stop from laughing)*
06:05	Stewie:	*(I lean forward to hear Stewie speak)* "A kid that goes into the TV world."
06:10	Wilson:	"Oh, okay fantasy that is interesting. What would he do in the TV, what would he do there?" *(Brock points at Stewie then make Ninja gestures and sounds. Then points to his right temple, shakes his as if telling Stewie "good idea")*
06:17	Brock:	*(Brock asks me the question)* "Does he mean like surfing through the channels?"
06:18	Wilson:	*(I turn to Brock and gesture with my hands telling him)* "You could ask him."
06:22	Brock:	"Will he surf through the channels?"
06:24	Stewie:	*(Laughs and puts his head down. Brock also laughs and puts his head down)*

After reviewing the data several times, the activity and actions of the members became clearer. At the beginning, Brock, Stewie, and KK's shyness was conveyed through their eyes and body movement. (Daniel was absent from school and missed the first meeting.) Their eyes and attention were focused on me. Brock, Stewie, and KK's body movements included fidgeting, swaying legs, and KK's hands folded and unfolded as she played with her hair. By the end of the

discussion, it was evident that Brock, Stewie, and I experienced solidarity. This was particularly evident in the amount of activity displayed by them. Once they loosened up, the camera faded into the background for Brock and Stewie. KK, however, began playing with the camera making peace signs and smiling faces. Throughout the group interaction Brock, Stewie, and my eyes connected and shifted to look at the individual who spoke. Their facial expressions changed in reaction to the words I spoke. The most important common indicator of entrainment during our dialogue was Bock and Stewie's eye-gazes. By the end of the conversation, Brock and Stewie showed significantly more movement that demonstrated entrainment. Throughout the group interactions, KK displayed movements that were different from Stewie and Brock. While Brock and Stewie's movements were in sync with the conversation, KK's movements were independent and more of a show for the camera. KK fidgeted with her hands and constantly brushed her hair behind the ears or pulled it to the sides of her face. At four minutes fifty-eight seconds into the exchange, I initiated the discussion about the comic books. Brock immediately took advantage of a turn-taking opportunity indicated by my eye contact with the group. He zeroed in the focus of the discussion by stating his story idea. When Brock shared his story idea with the group, KK looked at me, then Stewie, and back at me. I realized she wanted attention from Stewie as she displayed peace gestures to the camera. However, Stewie continued to focus on Brock. KK's playfulness with the camera interrupted her attention and group participation. The time she spent playing with the camera manifested in her inability to share her comic book story idea with the group. When she was asked to share, she became shy and embarrassed. Brock noticed KK's behaviors while he shared his story outline. When she displayed shyness in response to the question, Brock showed verbal and physical annoyance and displeasure by

sighing and rolling his eyes to her previous playfulness. The second time I rephrased the question to KK, Brock slapped his forehead in disbelief.

Not wanting to amplify KK's embarrassment, I focused the attention on Stewie who spoke softly at first. Brock and KK gave Stewie their focused attention. He briefly introduced his comic book story idea. Stewie's volume was low the first time and I asked the question a second time. Brock also demonstrated mutual focus by initiating a question to Stewie about his comic. Brock, very interested in his peer, asked me a question about Stewie's topic. I realized he wanted me to re-direct his question to Stewie. Since it was not my idea, thought, or comic, I could not provide an answer nor did I want to reinterpret Brock's question. Instead, I told him to ask the question directly. When Brock asked the question, Stewie became a little shy. Interestingly, I asked Stewie the same question a second time and he was comfortable answering me, but when his peer showed interest, he became shy. As a teacher, I am accustomed to students either becoming shy or pretending to be shy when not wanting to or not knowing how to answer. I was awakened to the fact that when students are in a mixed setting with a teacher led discussion they prefer to have inquiries made by the teacher, rather than their peers. I realized the formal classroom teacher-student/question-answer repartee could overflow into CBRDG. The open dialogue format described at the beginning where peers can offer one another inquiry is foreign to these students. However, Brock did not shy away from asking Stewie the question, thereby demonstrating the promise of the new format for CBRDG.

When Brock and Stewie shared the ideas about their comic books, they did more than illustrate the inspiration for each other's idea. They also connected the ideas and imagination to the group members' non-special education labels. During the dialogue sharing, Brock and Stewie were no longer stigmatized by their disability classification or educational setting. They were just

kids with common interests. In fact, since we all viewed each other as individuals, rather than the prescribed descriptions (disabled, special education, minority, teacher) provided by external structures (schools, classrooms, policy), the group's cultural identity flourished. Brock, Stewie, and I smiled and laughed not only during the comic book description, but also when I laughed at myself. Taking advantage of the tone that had been set in motion, Brock heightened the group's positive energy into effervescence by sharing a little detail about his comic. By the end of the discussion, Brock and Stewie's comic ideas had inspired us. This resulted in all members contributing information about their comics. The group's collective positive emotional energy, solidarity, shared identity, and the production of new culture became evident.

Vignette Figure 4-1: The Writing Component (Week 1)

The interactive dialogue about the comic book ideas provided the introduction to the summary writing component. It was paramount to the writing project for members to have an idea about their comics and to share those ideas with the group. During the writing segment, I made a noteworthy observation about an interaction between KK and myself. I spent a great deal of time assisting KK with her writing (i.e., idea development, grammar, punctuation, and spelling) while Stewie and Brock worked independently. The image below captures Brock, KK, and Stewie in writing mode and fully engaged in the creation of their stories. The second image isolates KK as requesting help from me. Brock and Stewie, the D75 students, are able to commence their project on their own. However, KK, a D75 self-contained student, has difficulty starting, following through, and finishing without my help. I believe her reliance on any adult is part of being in the self-contained classroom. Particularly, in self-contained in D75 there are less students and additional adult staff support. Some of the activities that are now part of the self-contained classroom culture include the staff being motherly, overly friendly, attentive, and

doing the work for the student. I walk around the small tables to observe the students' writing. I thought they could use my assistance in spelling and grammar. Brock and Stewie were capable of writing five or six line summaries on their own.

Brock, Wilson, KK, Stewie – Brock and Stewie are fully engaged in writing the summary for the comics. KK is inattentive while Brock and Stewie shared their comic book concept and needed helping in getting started with her story line.

Brock, Wilson, KK, Stewie – As I walk around to check on the status of the group writing, KK requests my help. Stewie notices and focuses on our interaction.

Writing and Significance of the Bell Structure - Interruption

During the vignette figure 4-1, the school's notification bell rang while the students were engrossed in the writing activity. The bell rang two times for 5-second bells and occurred three minutes apart. The general education bell structure signals to the students and teachers that it is time to change classes for the other schools that shared the same time schedule. As Brock, Stewie, and KK participate in various communities, and as they apply their agency in different fields, they are constantly learning and constantly changing. Their identities are both fluid and field dependent. When Brock, Stewie, and KK are in their respective classrooms, they follow the daily schedule. However, being part of CBRDG they had to learn a different schedule and ignore the school's bell schedule. KK's class, in the self-contained division, is on a different time schedule from Stewie and Brock's general education classes, but they must contend with the loud obtrusive sounds every period. The bell structure created different types of disruptions in the self-contained classroom. It takes a while to settle students labeled as emotionally disturbed into the flow of work, particularly those students who also have learning disabilities. Once they

are in the work mode, any little distraction can become an opportunity to “act out.” The ringing bell allows them to verbally express their annoyance in colorful language. At the same time, they lose focus and forget the purpose of being in school. They get up, walk around, and oftentimes spontaneously fight.

Since Brock and Stewie are classified as emotionally disturbed, the moment of the bell rang I forgot that they participated in the general education school and are accustomed to the bell signals. I immediately stopped working with KK in anticipation of a member possibly having an outburst, as is commonplace on the fourth floor. Amazingly, Brock and Stewie remained focused on their writing during the first sound. KK’s focus shifted temporarily and she began looking around. First, she looked at Brock, Stewie, then at me. Interestingly, the sound of the bell caused a similar reaction in Brock and Stewie. When the second bell rang, Brock covered his ears and continued writing and Stewie continued writing with his left hand, but pointed his right hand towards the bell sound. The bell ringing caused a slight distraction and a bit of confusion for Brock and Stewie. Looking at the clock, we realized the bells were premature. In school, this type of structure is an example that does not make sense to all students. The boys had ten minutes before lunch ended. The ringing of the bell is symbolic to Stewie and Brock. The first bell informs them to wrap up and get moving to the next class. The second bell indicates lateness. On a greater scale, Brock and Stewie’s identities are based on the general education school culture. Their affiliation with the general education population, culture, and schemas shaped their individual identities. Throughout the ringing of the bell, Brock and Stewie acted as one unit in their reactions, body movements, and focus on work. When Stewie and Brock are in their class, they are part of the bell movement. However, not noticing the time suggests that they were temporarily removed from their usual environment. In the rush to conclude their writing,

Brock and Stewie probably found the bell sound a little annoying. The significance of the bell ringing is important to note because students in self-contained settings must contend with this imposing structure. For example, KK is educated in a self-contained setting and the bell notification does not address her daily educational activities. Brock and Stewie's in-school identities and daily activities are driven by the bell notification. However, in CBRDG, they were able to temporarily tune out or disassociate from their general education identities and activities to tune in and stay in the field and focus on their work.

Contradictions – Disrespect in CBRDG

Within the CBRDG, group solidarity was achieved through the students' interactions, storytelling, literacy knowledge, technological instruction, and inquiry. However, after reviewing the video data I was able to see early patterns of breakdown in solidarity. In the descriptions below, I discuss events from week one and three. During the first week, I went over the basic rules for the CBRDG field. Then the group commenced discussion about the writing structure and their comic book stories. As each student shared his or her information and story, Brock noticed KK playing and making gestures at the camera. It bothered him because he enjoyed sharing and commanded attention.

Week 1 Vignette Figure 4-1: Dialogue and Writing - Brock, Stewie, KK

In the middle of our dialogue on the writing process and story ideas, I asked a question about their writing topics. As Brock was describing his Ninja comic book while emphatically banging on the desk to make a point, KK was making funny faces and hand gestures into the camera. She demonstrated a form of disrespect for her group member, thus commencing negative energy between Brock and herself. In the traditional classroom setting, students are

accustomed to the teacher correcting student behavior or telling them to pay attention. I did not realize or focus on KK's behavior as it occurred; rather, I focused on CBRDG as a field different from the classroom. It is learning environment where students could re/produce culture to improve their educational experience. However, Brock did ignore KK and as a result, he often sighed in frustration when she was unable to express herself. He mumbled comments about her behavior, calling it disrespectful. Once Brock and KK's interaction began, it created a little tension within the group. Throughout the first session, Brock and Stewie successfully contributed to the discussion on the rules, writing process, and aspects of their topics. When Stewie discussed his comic "Boy Goes into TV Land," he and Brock shared a moment elaborating on his idea once they got past feeling shy. This carried over into the writing component of that session. Since Brock and Stewie bounced ideas off one another, they were able to start writing summaries of their stories that would serve as the framework for their comics. Their interaction generated positive energy as it cleared up any confusion they might have experienced in developing their story ideas. On the other hand, KK missed her opportunity to fully become a contributor to the group. I believe this resulted in her slow start and inability to seek help from the other members. Had KK participated during the discussion time, I think that Brock and Stewie would have helped her develop her topic and she might have worked independently on her writing task.

Group Interaction, Inquiry Facilitates Story Telling

In the CBRDG, the student participants became members of the group through learning together and experiencing feelings of belonging. According to Collins (2004), students are more likely to engage in invention and problem solving when they learn in novel and diverse situations and settings because they are becoming knowledgeable. In CBRDG, a major component to the

students' development is their ability to dialogue with each other. CBRDG members demonstrated their changing roles and identities during different interactions. To illustrate this, I will approach this discussion as having three critical components – video dialogue, images, and a table of activities that I will analyze separately, but in relation to each other. One, the video's dialogue will be transcribed. Two, the images that follow capture the essence of the exchange between Brock and Stewie as they display signs of synchrony in body orientation, eye gazes, hand gestures, and overlapping speech. Three, the table delineates the synchrony and growing solidarity during the first 15 seconds as the adults enter the room. In my opinion, Brock and Stewie's overlapping speech signals accomplishment and is a striking example of urban, ethnically diverse students classified as emotionally disturbed demonstrating academic capability. Their success provides a salient argument against the deficit stereotype, thus promoting the idea that students labeled as disabled *are* capable of participating meaningfully in activities related to technology and writing.

Vignette Figure 4-2: - Brock Shares with Stewie - (Time 1 min. 48 sec.)

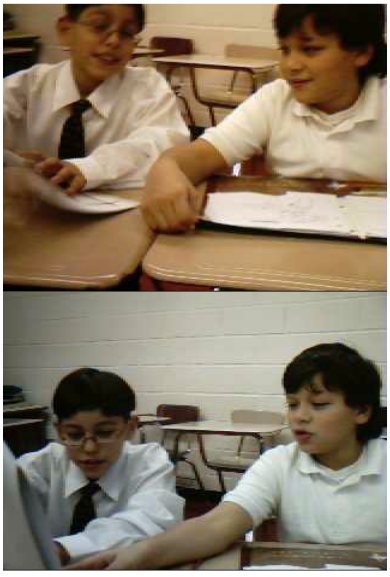
In this storytelling segment, I worked with KK in the background. Elliot, a member who was not allowed to be video or audio taped, as per parental consent, captured an exchange of storytelling, writing structure, and inquiry between Brock and Stewie. At the beginning, the video is unsteady as he is either walking over or trying to sit down to be at the face and voice levels. At this point, Brock noticed that Elliot had appeared, and yet he did not lose his focus. He continued his storytelling to Stewie. Although there were adults who entered the room to speak to Mr. O (and the voices are non-distinct sounds in the background) Stewie, Brock, and Elliot were unfazed by their appearance in the room because they knew the boundaries of their fields

would not be crossed. Throughout this exchange, Brock completely shared with Stewie. His speech was smooth and animated as he told his story.

Time	Speaker	Event/Dialogue Text
00:00:00	Brock:	*(Elliot captures Brock describing his story to Stewie.)* *(Brock looks at Elliot)* *(Adults enter the room. Background Noise as they begin talking)* "This is the drawing"
00:07:19	Brock:	*(Brock points to the images on the page to guide Stewie. Stewie leans forward and places his right elbow on the desk and his hand to under his chin)* "This is the story of Ninja Warriors and the Ninja drawings that I want to make. Then, I just started doing the drawing." *(Other adults enter the room. Their voices can be heard in the background.) (Brock looks toward the adult voices, then at Stewie. Stewie looks at Brock)* "I did that to hide the king. And, this is during the night. I did that that when the Emperor stops him. Then he opens the power of his – calls it Ace Band- it lets him contact all the other ninjas he needs to contact." *(Brock looks at Stewie)* "We are a lot in the USA, Tokyo" *(Overlapping speech as Stewie points to Brock's work and make an inquiry statement)*
00:35:87	Stewie:	*(overlapping speech)* "That looks like yu gui!" (Stewie looks at Brock)
00:39:04	Brock:	"Yeah, a little. *(Stewie looks directly at Brock again)* Then they smash through the front doors. Then in the dawn when they are going to attack, the Japanese warriors' reinforcement move their ban '*swooh'* power right through that door then they enter. Right, then I take this "Ahh" this, it is the same thing to be continued. The Japanese warriors already know so this is what one of them says "*Damn*" and the other little ones "*Oh, Oh.*" And they just get shoot, shot by a bunch of arrows. Meanwhile the main character from Japan is facing the main character from China." *(Brock ends his story and turns to Stewie to ask a question)*
01:43:60	Brock:	"How far did you get Stewie?"
01:43:60	Brock and Stewie:	*(Stewie did not immediately answer Brock. Instead the two exchanged smiles and a moment of friendship and happiness.)*

01:47:29 Stewie: "I am still at the part where I am writing all the names and the important stuff."

In less than 15 seconds and despite the distraction of adults who entered the room and created non-distinct background noise, Brock established himself as the focal point in this exchange. To ensure that he had Stewie's complete attention, he looked up at him. Looking directly at Stewie's face, Brock confirmed that Stewie was listening and attentive to his every word. Brock guided him through the pages of his comic book draft. I observed Stewie's nonverbal participation and interest. Stewie's posture is upright. His eyes are focused on Brock's gestures and movements signify entrainment and solidarity. As he concentrated on Brock, he leaned forward placing his arm on the desk and hand under his chin for support. Stewie took the opportunity to make a statement about one of the characters in his work. This caused overlapping speech, which is common in exchanges. Stewie looked at Brock to see if his statement was acknowledged. Brock told his story fluidly. The images below depict Brock (right) sharing his story with Stewie (left). They also show Stewie's interest through his eyes and hand gestures.



This image depicts Brock (left) sharing his comic book story and images. As Brock discusses the story, he points to the corresponding images. Stewie (right) follows along as Brock points to parts of his story.

In the same story telling vignette, Stewie shows his interest as he points to Brock's image followed with a question.

The images depict many signs of synchrony and unity. Brock and Stewie joined their desks together. Their desks are sealed without space between them. The two are focused on the

documents in front of them. Stewie smiles in appreciation of Brock's story telling flair. As Brock moves his hands through the page to point to different facts, Stewie's eyes, focused on every detail follow Brock's movements. Stewie listened intently to every detail of Brock's story. The table below delineates the activities of the fifteen seconds that include solidarity and interruption by outsiders.

Dialogue	*Brock*	*Stewie*
00:02 *(Elliot walks over)*	*Acknowledges Elliot's presence by looking at him.*	*Sits upright and looks at Brock's hands as he points to an object on the page. Then he smiles.*
Brock *This is the story* *(adults enter the room – adds to background noise)*	*Displays the cover art by pointing to the images and title.*	
00:09 *Brock* *Then I just started drawing*	*Looks up towards the adult voices.* *Turns the page, looks down on the page, and points to an object on the new page*	*Leans slightly forward. Eyes continue to focus on the written work. Places hand over mouth then under chin.*
00:14 *(adults talking in the background)*	*Looks up towards the adult voices again, but continues describing his story* *Then looks up at Stewie.*	*Looks at Brock*

Even though this verbal exchange in this vignette directly involved only Brock and Stewie, it seemed to draw the attention of Elliot. It is clear from the video that Stewie was interested in Brock's story. In turn, Brock was able to maintain Stewie's attention by engaging him in the details of his story. Since Elliot entered the exchange while in progress, I do not know how it started. What was evident during the interaction was the sound and vocal interferences by adults who had entered the room within the first fifteen seconds. Brock and Stewie tuned in to each other and tuned out these potentially disruptive structures. This is the second time I realized that Brock and Stewie demonstrated tuning in and tuning out, revealing the ability to stay in the field and focused on the activity. During this interaction, I concentrated on the physical and

verbal synchronous activities between these two. In control of the situation, Brock continues sharing his story while pointing to different items on his page. His gestures ensure that Stewie remains focused on him. A salient point that demonstrates synchrony and entrainment is the unbroken focus Stewie gives to Brock during the story telling. The actions between these two indicated that Stewie supported and accepted his role as receiver to Brock.

Following this session, I asked Mr. O if it might be possible to lock the door in order to minimize interruptions (e.g., visitors to the lab who were curious about the work we were doing or who wanted to bring students to the lab during lunch.) I immediately had to stop these interferences by complaining to administration and placing a "do not disturb" sign on the door. Although I had hoped to create for these students a sanctuary amidst their respective schools, I soon realized that our dynamic field could not be isolated from others. Although I took steps to minimize interruption, and tried to temporarily halt the onslaught of distractions, CBRDG could not prevent transient cultures from traveling through.

Sharing Builds Respect and Friendship

As Brock shared his story in the previous vignette figure 4-2, Stewie showed respect by listening and focusing on talk. Stewie also showed interest by asking questions. At the end of his story (0:01:43), Brock did not get up and walk away. He demonstrated a genuine interest in his group member's work by transitioning the attention to Stewie and asking about the status of his writing. Stewie did not respond right away with words; rather there was an emotional and physical exchange of synchrony and solidarity (e.g., their bodies swayed together from side to side, they smiled, and Brock embraced Stewie around the shoulder.) The image along with the brief dialogue below captures the friendly interaction between the two boys.

Dialogue	Stewie	Brock
01:43:60 – 01:43 *Brock: (looks at Stewie, smiling, then asks)*: "How far did you get Stewie?"	*Playfully smiles, giggles, and leans toward Brock*	*Brock puts his left arm around Stewie and they both smile*

Brock  Stewie

Their synchronous actions indicated entrainment and the accomplishment of their individual and collective goals. Conversations like these were most productive for building group solidarity and producing culture. Collins (2004) explained that prolonged personal membership in a group is dependent upon verbal exchange. Their talk comprised friendly exchanges that showed respect for each other as they took turn expressing various events of their lives. The shared activities and participation in CBRDG, not only helped produce culture and develop identities as technology users, but also simultaneously fostered healthy interactions, trust, and friendship in the group. Through videotaping and analysis, I am able to capture instances of sharing and inquiry during which there is evidence of solidarity and group entrainment indicated by body movement, eye gazing, gestures, and overlapping speech.

Building Solidarity: Information Sharing and Tech Talk

The CBRDG discussions usually took the form of stories about the weekend, cartoons they saw, and their comic book storyline. Next, the students would inquire about the status of each other's comic books and character images to understand how to improve their own. Then as

a group, we had in-depth discussions about technological resources learned, followed by peer-to-peer demonstrations. Brock and Stewie often shared their newly acquired technical knowledge and how it was applied with members who missed a session or did not understand the functions. When Brock and Stewie shared information, they became excited, and expressed positive emotional energy as the recipients listened and nodded in understanding. When I instructed the group on the session's application, someone would often get lost in the translation. Therefore, having Brock and Stewie teach the lost individuals was the most productive aspect to building group solidarity and producing new culture. For example, KK did not fully understand how to scan an image. In dialogue, I explained the functions of scanning and how it would enhance their comics. I demonstrated the steps, then observed and assisted as each member had the opportunity to come forward and practice. Although she did the practice with me, KK did not feel confident. Brock immediately sensed her apprehension and stepped in. His identity changed from student to coteacher as he took over the instruction of scanning. Brock obtained symbolic capital by teaching KK how to use technology. He went through the steps and looked at her to make sure she was attentive. Brock did not break concentration from KK and the two became a unit. His agency expanded as he took on an additional role as coteacher. In this way, Brock was able to take away her fears with his focus and teaching ability. He would intermittingly pause to ask her a question. If he sensed she did not know, he would comfortably answer it and move on. At this moment, I believe, Brock changed roles again to be KK's peer. He not only assisted KK on the steps in front of the group, Brock also continued his role as coteacher and checked in when she was working alone. He made sure that she went through the correct steps and that she was up to speed and comfortable with the new functions. KK's agency, expanded through learning, facilitated a shift in her identity. She displayed confidence through the change in her disposition

and body posture. Brock's offer of help and KK's acceptance of help created a social bond between the two. In turn, the group benefited from the strengthened social bond. Over time, she was able to work the scanner without my help or help from her peers.

Ironically, student involvement in the teaching of peers was a somewhat uncomfortable shift for me. In my classroom, I permitted students to enact different practices; however, I did not expect it to occur in CBRDG. I realized that I carried with me the ideas about teaching, learning, expectations, and how students should interact based on the traditional classroom. As I moved past the pervasive teacher-centered view of education, the students and I, as a community of learners, were able to benefit from the range of individual expertise represented by the entire group.

Information Sharing

Videotaping the group's interactions enabled me to capture instances of participants inquiring about each other's stories, sharing their story statuses, revealing examples of vivid imagination in regard to their own and others' comics, using tech-talk, and engaging in peer teaching. During these instances, evidence of solidarity emerged as members rhythmically engaged in body movements, mutual gazing, laughter, head nods, and overlapping talk. The observed patterns indicated "the greater the entrainment, the greater the solidarity and identity consequences, and entrainment reaches much higher levels by activity than passivity" (Collins, 2004, p. 83). Over the six weeks together, all or most student members contributed to the conversation by discussing their experiences in the group, imagining their comic books, building technological knowledge, or sharing their skills. Collins (2004) charges that high levels of focused positive emotional energy can be understood in terms of collective effervescence, which

can have long term consequences for interaction rituals that can be carried over after the individual has left the situation. In other words, if students feel energized about their new technology skills and writing progress, they will be more likely to put their newly acquired capital to work in their classroom, schoolwork, and home.

Vignette Figure 4-3: Developing Tech-Talk – Brock and Wilson - (Time 1:00 Min.)

The third meeting was dedicated to introducing scanning, its functions, and terminology. Brock was finished with his images, storyline, and was ready to begin scanning his work following the instructions. At this point, Brock and Stewie became vital agents in creating CBRDG into a new field primarily because their involvements seemed to derive directly from their ability to reproduce the learning culture that has been enacted in the field. The student members were curious about the status of Brock's work, and asked him to review it so that they could get ideas on how to continue. As he detailed his story and described the draft writing structure and process followed by the utilization of Microsoft™ to finalize his work, there was substantial evidence of solidarity, respect, trust, and reciprocity within the group. The group members focused their attention on him. Brock and Stewie, due to their regular attendance, were ready to engage in the next step, scanning their images for full comic book construction. Once I went through the steps for scanning an image, Brock was ready to demonstrate to the group the functions and steps to scan an image by uploading his own work. Although, I offered him assistance, he remembered the steps and terminology. I illustrate this in the following video segment.

Speaker	Scanning Event / Dialogue Text
Brock:	*(facing his peers)* "I press preview and drag it down." *(Brock turns to the Smartboard and moves the dialogue box)*

Wilson: *(His image displays)*
"Cool."
KK: "It looks so cool."
Wilson: "It does. It is amazing, huh. So do you need to crop it?"
(Brock looks at me)
Brock: *(turns to look at the image on the screen)*
"No, it is already seems to be the right size."
Wilson: "That looks so good. That's one page, right?"
Brock: "Yeah, it is."
(points to the screen)
Wilson: "Okay, what are we going to do after that?"
Brock: *(facing his peers)*
"Scan it."
(pressing the "scan" tab the directory opens)
Wilson: "Okay."

Dennis: *"Wow."*
Wilson: "Remember where we put it?"
Brock: *(facing his peers)*
"I will name it – Brock 7"
(turning back to the Smartboard he types the name on the keyboard)
Wilson: "Good. You remembered. Wow you are good. And then?"
Brock: "And then accept it."
(facing his peers)
Wilson: "Okay, Did we forget to put it somewhere? In a folder?"
(Brock turns to look at me. He sighs, giggles and slouches to his side)
"That is okay we can always move it to the folder. That's it."
(I see his document and verbally locate it for him)
Brock: *(Looking at the screen, Brock could not immediately see it. He asks)*
"Where is it?"
(looks back at me)
Wilson: *(I point to the area on the screen then give him some directions)*
"It is right there, just drag it and drop it into the folder.
Drag it and drop it into the folder. It is gone."
(as I spoke the directions, Brock performed the function at the same time)

A close analysis of the above video segment details the technology interaction between Brock and me. Brock's newly acquired cultural capital (technology knowledge and developing skills) expanded his agency. As a result, immediately following my instructions and demonstration on scanning, he volunteered to scan his work first. Brock's recall ability of technology terminology and concentration added to his growing identity as a user of technology Brock was able to commence the functions on his own by talking through the steps. As he talked

to himself, he simultaneously and fluently scanned his images, explored the Windows™ environment, and worked the Smartboard™. I prompted him along by asking what came next to continue the verbal steps. Once his image appeared, his peers responded with head nods, eye gaze contact, and complimentary speech. I initiated a question about cropping it to measure his recall and understanding of the function. He answered confidently without wavering. In fact, throughout the scanning process, he was able to recall almost all of the steps, which meant he was focused while I instructed. Building cultural capital is essential in expanding agency, and Brock utilized every opportunity to acquire more capital as he listened and participated in CBRDG. Brock enacted different aspects of his capital, such as seeing, hearing, talking, participating, in order to exert his agency. Throughout the "tech talk" exchange on scanning, all members displayed signs of synchrony in body and eye movement as they shifted between Brock and me. His voluntary display of his comic, scanning skill, and use of correct simple terms helped the others develop and facilitate the language. Brock was able to demonstrate great skills and retention of information, which caused the group members to feel comfortable. The exchange between Brock and me was evidence of his desire to learn as he looked at me to prompt, validate, and compliment him on his ability to explain the functions and steps to the members in clear and simplified language. The various types of capital act as affordances for each other, and they work together to expand agency. The interaction between Brock and me earned him symbolic capital which helped him form social relationships (social capital) with the rest of the group. In turn, he was exposed to more cultural knowledge, thereby building his cultural capital, which expanded his agency or ability to act.

Contradictions – Friction between Brock and Stewie

In week three (see Vignette Figure 4-3), I went through the steps on scanning and invited the students to the Smartboard™ to practice. Always ready, Brock made it to the front of the room first. Unbeknownst to me, Stewie wanted to be first. He then accused me of picking Brock over him. I explained to everyone that, unlike a traditional classroom, raising a hand is not required and participation is voluntary.

Week 3 Vignette Figure 4-3: Scanning - Brock and Stewie

In the vignette on scanning, there was evidence of solidarity breakdown and friction in the group as Stewie exhibited shyness in demonstrating a new role that is not usually permitted in a traditional classroom. Brock had fully mastered the theory behind the functions of scanning and was willing to share his newly acquired skill with others in the class. During my instruction, I noticed KK and Stewie having a private conversation. By the time I moved aside to let the students practice the activity, Stewie was not ready. Although I felt as if I wanted to redirect the students' focus from talking, playing with each other, or just looking around, I did not want this group to feel like a traditional classroom. Based on the rules established during the first meeting, I was not in the position to scold or reprimand the students. As a result of not interfering, Stewie was able to approach me to let me know he did not like KK because she caused him to miss out on learning to scan the first time. I realized that Stewie meant he did not like that KK caused him to miss out on the activity and his opportunity to be first.

As I went through the scanning steps a second time, I decided to ask the members for help. Brock immediately volunteered first to demonstrate the next step to the class. He advanced to the front of the room before anyone else. Stewie became upset that he did not volunteer first

and said it loudly. Drawing upon my personal beliefs about technology and the CBRDG as a field for learning and expression, I wanted to use each moment of teaching, skills usage, and discussion as a way to create learning opportunities that expand student agency and not to control students by calling on one over the other. I explained to everyone that what we do in the CBRDG is voluntary. In other words, if we were in a classroom, I would select participants from a group of hands, but we are part of the CBRDG and if anyone wants to do something – just do it. Once Brock was at the Smartboard™, Stewie put his head down and covered his head. Interestingly, Brock displayed maturity and repeated what I said to Stewie, "Like Ms. Wilson said, "We make this group." If you want to do something, get up and do it and stop getting upset."

In the CBRDG where technology is at the center of learning and becoming a sacred object to the members, Brock getting to the Smartboard™ before Stewie generated a wave of different emotions from the members. This symbolic capital affords identity growth when they use the technology successfully to meet their collective or individual motives or goals. In this instance, Brock's getting to the Smartboard was an individual goal. Stewie felt overlooked and showed his displeasure by covering his head and mumbling comments. Shutting himself out, Stewie displayed a form of disrespect to Brock and the rest of the group members. Respect is a form of highly prized symbolic capital (Anderson, 1999). Stewie's hiding could be interpreted as a non-verbal and disrespectful response of "I do not want to learn anything from you" directed toward Brock. In other words, he unintentionally tried to reduce the symbolic capital of Brock. However, Brock, not reciprocating disrespect toward Stewie through belittling or negatively reacting, demonstrated his maturity in this situation. When he reiterated my words about participation, he meant it. Brock's response helped build a more unified feeling in the group. In

turn, his reaction resulted in increased symbolic capital in the form of respect from his peers. At that moment, Stewie did not agree with Brock, or me but his desire to learn technology and create a comic book overcame his feelings of disappointment and his damaged pride.

CBRDG Unity – Students, Agents of Cultural Changes

As the teacher sharing technology knowledge and skills with CBRDG, I noticed that students began to model my teaching skills to each other. For example, during Brock's interaction with me on scanning in the previous vignette figure 4-3, I was able to hear the positive and negative reactions of the members to his tech ability and work that was scanned. Brock's position at the Smartboard™ was very similar to mine. His identity roles shifted between student, peer, and coteacher. In this field, Brock did not have the same stigma as he did in his school because of his disability classification. In CBRDG, Brock's technology knowledge and skills became capital that expanded his agency. In this field, Brock was able to productively exert his agency. For example, Brock, as coteacher, was mindful that his peers were behind him. He looked at them and paused to make sure that they were focused. Prior to interacting with the scanner and screen, Brock faced us to introduce the step. Although Brock was able to recall the steps, he hesitated at certain points and looked to me for assistance. This is very similar to how I maintained student engagement in the activity. I paused with a simple question to ensure that they were following along with me. Brock's scanning skills and captured images generated positive emotional energy as the members showed excitement and verbally expressed their eagerness to get their projects done. I recalled feeling very connected to the participants in the process.

Our affiliation in the CBRDG as students and teacher, as well as the interaction of cultures and schemas, reshaped our individual and collective identities. As a group, we experienced a feeling of belonging, shared goals, mutual focus, and synchrony. This was evident throughout the exchanges between students-to-teacher and students-to-students. The group members remained seated while their eyes focused on Brock as he went through the steps on scanning. The positive emotional energy, collective effervescence, and group solidarity was expressed in their facial expressions. The members smiled and gasped as the different images were captured and displayed on the Smartboard™.

In our CBRDG community, we valued technology and Brock's usage generated emotional energy as well as built solidarity through the use of it. I believed students think teachers know and can do everything. However, the fact that Brock and Stewie were able to provide student-focused instructions inspired the others to want to try. This is related to Collins (2004) concept of "sacred symbol" within interaction rituals. Our abilities to have informed instruction, dialogue, and tech-exchanges were most productive for building group solidarity and producing new culture. I understand that what drew the members to this group is a collection of themes – the opportunity to make their own comic books, to learn and use technology, and to participate as members of their own exclusive group. The strongest proof was the positive emotional energy, collective effervescence, and group solidarity that resulted from these participants being together. Although each session did not explode with this radiance, it was inspiring to be part of a group of youngsters who were enthusiastically re/producing culture.

Technology was one of the focal points within this group. While the student members were new to the use of the various technologies in the room, it became an absolute and crucial ingredient of the glue of the group's culture. The students labeled as emotionally disturbed in

CBRDG also built a successful social network that includes both staff and students. While technology use for students became vital and natural when enacting culture within CBRDG, Brock, Stewie, and KK were able to benefit from the social networks to help them accomplish their comic projects. Although essential to their project, I did not heavily emphasize or discourage the use of technology as a requirement for being in the group. The members understood their participation was voluntary and they could do as much or as little as they desired. If students are not involved in a learning community of practice with a teacher who holds technology as a sacred symbol, technology use may remain in the background.

Brock and Stewie's efforts emphasize that consistent effort and practices are essential to teaching, learning, and helping each other. If aspects of a student's technology/literacy identity are allowed to merge authentically, the process can result in the transformation of a technology/literacy identity. If allowance for failure is not present, a student's technology/literacy identity may more likely remain fixed. For instance, during the technology session in vignette figure 4-3, Stewie showed evidence that his new role was challenging to enact. He displayed learned classroom culture behavior when he raised his hand instead of getting up and directly interacting with the new field structure. Overall, the vignettes show the transformation of a newly infused practice into a ritual as Brock and Stewie discussed their new practices, voluntarily shared with the group, engaged in coteaching, and displayed a strong social identity. It is noteworthy to highlight Brock and Stewie's coteaching abilities in the group because this activity is not usually associated with children classified with emotional disturbance. Moreover, coteaching is not a skill that I taught or suggested. In this sense, Brock and Stewie deliberately endeavored to generate additional learning opportunities by encouraging others' participation. As they became engaged in the work, their roles expanded and coexisted

with their involvement in the CBRDG. These practices resulted in both of the students engaging in the new modified ritual over the remainder of the CBRDG sessions. Throughout this study, Brock and Stewie were able to display the possibility of transferring deliberate practices into daily rituals and infusing the practices with existing rituals when working in fields physically very different from the school.

Working within a field between the traditional classroom and their homes, the students of the CBRDG enacted practices and re/produced culture. We can possibly charge technologies and academic learning with the positive emotional energy necessary to spark definite change in their home classrooms. However, since the CBRDG is a created learning space specific to teaching and learning technology, the activities might not be accepted in their traditional classrooms. CBRDG enacted practices demonstrated that teaching and learning of technology, curriculum subjects, the classroom, and students' experiences could not be kept in isolation from each other. Instead, it is important to capitalize on the culture that travels through porous boundaries of the educational field. The porous nature of a field's boundaries seems to facilitate the transfer of culture. Fields such as the CBRDG are loosely bounded social spaces in which participants possess and enact social, cultural, and symbolic capital. In vignette figure 4-3, Stewie displayed disrespect to Brock because he went directly to the Smartboard to practice scanning without raising his hand. Since these students are classified as emotionally disturbed, Stewie's shutting down could have caused Brock to retaliate. As the teacher, I consciously did not get involved because I thought it was important for the two boys to use their agency to negotiate and resolve the situation. However, Brock's reiteration of my words about the structure of the CBRDG averted any potential disruption. Although the words worked for Brock, at that moment, they meant nothing to Stewie. As the teacher, I still have to create and maintain a learning

environment. The power is shared when students negotiate the space based on my proposals. It became very clear that, since individuals have agency and can change the patterns of their actions as practices unfold and culture is enacted, individuals' actions can be unpredictable. Brock and Stewie's use of social, cultural, or symbolic capital dynamically structure the CBRDG and its practices. Given the porous nature of a field's boundaries, culture enacted in one field can be enacted in another field, thereby allowing for the distribution of culture across an individual's lifeworld. Through such a diffusion process, the dialogue, learning activities with technology, and co-teaching in CBRDG contributed the opportunity for students to create and transform culture, not simply reproduce it. As expressed in the CBRDG, students can confidently begin to transform and produce a new culture that includes technology as a tool for learning in their classrooms and lives.

I Learned, I Changed

I opened this chapter with a quote from Postman who believed that technology favors some groups of people, which often results in winners and losers. Postman's quote used in conjunction with Sewell's notion of culture having weak boundaries, allowed me to focus on the students in CBRDG who are educated in separate setting. I discovered that students labeled with disabilities might express their "ways of knowing and being" differently depending on the environment. In self-contained or general education classrooms where structures support independent student-focused learning based upon a student's particular disability and individual achievement, the student's agency to act can be truncated. However, if a learning environment (like the CBRDG) encourages student agency through dialogues, sharing, and technology practices, students are more likely to be mutually supportive and co-teaching may occur

naturally. In the CBRDG structure, the enactment of co-teaching on the micro level afforded the transformation of my traditional classroom teaching and the students' learning practices.

In this work, via student/teacher collaboration, Brock, Stewie, and I took aim at the deficit lens synonymous with special education. By actively examining what students *can* do, Brock and Stewie fully participated in not only the dialogue sessions and learning technology, but also expanded their identities from students identified with disabilities to users of technology and co-teachers. Moreover, Brock and Stewie's expanded roles as technology users and co-teachers enhanced peer learning. This chapter showed that Brock and Stewie's agency powerfully assisted the amount and quality of capital production (i.e., teaching, learning) because their desired outcomes were in tune with the objective of learning technology. As I stated elsewhere, the hegemonic traditional classroom structure does not permit students labeled with a disability (such as KK, Elliot, Brock and Stewie) to enact new culture, roles, or identities. Throughout CBRDG sessions, I witnessed student development that revolved around capital production, identity formation, solidarity, entrainment, and positive emotional energy. My practices expanded Brock and Stewie's agency to collaborate with each other and the rest of the group. Through the agency afforded in the lab, these students felt co-responsibility for CBRDG that transformed into a desire to collaborate with each other. Brock and Stewie attained high levels of success because they were given the opportunity through their association with CBRDG to freely and naturally enact new culture, rather than remaining constrained by the traditional hegemonic practices that conform to the policies and leadership structures associated with many urban schools that include students classified with disabilities.

I learned that the opportunity to enact new roles must be provided to students in order for them to learn how to interact effectively in any class. Since students must either know or learn

culture that is specific to fields, the CBRDG affords a social space for preparation. For example, the practices that structure the CBRDG are to expand student agency and expand learning opportunity. Although Stewie and Brock showed signs of being comfortable with the group and demonstrating micro level enactments of technology skills and literacy knowledge, the traditional classroom cultures overlapped into our group. While Stewie enacted culture learned in his classroom by raising his hand, Brock enacted the new culture learned in CBRDG by getting up and directly interacting with technology. The very practices developed in CBRDG created a social space, allowing the enactment of new student roles to open up students to the possibilities that existed but often not explored in the traditional classroom.

CHAPTER V

TECHNOLOGY IN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:

Cultural Enactment Identities Re/Production in the Comic Book Research Dialogue Group (CBRDG) As Learners become Peer Tutors

> Even though resolution of inequities regarding the use of technologies for learning may be a challenge, it is one that warrants resolution on moral grounds. Today, the upper and middle classes have numerous technological resources available in their everyday lives and come to formal learning sites with well-developed dispositions to use this technology to expand their learning. In contrast, many learners from working and lower classes encounter learning technologies for the first time in schools and other informal learning sites. Accordingly, they may not be disposed to use the different technologies and may be unaware of their potential as learning resources. In this regard, disadvantage is contained by the boundaries of social class and may be confounded by ethnicity (Kenneth Tobin, 2005, p. 149).

Reflection - CBRDG Practices Not a Traditional Learning Environment

I recalled the first day Brock, Stewie, KK, and Elliot, and I sat in the computer lab. The thoughts that circulated in my head focused on the fact that I did not want these sessions to feel like a traditional classroom with typical teacher-student instruction, a computer instruction class, or a group without fundamental rules of interaction. My thoughts were met with secondary thoughts about my ability to integrate technology into literacy and identity as a teacher and ethnic woman who lives in one community and teaches in another. I did not want my domineering personality, cultural orientation, or need to finish my dissertation research to co-opt the agency and experience of these young students. Instead, I wanted to create an open, flexible, and respectful learning community that would enable us to learn from each other's cultures and to reproduce culture as we restructure CBRDG. It was also important to understand the research group as a smaller social field that we created and defined—a field within which we all should feel comfortable, free, and the students would have more volition over the production of their

work. For example, during one of the writing sessions (images below), Stewie and Brock's positions as they sat in the chairs would most likely elicit correction from a teacher in a traditional classroom setting. In the images below, I isolated Brock and Stewie because their sitting positions, writing postures, and individual ways of focusing could be misconstrued in a traditional classroom as not being engaged in work. In image 1, Stewie sat upright in the chair with his legs folded and tucked under the chair on the bookrack. As the other students are writing, he looked at an object in his line of sight. Stewie's arms extended and surrounded the sheets of paper in front of him. His right hand was flat while his left hand holds a pencil. Stewie is quiet (a traditional indicator of student compliance); however, his body orientation and eye gaze could signal noncompliance with work and rules in a traditional classroom.

Image Figure 5-1: Left to Right -> Daniel, Stewie, Wilson (empty seat), Brock, and KK.

The students were given comic strip sheets to develop their story summaries into an outline. All engage in writing, but Stewie. Stewie is taking his time to mentally build up his thoughts. He has his legs folded and tucked under his chair. Stewie's arms almost encircle his sheets of paper while holding a pencil. Meanwhile he is looking at a particular direction. You can see his entire face and chest.

However, image 2 clearly depicts Stewie in full writing mode with a change in his body position. Stewie's upper body leans forward. His head is face down with eyes focused on his paper. His arms, still in a circle, are closed and his hands are in the writing mode.

Image Figure 5-2: Left to Right -> Daniel, Stewie, Wilson (empty seat), Brock, and KK

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In this clip, Stewie's leg position does not change when he begins writing, but his upper body, arms, and head change. Stewie is leaning forward and his head is positioned downward facing his paper. His arms are closed onto his paper – right hand holds the paper as he writes with his left. Now the top of his head is visible.

From Image one to two, Brock's sitting position and focus does not change. Brock's legs are crossed at the ankle. His upper body leans forward into his work. His left arm is under the table and rests on his left leg. Brock's upper body is leaning forward and his chin is resting on the desk. His right arm rests on the desk and his right hand holds the pencil.

In both images 1 and 2, Brock's position does not change. In image 1, Brock immediately begins to write. His style was similar to Stewie in the sense that it was relaxed. Brock's legs were crossed at the ankle and pushed back to rest on his toes. Intermittingly, he swings his legs out. Brock's upper body leaned forward into his work and his chin rested on the desk. His left arm was under the desk and rested on his left leg. Brock's right arm rested on the table and his right hand held the pencil.

In a traditional classroom, the teacher would most likely readjust both Brock and Stewie's writing postures positions. Although they were able to focus, write, and think comfortably in their chosen positions, Brock and Stewie might be misperceived by onlookers as non-engaged and unproductive. However, in the CBRDG students are able to participate in ways that they prefer. For example, it is acknowledged that Brock and Stewie may be more productive when permitted to look about to gather their thoughts and to write in a sitting position comfortable to them.

The CBRDG, as a learning community, is the seedbed for the development and assertion of the students' agency, technology skills, and reconstruction of their identities as peer tutors. Unlike the traditional teaching and learning of technology in school which maintains the supremacy of teachers' perspectives, the cultural interactions in the CBRDG positively impacted the identities of its members. Such cultural interactions cannot happen in a traditional classroom that primarily focuses upon teacher correction of student learning and behavior. In the CBRDG,

participants learn technology not on my terms nor in isolation because identity re/construction is not an independent development. Wenger (1999) stated that our practices and languages are products of our social relations and although our thoughts are private, they are constructs of images and perspectives that we understand through our affiliation in social communities. As a social act, identity re/construction was necessarily interconnected with practices and views of those around us. In the CBRDG, our social interactions enable Brock and Stewie to access technology knowledge, language, and skills on their own terms. As they develop into skilled users, Brock and Stewie, in turn, engage in tutoring other members.

CBRDG - Shared Culture and Practices

In order to develop a culture and a sense of community within the CBRDG, I had to create a shared sense of purpose in which each individual could develop a sense of identity that would bond him or her to the unit. Sewell's (1999) notion of culture (i.e., values and ways of acting and interacting that characterize a social group) includes attitudes and beliefs we have about learning and views we hold about schools and classrooms. Cultures are dynamic, complex, and changing, and include the ideations, symbols, behaviors, values, and beliefs shared by a group. The development of community and a shared culture is particularly important for the CBRDG since the members are part of a larger school community. The student participants gain insight into their similarities and differences through their learning and dialogue interactions. As a result, they acquire a shared sense of purpose. This finding is supported by the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) who argue that a sense of community and shared purpose grows from open communication between students and teachers and a realistic understanding of each other's perceptions and needs. Thus, these significant outcomes for students result from their

development as members within a community of learners who share common goals, values, language, and milestone experiences.

In the CBRDG, our agency or ability to exert direction over a given situation is shaped by and simultaneously shapes structure and culture (Sewell, 1992). To become members of the CBRDG we had to create the structure and community culture. As we exerted our individual agency—as an instructor of technology and as learners of technology—we learned how to negotiate the different structures (e.g., schemas and cultures). Once established as members with something of interest to exchange, our attitudes towards teaching and learning of technology changed our identities. Realizing we have the ability to reshape structures, it is important to remain conscious of how our agency alters existing structures, as well as the new types of structures that are created (Tobin, Elmesky & Seiler, 2005). As the teacher, I did not correct the students' sitting positions or their participation. Of particular interest are my observations of the group in work mode. The above images 1 and 2, I focus on Stewie because he is the only one who appears not be working. However, rather than prompt him to start, I allowed him to enact his agency. I acknowledge that Stewie needed time to gather his thoughts to being working.

Not the Classroom — Technology and Teaching in CBRDG

The CBRDG is not a traditional group of students and teacher. It is a new community of individuals who convene to learn how the functions of technology can enhance their literacy skills. Although there are rules in our field, we work hard to create a social atmosphere different from a classroom. Tobin (2005) argued that classrooms cannot be managed using a referent of teachers having control over students, but instead teachers and students should jointly construct how management processes should be enacted. The CBRDG is a field where participants learn skills in literacy and technology; however, a very important dynamic in this field is the dialogue

that allows all participants to share information. Tobin (2005) describes such fields as "cogenerative dialogues" –safe places that afford participants who share a common interest the opportunity to reflect on activities. The learning of technology, social interaction, and sharing of cultures through dialogues inevitably impact and potentially changes teachers' and students' identities during practices. Wenger (1999) describes identity as the "social, the cultural, the historical with a human face" (p. 145). Given that the CBRDG is a learning community, and a social field and that identity is a fluid corporation of various identities inscribed by others and culture, identity cannot be separated the social activities and is reconstructed as new knowledge is acquired.

Re/Constructing Identities in CBRDG

Identity re/construction is usually subconscious but always continuous and dialectical (Roth, 2006). It maintains our histories, dispositions, capital, and habitus, which are continually in flux as we negotiate various fields, structures, and resources in school and outside (Swartz, 1997). Identity re/construction is part of learning and changing which does not occur in seclusion. It is inextricably linked to capital in fields and enables us to exert our agency to meet our specific goals of acquirement.

In the CBRDG, it was necessary to construct a field outside of the classroom where we could collaboratively re/construct our identities and exert agency without the overarching, stifling, and imposing structures of the school, classroom, and administration. In the CBRDG, re/constructing our identities became part of a routine that involved a "subtle dance of the self" (Wenger 1999, p. 41). As such, the participants had to transition from "being" students labeled as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed whose behaviors are controlled by special education professionals to "being" technology users who exercise newly acquired knowledge and agency to

finish projects on their own terms. As an alternatively certified teacher, I had to re/construct my identity into a special education teacher/technology user/group participant in a school community that places limited value on my personal capital. Nonetheless, I learned how to use my capital from the business and educational worlds in conjunction with my capital from the teaching world. My efforts afforded me room to develop pedagogical strategies that would lead my participants to acquire technology skills that would be useful in many fields – the CBRDG, the classroom, and home. In the CBRDG, participants had to acquire traditional literacy skills along with the language and functions of technology. In other words, I focused on providing real world application by integrating technology as a tool into academics to develop literacy skills.

A major part of our routine in the CBRDG was saving work onto a storage device. I contemplated using individual floppy disks, but decided against it because new laptops do not provide this option. I bought a USB (A Universal Serial Bus or USB is a removable and writable memory data storage device.) for the participants in the CBRDG to use and to have as their own while in the lab. Due to concerns of safekeeping of our work, the participants and I decided that I would hold onto the USB. They said, “Put it on the key ring with the school keys, so you would know not to use it for other things.” Thus, my keys became more than a symbol of access to my office, bathrooms, and elevators – the USB became symbolic capital of the precious documents stored within. The combination of my school keys and the USB that held our work denoted a new type of access and power to all things, including technology. When a participant walked around with my keys/USB, his or her status changed from just a student to one who is a technology user and gatekeeper to the bathrooms. In a school environment with bureaucratic structures that isolate teachers and students from each other, the CBRDG became the bridge that permitted movement over the gaps between communities.

CBRDG – A Community of Practice and Participation

A group of people sharing a passion lies at the heart of learners in a community of practice. Participation is voluntary and open to anyone who has interest in the subject. The CBRDG emerged from a common interest and the interaction among participants implies that a community and learning cannot be designed, but rather they can only be designed for (Wenger, 1998). Learning is more than simply internalizing information and knowledge. It involves participation in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to Wenger (1998), a community of practice defines itself along three dimensions: what it is about, how it functions, and what capability it has produced. The CBDRG is a "joint enterprise" understood and continually renegotiated by its members. It is more than the interactions, transactions, and learning of new technical knowledge skills. CBRDG is also a social entity where members are bound to each other by group functions, shared repertoire and capital, language, and skills. Wenger attributes learning and becoming who we are to our personal engagement in communities of practices. The various exchanges in the CBRDG, as a social group, assist in individual development. The individual investment in the CBRDG translated to relationships and association over things that matter to the collective group.

A Space for Learning Technology

A student who learns within the context of a community lives a new way of learning. In moving from the position of "a novice" to "the center" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the student comes to realize how the community has given him or her a sense of belonging and a connection to others. Tobin, Elmesky, and Seiler (2005), state that cultural constructs are domain specific. As participants of the CBRDG, for example, we engaged in dialogue, literacy, and literacy strategies, and technological language and skills specific to our newly created field. We became

active members and transformed the computer laboratory into a space where students felt safe and connected to those around them. As the teacher in the CBRDG, I initially led the group, introducing support, encouragement, respect, appreciation, learning, and appropriate behavior into the educational climate as a cultural model. Understanding that students come with a set of values, culture, knowledge, attitudes about learning, and different perceptions of themselves and their roles as a student, I knew that it was important to treat the CBRDG field as a place where members could live a fulfilling educational experience together as learners while expressing needs and concerns appropriately.

As the teacher, I had the responsibility of leading the group and explicitly teaching technology functions to enhance literacy skills. In the midst of teaching and participating, I had to be proactive to any potential issues that could arise while nurturing the relationships between students and myself. The participants of the CBRDG developed as learners of technology and literacy skills. They recognized their common goals, engaged in common experiences, developed a shared language, and adopted the beliefs and value system of our field that could be transferred to their academic lives. The knowledge and skills gained by Brock and Stewie's participation in the CBRDG aided in the relinquishment of their positions as novices. They moved from the periphery of learning to the center as skilled users and peer tutors. According to Lave and Wenger (1991),

> Learning through legitimate peripheral participation takes place no matter which educational form provides a context for learning, or whether there is any intentional educational form at all. Indeed, this viewpoint makes a fundamental distinction between learning and intentional instruction. Such decoupling does not deny that learning can take place where there is teaching, but does not take intentional instruction to be in itself the source or cause of learning, and thus

> does not blunt the claim that what gets learned is problematic to what gets taught (pp. 40–41).

People and communities are continuously in process, and it is impossible to predict what people learn as they participate in their daily practices. The CBRDG, as a community of learners, was continuously in transition. On the basis of the CBRDG group interactions, for example, it was hard to predict how, when, and at what speed participants would acquire skills and if those skills would transfer back to the classroom.

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

The CBRDG is focused on knowledge and knowing in practice. The process underlying the construction and nurturing of knowledge and skills in the CBRDG is called Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). LPP is the process by which newcomers become full members by learning from old-timers and by being allowed to participate in certain tasks that relate to the practices of the community. It suggests an opening, a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement.

At the beginning of the CBRDG project, I had to establish a routine of teaching and learning because all participants were new to the dialogue format. Therefore, I was the person at the center of the group and student participants were at the periphery of learning. If I had maintained this unbalanced environment, learning would not have taken place. To rectify the imbalance, it was necessary to bring the social aspect to the forefront. Lave and Wenger (1991) believe that a focus on social engagements rather than conceptual structures is the proper context for learning to take place. In communities of practice, collective learning over time results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of enterprises and attendant social relations. Since learning

in the CBRDG involved activities and dialogue, it included being active in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities (Wenger, 1998).

> Learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and … the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community. "Legitimate peripheral participation" provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a socio-cultural practice. This social process, includes, indeed it subsumes, the learning of knowledgeable skills (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29).

In the CBRDG, members whose peripheral position had the potential to move them toward the center of the learning community found they were able to gain more knowledge and participate more fully in the community's practices. Yet the periphery can be oppressive if a peripheral member is denied access to knowledge necessary to become a more central member. In this case, the peripheral member of the community was marginalized. In my school, the segmented nature of schooling stunts the development of healthy learning communities for teachers and students. The school is divided by disability classification and grade level. Moreover, the day is broken up into 40-minute blocks of time, which create structures that isolate teachers and students from working together, and eliminates the potential for teacher collaboration. While school administrators do not necessarily discourage the formation of learning communities, neither do they provide conducive structures for the cultivation of communities. The CBRDG, although founded within the school's community, does not mirror the traditional classroom structure and schema of teaching and learning.

Drawbacks of Communities of Practice

There are critics of communities of practice who view the structure and learning outcomes of the group as hard to quantify, and consider results subjective in nature (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the CBRDG, I rely on the social and symbolic capital evident in the video vignettes and writing samples to argue the results of this study. The capital of the group, according to Sewell (1999), is the existence of a series of connections and the availability of a common interest or shared, common understanding. A drawback to communities of practice could be the reliance on the free transfer of information and knowledge as the students enter different structures. Since knowledge is often considered a private good, in order for knowledge to transfer freely, it must be regarded as a public good. The fact that communities are self-directed and self-motivated is an advantage as well as a drawback. In other words, the fact that the members of the CBRDG could exert agency to define our individual objectives does not necessarily mean that those objectives would align with the broader group objectives. When objectives are not aligned, the benefits of a community can be very small or even negative if the members work against each other. Lack of shared identity and consensual knowledge can also result in a community's failure. Despite the potential for such drawbacks, the CBRDG as a learning field was embraced by its members. Participation in the CBRDG enabled each individual to experience a life that involved interactive dialogue, friendship, new technology knowledge and skills, cultural enactment, and empowerment of agency in self-expression that evolved into peer tutoring.

Novice to Expert: Practice Transforms Learners into Tutors

Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss individual participation in a community as a way of understanding knowledge, learning skills, and an overall transformation of the person. Based on the data and my observation, Brock and Stewie engaged in a set of milestone experiences as they moved from novices to skilled technology users and peer tutors. While engaged in milestone experiences, Brock and Stewie were introduced to the conceptual strands of self-awareness, respect, cooperation, trust, responsibility, reflection, and social justice. In CBRDG, Brock and Stewie first encountered the theoretical context that guided their learning. Knowledge, self-awareness, skills, and dispositions are embedded in a carefully sequenced, developmentally appropriate six-week outline for technology instruction. The examination of themselves as learners was at the heart of being members of CBRDG and key to their development.

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is a widely studied instructional strategy in education. Research on the success of peer tutoring suggests it can be a powerful tool in improving classroom performances (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Burish, 2000). Peer tutoring has been effective in improving academic skills in the subject tutored. Damon and Phelps (1989b) defined peer tutoring as an "approach in which one child instructs another child in material on which the first is an expert and the second is a novice" (p. 11). The authors believe the language shared between tutors and tutees is similar and therefore easier to understand. Moreover, the language interaction between peer instructor and tutee can be more balanced and lively than the teacher-led instruction. Damon and Phelps noted that, unlike adult-child instruction, the expert in peer tutoring is not very far removed from the novice in authority or knowledge, nor does the expert have any special claims to instructional

competence. Although the relationship is not exactly equal in status, the conversation between the two is high in mutuality.

At the beginning of the CBRDG, I provided instruction in the technology and literacy knowledge and skills required for members of the CBRDG to complete their projects. However, as time passed, and Brock and Stewie's knowledge and skills evolved, they become active participating members and experienced a role-switch from novice to expert. Their newly acquired technology and literacy expertise enabled them to work independently and eventually to assist other members in working on their projects. Brock and Stewie's appetite for learning and desire to finish their comic book projects propelled them ahead of the others. Knowing we were on a schedule and that I believed in teaching everyone at the same time, Brock and Stewie became assistants in the group. Thus, the developing group members benefited from same-age tutoring by Brock and Stewie. The emotional and psychological improvements of the group members changed. Learning technology functions and literacy skills from the teacher and having their new knowledge reinforced by their peers enhanced self-esteem (e.g., Daniel using MS Word in vignette figure 5-1 with Brock's help), social behaviors (e.g., sharing stories and taking turns while talking), and peer relations (e.g., helping one another with their projects). A broader longitudinal benefit overflowed into the dialogue settings as the members became more focused, cooperative, and emotionally energized. Although research suggests overflow of these types of positive behaviors into other settings, I did not have an opportunity to observe whether or not the CBRDG members' change was present in their traditional classroom setting (Damon & Phelps, 1989b).

Brock and Stewie Emerge as Technology Tutors

During weeks two, three, and four, I introduced and instructed the students on the application and various functions of Microsoft™ Word (MS Word), scanning, and PowerPoint. Unfortunately, Daniel missed the first session and felt lost during the second week. In the first session, Brock, Stewie, and KK had created and written their comic book summaries in preparation for the activities planned for the second week. During the second session (see Chapter III), I demonstrated how to navigate the desktop environment and identify the MS Word icon, followed by instructions on how to open the icon by double clicking on the Smartboard screen. Within MS Word, members learned that the blinking cursor in the white space indicates the position and ready to type mode. I typed a short four-line story in order to demonstrate and explain a few essential icons on the menu bar. The basic menu tools introduced were, spell checker, font face and size, page alignment, bold, italics, underline, cut, copy, and save. This was followed by instruction on the steps for saving and naming their documents (e.g., their_name_summary) and placing them in the group folder, and then into their individual folders. At the end of my application instruction, each student had the opportunity to practice his or her newly learned skill by using my document at the Smartboard. After the independent demonstration, they were discharged to type their summaries in MS Word at their assigned terminals.

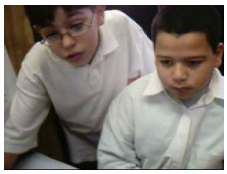
Wanting to be at the same position as his peers, Daniel decided to write his summary and ignore the MS Word instruction, demonstrations, and practice. As a result, he required additional assistance. After showing Daniel how to access the application, I told him to begin typing his summary so we could move on to the next demonstration of the menu bar and instructions for saving the document. Upon returning some 10 minutes later to work with him on the next steps, I

saw that Brock was at Daniel's terminal offering one to one peer instruction. I remained to watch and listen to their dialogue. I thought it would be important to make sure that Brock's directives and uses of terminology were clear. The following vignette and images illustrate Brock's peer tutoring with Daniel. (Elliot could not participate in the video or audiotaping. Instead, he took charge of the hand held camera and followed us around the room.)

Vignette Figure 5-1: Brock Instructs Daniel – MS Word

In addition to studying Brock's contribution during small group dialogues, I analyzed his expanded role as a peer tutor in the following interaction with Daniel. Micro-analysis of Brock in both formats shows that his participation produced the needed ritual ingredients to strengthen his position in the community. Brock expanded his student role to teacher as he assisted Daniel in MS Word. Brock integrated various aspects of teaching, such as repetition, asking questions, and modeling. In this sense, he saw himself as equally responsible for Daniel understanding the functions of Word. Beyond his sense of joint responsibility for Daniel's learning outcome, Brock subconsciously used my mannerisms in posture and speech to create a comfortable experience. Although my initial intention was to help Daniel, Brock's initiation temporarily removed me from the equation. Overall, Brock assisted in the technology instruction more than he realized. Beyond his contribution of participation in group dialogue, Brock also contributed to technology practices, which helped structure learning in the CBRDG. Upon close examination of the vignette, I saw evidence of Brock's ability to transport culture learned from the whole group teacher-led technology instruction sessions and to reenact these practices during his teaching session with Daniel.

Brock and Daniel's peer tutoring interaction demonstrated signs of mutual respect and synchrony that seemed to build strong levels of solidarity. Upon close analysis, I could see symmetry between Brock's alert, slightly leaning-forward posture and his engaged pose during class. In fact, Daniel and Brock shared several different body positions, such as leaning forward, posturing upright, tilting the head, pointing at the screen, following hand movements with eye gaze, and striking a resting pose. Brock set the tone for this mini-session by engaging Daniel's focus by asking questions and modeling different functions. In turn, Daniel's attention and responses indicated appreciation. Brock's alertness coexisted with his peer's attention and focus on every word, gesture, and motion. While this particular analysis also includes Brock's non-verbal responses, they were significant enough to confirm his expanded identity role in the group as a peer tutor.

Individual	Instruction
Brock:	"Well first …"
	(Wilson approaches the two boys.)
	 *(Brock had Daniel's attention. Brock standing behind Daniel. Brock's left arm is behind Daniel and the right side of his body is leaning into the cubicle. Brock's right arm is slightly on the table and his hand has control of the mouse. Daniel is sitting back and his head and eyes are focused on Brock's movement.)*
Wilson:	*(My question interrupts Brock's flow of thoughts)*
	"Brock, you will help him save the document?"
Brock:	"Yeah, Daniel you might want to save it."
	(Daniel leans forward and places his left elbow on the table and hand to his mouth.)
Daniel:	"So, yeah, I know. I go on this and …"
	 *(Daniel uses a finger on his left hand to point to the screen. Then with his right arm and hand he motions toward the mouse. Daniel pulls back when Brock spoke about running the spell check)*
Brock:	"Yeah, Daniel you might want to *(pause)* ah spell check before saving."
	(Brock points to the 'abc' icon on the screen)
Daniel:	*(Daniel takes a finger on his left hand and points to the 'abc' icon after Brock)*
	(Short pause before speaking) "This thing. Okay,"
	(Pause)

(Daniel extends his right arm and hand to gain control of the mouse. His body position changes as he leans forward to complete the action. Brock's body position does not change and his eyes focus on Daniel's actions.)

"Done." *(hesitant tone)*

Brock: "Yeah. Now you need to save this thing so the name will show here."
(Brock points to the title bar and Daniel's head and eyes move along with him.)

Wilson: *(I interject with another question to encourage use of the terminology)*
"What is he saving?"
(Brock puts his hand on Daniel's shoulder)

Daniel: *(Both pause then Daniel speaks)*
"Save - the story."

Wilson*:* *(In the background, I ask – how is he saving it - file, save, you have to name it. That is the summary okay. Brock and Daniel were engaged with each other.)*

Brock: "Take the *(pause)* ah cursor to the menu bar and select File."
(Brock points to the word file. Then he leans his right arm on the cubicle wall)
"After that point to save or wait you can also click on the disk."
(Brock moved into the cubicle again and points to the save icon on the menu bar)
"Now you get this box – I forgot the name – to name the file."

(Long pause. Then, Brock and Daniel look to me for help. I am standing at the corner of the desk unit. Daniel leans back and away from the computer and looks up. Brock continues leaning forward with his right arm and hand in the same position. Brock slightly turns his head to look at me.)

Stewie: *(As I was about to speak, Stewie pushes his chair and sticks his head around. The three of us look at him as he answers)*
"The directory. And don't forget to put your name."

Wilson: "Right, the directory."
(I was a little stunned which resulted in Brock and I speaking the words 'the directory' at the same time)

Brock: "Oh Yeah, the directory. Thanks. Click where you see 'file name' and type summary. Now go to my documents."

Daniel: "Go to my documents??"
(in a hesitant and unsure tone)

Brock:

(Brock begins to move away from the computer to speak to Daniel. He looks at Daniel. Then Brock leans forward to point to "my document")

"Yeah, and look over here, we learned this last week - click on that yellow - to make a new folder - new folder is down there, put in your name."

(After Brock tells Daniel the next step, he completely steps back from the computer to provide Daniel with the room to type.)

(Body positions change as Brock moves away from the computer to the outside of the cubicle. Daniel sitting in the cubicle leans forward. He is in control of the keyboard and computer screen. Brock continues to look on over Daniel's right shoulder.)

Daniel: "Done, done."
(Daniel leans back and folds his hands)
Brock: "Good, now take this mouse and take your thing – *(pause)* ah document which is right here and pull it inside the Daniel folder. Done."
(Daniel claps his hands at his accomplishment.)
Wilson: "Finished, beautiful. Thank you Brock and Daniel."

Immediately following the teacher-led instruction on MS Word, Brock is able to take his newly acquired information and redirect it in a linear manner for Daniel. Reviewing my journal notes about this encounter, I remember how truly amazing this was then and now as I watch the video clip. In this one minute fifty second clip, Brock presented himself as a knowledge user and coteacher of technology. His ability to give clear directives in a teachable manner impressed me. Brock, very comfortable in his role as coteacher, was not embarrassed or afraid when I briefly interjected with questions or suggestions for next steps to pursue. In fact, he maintained focus and active eye contact with Daniel and the activity while responding to my questions. More impressive is Brock's acceptance of help from Stewie. The close social bond between Brock and Stewie manifested when Stewie entered the conversation with the answer to my question. Both Brock and Daniel thanked him. Brock established the ability to tune in and stay on course with Daniel and tune out activity that might disrupt Daniel's focus. He did not allow Stewie's or my interjections to derail his focus on Daniel. As he instructed Daniel, Brock self-corrected words by replacing them with the terminology learned. His ability to recall all the essential components

learned included running the spell check before saving the document. Brock noticed Daniel had a few misspelled words in his document and suggested cleaning it up before moving to the steps on saving. One very important aspect about saving and naming a document is the ability to see the name on the title bar. Brock also found the appearance of the document's name on the title bar valuable. He highlighted this by pointing to the area on the screen where the name would be displayed. As he moved on to the save function, Brock told Daniel the two ways he could save his document – either clicking on the word file or on the disk icon. When Brock mentioned the disk icon, he pointed to it. Brock was very thorough with the steps on saving which included Daniel creating an individual folder to store his work. His effortless and unsolicited assistance to his peer are summed up by my compliment at the end. I was elated and the word *beautiful* contained joy as apprehensions about my own abilities, the short timeframe, the multiple technology applications, and the writing structure were eased.

Teacher's Journal – Field Note

Watching Brock's performance made me curious. I wanted to know how he was able to effortlessly complete his work and offer peer teaching without my help. At the end of Brock's tutoring, I asked him how he remembered all the steps to MS Word, including creating a folder. He looked at me with a child-like expression as if I should know. Then he said, "Stewie and I wrote everything down. In addition, Mr. O. let us to come to the lab to practice by ourselves. This is so much fun." I asked to see his notes. Brock went over and spoke with Stewie. Then he returned with their two work folders. As he opened his folder, I noticed it was very organized. Brock identified each work segment with labeled post-it notes – summary, images, storyline, and tech directions. I asked, "How did you think to use post-it notes?" He replied, "We noticed you wrote on them last week and put them on your paper in your folder." He pulled out the directions

from both folders to show me. The loose-leaf papers were folded in half to replicate a small notebook. He pointed to page one, removed the post-it, and said,

> This is what we learned last week, see. We talked about the comic book and writing parts of a story. Then you showed us how to create a folder. Look I wrote it in steps. You kept saying how important it is to remember where our folder is. So, we didn't want to mess up. We tried to help KK but she is on a different floor and Daniel wasn't here.

Contradiction – Wilson Inhibits Brock's Agency as Peer Tutor

In the vignette figure 5-1, my actions and speech interrupt Brock's concentration while tutoring Daniel. When I returned to Daniel and found Brock assisting, I was unable to relinquish my responsibilities as a teacher. Rather than stand and observe Brock tutoring Daniel, I interject with questions. Elliot was there videotaping the interaction. In watching the videotape, I see how my teacher personality failed to remain a background figure. I realize my desire for the students to learn technology overpowered my desire for them to be agents. At the time, I thought Brock's pausing was an invitation for me to ask my question. Upon close analysis of the videotape, I realize that his pausing was an opportunity for Daniel to digest the information. I notice my question overlapped with Brock's train of thought and associated speech. Nonetheless, Daniel and Brock did not stop to look at me or acknowledge my words. Confident in his abilities, Brock momentarily paused, but was able to pick up where he left off. I believe my presence and verbal interruption might have caused Daniel to become nervous. The second time I interjected was to ensure the proper use of terminology and steps to save the document. While I am not captured on video, I am in the background. My talking over Brock or at the same time could have confused both boys. Fortunately, Daniel did not default to my suggestion because of my position as teacher. Brock, at the same time, did not permit me to take over or truncate their agency.

Field Note – Microanalysis of Brock and Stewie Modeling Teacher's Style

On the micro level, I studied how Brock and Stewie's peer interactions demonstrate culture being enacted. Learning technology for Brock and Stewie was an intellectually rigorous and intensely social event in which they interacted with the CBRDG curriculum, members, and teacher. After reviewing the video data several times, I realized Brock and Stewie adopted my teaching style and mannerisms. In the CBRDG, I had a very hands-on and informal approach to instructing with technology. The atmosphere in our field was open to exploration, inquiry, and freedom. It was evident that both Brock and Stewie were highly alert and invested in the results of our group. In addition to their energy and the focus they brought to the group, Brock and Stewie also demonstrated "expert" aspects of dialogue, technology knowledge and application, and leadership abilities. Their newly acquired knowledge and characteristics such as membership, coteaching, and leadership were evident as they provided valuable feedback on the group learning processes and implemented peer-tutoring practices. Their high degree of verbal participation, attentiveness, and manner of assisting peers who seemed to have trouble with technology functions were concrete manifestations of the group's dialogue and learning effects. In particular, Brock seemed especially interested in whether or not his peers were learning the material. The transcripts above present an exchange in which both Brock and Stewie employ teaching strategies to insure that their peers stay on-task and involved in the group's activities.

Brock's Mannerism – In vignette figure 5-1, Brock worked with Daniel in MS Word. I saw and heard my gesture style and speech combination. As Brock spoke, he did not rush through the steps. He did not allow my interjecting comments and questions to derail his focus on Daniel. Brock spoke clearly and paused to look at Daniel from time to time. The breaks in his instruction allowed Daniel to digest the information. It also enabled Brock to identify whether or

not Daniel understood the steps. If Brock realized that Daniel was not adequately absorbing the steps or functions, he offered additional information or pointed to the specific area or icons on the screen. For example, Brock advised Daniel to run the spellchecker before saving. Daniel's action was not immediate. Therefore, Brock pointed to the "abc" icon. This action caused Daniel to look at the area of the screen where his finger was pointing. Then, Daniel was able to point to the icon on his own with his finger followed by the mouse to execute the function. Brock tuned into Daniel's feelings and tuned out the potentially disruptive voices of Stewie and me. In response to noting that Daniel appeared a little nervous and unsure Brock exerted his agency as a coteacher and provided reassurance by putting his left hand on Daniel's shoulder. This gesture appeared to have a calming effect upon Daniel.

At the beginning of their interaction, Brock had to share the same space with Daniel to acquaint him with the MS Word and Desktop environment. Brock leaned in and took control of the mouse. However, when Daniel needed the space to type or to be engaged with the computer, Brock released the mouse and either moved aside or to the outside of the workspace. Although he looked on, he allowed Daniel to attempt the work. This is very similar to the way I instructed the group at the Smartboard. During my instruction in MS Word (see Chapter III), I asked questions to ensure each member understood. I always identified the different icons on the screen by pointing to them. The pointing gestures served the purpose associating the icon, its location, and explanation of its function. However, the most important aspect of the technology instruction session was permitting the students to practice their new skill. I completely and consciously moved away from the Smartboard, computer, and mouse. I wanted them to be able to explore without fear that I would shut them down.

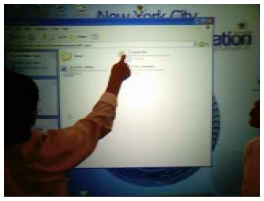
Brock's tone was very mild and confident. He used the exact words that I had used during group instruction when he told Daniel to "to run the spellchecker before saving." When Daniel displayed hesitation, Brock did not get excited or express judgment at his inability to immediately follow through with the steps. When Brock realized Daniel might have difficulty recalling information, he spoke the steps in a supportive way that suggested that he was there to help him. At the point when Daniel had to click to create a new folder, he became a little lost in the directory. Brock helped him identify the folder by calling it by the color "yellow." I often compliment the students on their writing or technology performance. Brock also used complimentary speech. He either agreed with Daniel or praised him with kind words.

Stewie's Teacher Talk – In the vignette below, Stewie shared his finished comic with the group at the Smartboard. He tells them what he is going to do and waits until the group focused on him. As he proceeded, Stewie indicates the application necessary for projecting his comic. I observed that Stewie uses a combination of my gestures, tone, and position. In chapter three, I instructed the group in MS Word. As the teacher, it was necessary to use gestures, talk, eye contact, and physical movements to maintain the students' focus. I pointed at the various areas on the screen to locate and identify the icons and explained their functions. As I explained a function, my hands were used as a way to express my thoughts and the upcoming actions. In analyzing my manner of speech, I noticed that my tone was always mild and at ease. If I asked the students a question and they did not know the answer, I changed my tone in a way to assist them in understanding the question. Always conscious that I am instructing, I tried not to block the members' view of the screen. In fact, the first thing I did when I walked to the front of the room was to move the table that holds the mouse and keyboard to the far side of the Smartboard. This allowed me to stand at the side and not in the front of the screen.

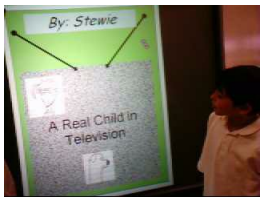
Vignette Figure 5-2: Stewie Displays His Work Using PowerPoint and the Smartboard

At the end of session five, Stewie, like Brock, had completed, for the most part, his comic book and wanted to display it to the class via a slide show using the Smartboard. He demonstrated great confidence in working with different technologies and various applications. When I offered some assistance in the form of guidance, Stewie took in the instructions and followed along without losing his position. He did not perceive my intervention as shutting him down in any way. He was very proud to show his work and demonstrate his understanding of both PowerPoint and the Smartboard touch directives.

Daniel, KK, and Elliot were interested in knowing how he and Brock finished their comics. Therefore, Stewie engaged in a mini presentation to tell his story and showcase his newly acquired talents. He discussed the steps learned over the previous weeks that involved the initial writing process, image, and story creation as well as the technology applications. Stewie indicated the importance of understanding the functions of MS Word, Scanning, and PowerPoint in creating and assembling his comic book. He talked about some writing issues and the help Brock gave him. Stewie emphatically stated the importance of writing down information, and directions, and the advantage of having more time in the lab to work on his comic. He let them know he and Brock had made special arrangements to come to the lab during lunch.

Individual	Instruction	Comic Book Images
Stewie:	"I will now show you my comic." *(works with the mouse to locate PowerPoint)*	
Wilson:	"Is this your finished comic?"	
Stewie:	*(pauses and waits for the group to*	

focus on him)
"Yes, I will open PowerPoint – to open PowerPoint you must find the icon, double click on it with your finger or ah this, the mouse, next you must open the file by clicking on - file, open, then the file. Here it is."



Wilson: "That looks great. Do you remember how to run the slideshow?"

Stewie: "Yes, to make the slide show click on this icon with your finger. I can click on this with my finger here, right?"*(Stewie points to the slide show icon at the bottom of the screen)*

Wilson: "Yes, you can."

Stewie: "This is the cover of my comic. Oops, I want to start at the beginning. So I have to go back. – you can click on the arrow to go back."
(Stewie accidentally touched the screen and the pages advanced. He then points and taps the back arrow to return to the intro page.)

Daniel: "What are you telling us about your comic? What is the name?"

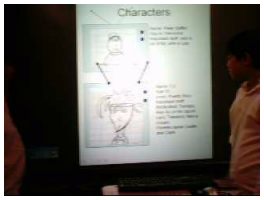
Brock: Yeah, what is the name?

Stewie: "The title is right here, *(pointing to the screen and saying)* – "A real child in television.""

KK: *(Pointing to the television)*
"Oh, and it looks like a television "

Daniel and Brock: "Yeah, it does."

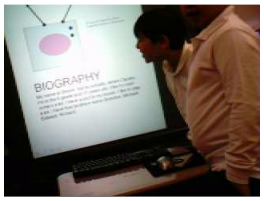
Stewie: "To change the slide you can click on the arrow or this [spells out] - pg dn button."



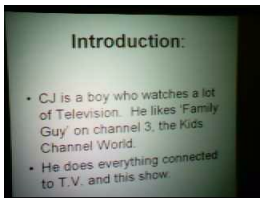
(Stewie change slide)
"And these are my characters I created and scanned them in."

(Daniel says "that is very nice" and starts reading the characters description. Then Brock joins him in reading)

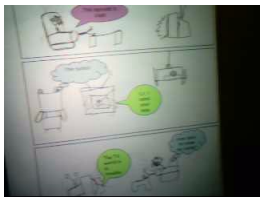
	(Brock clicks the next slide)
Daniel:	"How did you make the letters look like that?"
Stewie and Brock:	*(speaking together)* "It is comic something …" *(Stewie says, "I can show you after.")*
Wilson:	"That is nice. Look at the biography." *(Daniel exclaims – ooh!)* *(Daniel and Brock read Stewie's biography)*



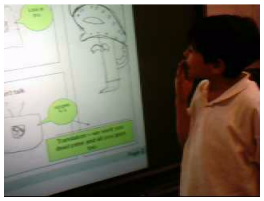
Stewie:	"The biography tells a little about me and stuff." *(Stewie changes slide*) "This is the introduction to my comic. This is the first part of the comic. It tells us what is going to happen in the story."



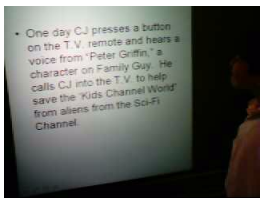
	(change slide) "Here CJ is sitting in his chair and watching his favorite television show on the family channel. His favorite character is Peter. Then suddenly an alien appears from the sci-fi channel and begins chasing CJ."



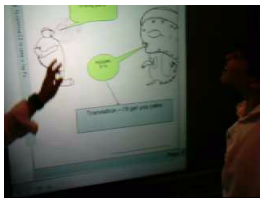
Daniel:	"Wow, look at this. Yeah, keep going."
Stewie:	*(Stewie change slide)* "Here Peter tells CJ, "I need your help.""



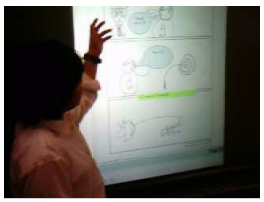
Activity	*(Daniel and Brock are discussing Stewie's pages and pointing to the details)*
Daniel:	"This stuff is so cool." *(he points to the dialogue boxes)*



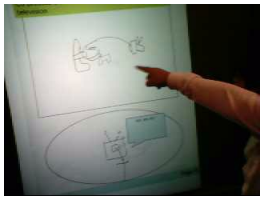
Stewie: *(Stewie change slide)*
"Here as Peter is running away from the alien, he tells CJ again he needs help."



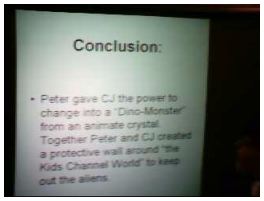
"CJ presses a button on the remote and he goes into the television."



Daniel: "Wow, look at how long his neck is – and then the conclusion what did he do – he saved the world."



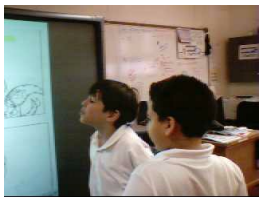
Stewie: "The conclusion – this tells what happens at the end."



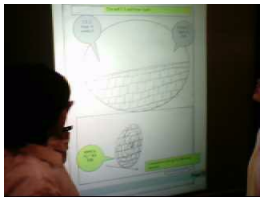
"This is the part where Peter gives CJ the crystal to transform into a fighting alien."

KK: "That is the most important part."

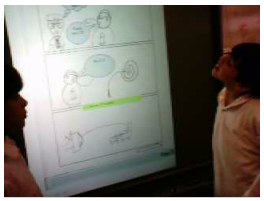
Stewie: "CJ is running after the aliens chasing Peter. This is him killing the alien."

“Then he and Peter build a wall between the family and sci-fi channels.”



“Then Peter thanks CJ and he returns to the regular world. Here he is back in his chair.”



Stewie: Activity “Then it goes back to the regular PowerPoint. And to change the letter you click *(points to the font)* on the arrow and select this one – comic sans”

Wilson: “Beautiful – that was wonderful!”

Prior to starting any functions, Stewie waited for the students to settle down and focus on him. Stewie described the steps needed to open PowerPoint. Once in the application, he proceeded to the directory to locate the file. When he said, “Here it is,” it reminded me of the way I reassure students to take their time to recall the steps and that they will always find their work. He pointed to the screen indicating different areas such as the title or image. There was a point when he started talking and his slide advanced. He calmly recognized this as a common occurrence and told us how to get back to the correct talking position. As Stewie presented his comic, he was able to integrate the literacy components learned during the dialogue sessions along with the identification of technology functions. All the while, he used the appropriate

terms and steps. His peers, mesmerized by him, got out of their seats to take closer looks. Stewie embraced their questions about the text style, biography, and characters.

Stewie exhibited ease, confidence, and skill in presenting the elements necessary to complete his comic. He demonstrated his knowledge along with dexterity in using the Smartboard and navigating the Microsoft environment. Stewie took his time in telling the story, pointing to the different images, and answering the responses and questions. The other members were so very impressed with his work that they did not want to sit down; rather they gathered at the Smartboard and became fully engrossed in his storytelling. In hindsight, I understand that what drew the participants out of their seats was their emotional energy, collective effervescence, and group solidarity that radiated around his delivery. While not every session felt that way, it was inspiring to be there with a group of students who were enthusiastically producing culture.

In analyzing my field notes on the growing cultural re/production of technology and terminology use as well as the new demeanors of Brock and Stewie, I concluded cultural re/production is a never-ending process. If students are involved in a community of practice that holds technology as one of its "sacred symbols," it becomes foregrounded. At the same time, constant technology use makes it a viable and transparent tool. A community of practice that values technology use, teacher knowledge and experience, and group activities can help students satisfy the diverse demands of the many fields in their lives such as, school and home. As student's re/produce culture in the CBRDG, there is potential to simultaneously charge technologies and literacy with the positive emotional energy necessary to possibly spark change in their home classrooms. Although I did not have an opportunity to witness changes if any in their classrooms, I hope the students were able to enact the same practices as in CBRDG. Based on the teaching/learning practices in the CBRDG, it appears that technology, literacy, and

teacher experience cannot be isolated from one another. These entities must interact. We must capitalize on the transient nature of culture as it travels through the multiple social fields, such as classrooms, computer labs, and training sessions.

This research supports the creation of opportunities for student technology and literacy knowledge and skills development and the implementation of peer teaching in technology for more effective learning in urban schools. Being involved in a learning community of individuals which collectively values learning, technology, knowledge and skills energized the students to produce new culture. The association and practices in the CBRDG created a catalytic, spiraling effect that enabled students to begin identifying themselves as technology users and peer tutors. Since students move through multiple structures (e.g., classrooms, school, cafeteria, home), they continuously enact and produce new culture that can be used in another. Although the fields are separate, they are linked to each other through the students who act as connecting channels. Since Brock and Stewie's interactions in the CBRDG was not teacher initiated or coerced, their actions can be seen as concrete demonstrations of cultural production; that is, reproduction and transformation that can be replicated in other urban classrooms to transform existing teaching and learning styles for the benefit of all students.

Collective Identity as Learners Build Social Development, Respect, and Solidarity

Communities of practice are essential to social life and social development. The CBRDG members' collective identity as learners, teachers, students, tutors, and researchers is intertwined with individual participation and practices and evolves into becoming part of and belonging to a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The aligning of the cultures of teaching and learning enabled both the students and me to mutually create our own exciting cultural identity as technology users in the CBRDG. The interaction of the members along with the use of our

cultural community tools played an important role in the growth and social development of the individual and group. Brock and Stewie's use of the community tools had a direct bearing on their progressive social and technological development in the group. In the CBRDG, they demonstrated an appreciation for technology knowledge and skill, as evidenced in the way they responded to their peers. Brock and Stewie were able to generate positive emotional energy and build solidarity through their literacy and technology teaching abilities. They clearly valued the tools of the CBRDG as sacred symbols (Collins, 2004). Although it is difficult to identify how intangible sacred symbols (such as verbal exchange) influence and mediates others' actions, Collins (2004) stated participants use sacred symbols to maintain membership in the community. For example, when Brock helped Daniel to learn the functions of MS Word, he captured his full attention. Brock asked Daniel questions to ensure that he was following along. Daniel, in turn, positively responded to his questions with a simple yes or a head nod. Additionally, Daniel's eyes were fully focused on Brock's finger as he pointed at the screen or to the mouse. These interactions between Brock, Daniel, Stewie, and the group signified respect on the part of the participants as recipients and the emergence of solidarity. These factors are considered in the next two sections.

Respect

During the group dialogue sessions, the members began respecting each other and they also respected the diverse knowledge and skills I brought to the group. The members recognized that I was at the center as the primary holder of power because of my social capital associated with being a member of the faculty. For example, when Brock and Daniel could not remember the word "directory" in the first vignette, they looked to me for the answer. However, when Stewie interjected the answer, both Brock and Daniel expressed appreciation for his help. The

respect grew into a trust that facilitated conversation about technology and literacy, as well as general personal topics.

In our CBRDG field, each member had opportunities to contribute to the field in different ways. We collectively talked during dialogue sessions, practiced during technology instructions, and/or inquired and shared in pairs. During the sharing of comic information, the members displayed deep respect to the one talking by not interrupting or by offering a question or comment, when necessary. In chapter four, Brock shared his comic book story and illustrations with Stewie. He was able to move about the page and discuss information about the characters with Stewie's full attention. In fact, Stewie's eyes were glued to Brock's every move as he pointed to images or flipped the pages.

Solidarity

Reviewing the vignettes on cultural enactment allowed me to analyze and reflect on peer interactions in the form of gestures, body movements, eye gazes, and head nods that signify the growth of solidarity (Collins, 2004). The CBRDG is a unique group with boundaries that separated us from the general student population. Inside the structure of our group, we experienced positive emotions as a direct result of sharing information, ideas, and skills specific to our domain (Tobin, Seiler, & Elmesky, 2005). I was able to capture elements of storytelling and technology talk during which there was evidence of group entrainment indicated by rhythmic body movement, overlapping speech, and eye gazing on the speaker. Over the course of the six weeks of group meetings, I observed the group's interaction patterns that indicated a growth of unity. In the first vignette, Daniel's eyes were focused on Brock's movements as he pointed to different objects or areas in MS Word. Their bodies were positioned in a manner that

represented teaching and learning. Both Daniel and Brock were part of the same space at the same time. Daniel sat on his cubicle chair and Brock stood on his right side. Brock showed commitment to helping Daniel by leaning forward into the cubicle space. Daniel permitted Brock access by sitting back. However, when Daniel needed to perform a function, Brock moved out of the space to allow Daniel the space to work comfortably. In the second vignette, when Stewie presented his comic to the group, everyone was focused on his work. In fact, Brock, KK, Daniel, and Elliot left their seats to move closer to the screen. In this way, collectively, they were able to point to different parts of his comic or read together his information. According to Collins, "The greater the synchrony, the greater the entrainment, the greater the solidarity and identity consequences; and entrainment reaches much higher levels by activity than passivity" (p. 83). In these successful dialogues, all members, except Elliot, were able to contribute to the conversation.

I had created a ritual chain, which, in effect, celebrated our newfound literacy knowledge through the acquisition of technology skills. The practices and activities developed in the CBRDG created a space for socializing and enacting roles as tutors that is not likely to emerge in a traditional classroom. In fact, of the many resulting benefits of being a member of the CBRDG, perhaps the most significant was the opportunity for each participant to express his or her experiences, feelings, and opinions. Brock and Stewie shared their newly acquired technology and literacy knowledge as peer tutors with other members in the group; and as the teacher, I was able to provide technology and literacy skills, knowledge, and function that connected to the students in school and in their home worlds. During a side conversation with Brock, Stewie, and Daniel, they told me how the "spell check" function in MS Word could help them write their papers and complete homework. The group members' receptive responses to Brock and Stewie's

tutoring skills evoked positive emotional energy in the group. These actions created respect, increased group solidarity, and produced new culture. In turn, as the teacher, I felt good about the way my capital was accepted and permitted to work in this field as a member of this group.

Community of Practice Fights Stereotype

In my teaching experience, I have witnessed how teachers, students, and the general school staff speak about special education students. They view urban special education students of color as dilatory, recalcitrant, disruptive, and incapable of learning. Adding the component of poverty to disability creates a ridiculously negative stereotype that is hard for me as a teacher, and I am certain for the students to dispel. However, the technology learning community encouraged me to form a very different opinion about urban special education students. I came to realize that, as a teacher, I carried traditional opinions and hegemonic practices into the CBRDG. At first, my past exposure to emotionally disturbed students kept the possibility of outbursts at the forefront of my mind. However, as time passed, I began to really see the students through their talents and not their disabilities. These students saw me as a person and member of the group. Unlike in my classroom and school where the teachers make it a point to highlight that I am an alternatively certified teacher, my transition status did not matter within the CBRDG. The members acknowledged my position, but did not label me as teacher, special education teacher, or researcher. In our unique little group, we were individuals who convened with a purpose and a goal. As the teacher, I accommodated students in terms of pace, interest, participation, and level of support. Although we met on school grounds, the stigmas and stereotypes that accompany students labeled with disabilities were left outside our field. As a teacher, I did not permit disruptive characteristics to curtail our interactions. The students were free to be individuals and exercise their intellectual ability. We created and defined our space.

Ontology offers insight into who we are and who we have been so that we can gain new visions of who we can become. In CBRDG, the development of Brock and Stewie's hybridized identities as students labeled with a disability, users of technology, and coteachers required them to straddle between their classrooms in general education and participation in the group in the self-contained division of the school. For Brock and Stewie, the process of hybridization served social and cultural purposes. Being D75 students, they often alluded to their hybridized identities when describing the complex ontologies that must be employed in their home classroom and in CBRDG. In their classrooms, they want to fit in and be accepted by their peers as regular students, but this means hiding their disabilities and dissociating with anything considered special education. Yet, due to their association in CDRDG and a special education teacher, they take on additional identities as technology learners, users, and coteachers. In our group, Brock and Stewie are free to be students without any stigmas while engaging in an activity with others.

The CBRDG's membership was both simple and intricate. As a group, the members engaged in dialogue that expressed their respect for each other and creative sides. I taught technology and literacy functions, but the members practiced various ways to integrate the two entities. In particular, Brock and Stewie's ability to transfer their newly acquired knowledge into shared teaching points to assist the other members represented a defining high point for the CBRDG.

As a researcher and educator, I explored the social dynamics of the group as well as individual relationships that developed between students in the learning community. In addition, I examined the teaching and learning process. In our community, unlike the traditional classroom, we focused on maintaining and increasing avenues of communication among all participants. Lave and Wenger (1991) said that the situated learning perspective emphasizes that

the learning processes are related closely to participation in the practices of a community. Within the CBRDG, Brock and Stewie, in particular, immersed themselves into our community of practice to learn technology skills and literacy knowledge. They were full, attentive participants in the dialogues and during hands-on instructions. The goal of the CBRDG was to connect students' in-school learning experiences to their everyday life worlds and, at the same time, motivate participants to continue acquiring knowledge and skills, in general. In chapter six, I focus on deconstructing special education and looking at students as individuals with challenges rather than disabilities.

Contradiction - Teacher Learns from Brock and Stewie

In my field notes journal, I captured what I learned from Brock and Stewie and the process by which we changed roles. In the CBRDG, Brock and Stewie became peer teachers and, as I observed cultural enactment, I became the student. Reviewing the vignettes described in this chapter, I found myself in the background as a participant/teacher as Brock, Stewie, and I expanded and exchanged roles. I learned to relinquish my role as teacher when necessary to enable Brock and Stewie to expand their agency. For example, during the second meeting, I left Daniel typing in MS Word with the intention of returning and further assisting him with the various functions. However, Brock assumed the role of teacher and went through the steps with Daniel. It was interesting to watch their interaction. Brock occupied Daniel's cubicle space while he talked through the steps, asked him questions, and used gestures to locate the icons while demonstrating the functions. Then, instantaneously, Brock shifted his physical position out of the cubicle which allowed Daniel room to comfortably perform the functions he reviewed. In the second vignette, Stewie demonstrated poise and confidence while presenting his finished comic book to the group. The fact that he had the patience and confidence to wait until the members

settled down was impressive. As he shared his comic on the Smartboard, Stewie's eye contact, body position, pausing, and gesturing engaged us. These elements enhanced his ability to bring to life the different technology used, describe the help that he received in constructing this project, and tell his comic story. The most salient aspect was Stewie's body position. As the teacher in front of the room, he had the power and ability to obstruct the view of his work or to allow the group full access. Permitting us to experience his hard work captivated us. Standing to the side of the screen, Stewie demonstrated that he was conscious of his body, presentation, and onlookers. His manner of teaching enabled all members to appreciate him and his work.

Brock and Stewie's ability to teach the other members what they learned from each other or me during dialogue or technology instruction session was unexpected. I was surprised not because I believed Brock and Stewie were incapable. Rather, I thought that the members would need to rely upon me because the group meetings were brief and the technology knowledge and skills were new to the students and included multiple applications I came to realize that my teacher persona and beliefs about students' performance and needs overflowed into the CBRDG. However, Brock and Stewie completely helped me readjust my thinking to see students as capable of helping and teaching one another or the teacher-student and teaching-learning relationships.

CBRDG – A Fertile Field for Cultural Reproduction

I commenced this chapter with a quote by Tobin (2005) because I thought it fitting of the current situation in my school culture which is reflective of how children classified with disabilities in poor urban school communities are usually overlooked or viewed negatively. The overwhelming social conditions of poverty tend to leak into the school environment. More often than not, teachers focus upon the disability of the child, rather than seeing the child as an

individual with challenges. If teachers view students with disabilities through a deficit model lens, technology might not ever be introduced into the culture of the classroom as a teaching tool. A focus on disability can eclipse and sully potential opportunities for students to learn technology. As a teacher, it is my responsibility to use any teaching strategies and tools (such as a learning community and technology) available to ensure that all students, including those with a disability, have equal access to learning. The interactive technology entity in the CBRDG afforded participants numerous opportunities to learn through practice, dialogue, and activities, including how to use technology as a tool to improve their literacy skills.

The CBRDG was a learning community with a culture that entails a variety of micro level practices (e.g., participation, dialogue, technology, and literacy) essential to the re/production of student identities as technology users. Micro level behaviors and activities that encourage learning and peer tutoring practices were evident during the various dialogue sessions as Brock and Stewie discussed in detail how they conceived topics for their comic books, developed ideas, and completed their projects using different technology applications. They shared how they were able to finish their comics by spending additional time in the lab. As a measure of respect, I did not cut short or interrupt Brock or Stewie's sharing with the group. In that way, both students were able to enact their agency through complete expression and gestures. The speaking and tutoring abilities of Brock and Stewie demonstrated their moves from beginners who learned technology and literacy knowledge to student experts able to assist others. In this manner, I made room in the center. I was no longer the teacher and only person with technology knowledge. Watching and listening to the video segment confirmed that Brock was able to replicate similar mannerisms, tone, language found during my earlier interactions with the group. The different video analyses revealed that as Brock moved to the position of peer tutor

he wanted his peers to also be active participants in the group. When Brock tutored Daniel and KK, he modeled my speech and gestures. When KK or Daniel completed a specific step correctly, Brock reinforced their feelings of accomplishments by saying “Very good” or “Good job.” Reviewing the video segment also allowed me to see the positive influence Brock had on his peers. I felt that both KK and Daniel were, at times, a little resistant to my instructions and/or help because I am a teacher. However, as they witnessed Brock and me working together, they were more inclined to ask for or receive help.

This chapter illustrates that opportunities to enact new roles must be provided to students in order for them to learn how to interact effectively in any class. The specific learning culture of the CBRDG allowed students to be part of a multi-entity teaching and learning community that includes dialogue, technology, and practice. This type of space affords cultural reproduction and transformation through social interaction. Since students must either know or learn the culture that is specific to their learning environment, the CBRDG became the place for the participants to access information, training, and practice. In our community, peers responded to each other’s actions or comments, verbally interacted and answered teacher’s questions, and/or discussed salient issues relevant to the topic—all aspects of cultural and identity reproduction. These exhibited social practices and transformations reinforce my belief that students in special education are capable of higher-level learning, thus refuting the negative stereotype associated with children with disabilities.

CHAPTER VI

TEACHER'S STANCE ON SCIENTIFIC TOOLS FOR TECHNOLOGY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Journal Reflection – January 2008

At the close of our last research group, I returned the students to their classrooms and realized that I forgot my folders and journal in the computer lab. When I entered the computer lab, Mr. O., the school's computer teacher presented me with unsolicited comments about the comic book research dialogue group's (CBRDG) activities. In short, he expressed amazement at the students' ability to learn many different technology applications, their manner of communication with each other, and their level of productivity. As he compared my teaching in the CBRDG to his teaching experience in the lab, he implied a preference for the CBRDG as reflected in his statement: "I enjoyed being here." He further commented that, "Their disability could have created a very different environment." When I heard the words used by Mr. O. "their disability," I found them to be problematic. It reflected the absence of decision making on the part of the teacher, as if the students' disabilities created the environment rather than the *interactions* between teacher (the responsible party for most decisions being made) and students. He spoke from the perspective of a teacher in special education who works with emotionally disturbed students. In other words, Mr. O. *anticipated* disruptions. However, the CBRDG members renewed his hope for students labeled with disabilities. Stewie and Brock made regular visits to the computer lab to work on their projects and to discuss how to help each other. Mr. O. commented on their high level of commitment to learning different technologies and their ability to focus on the end results. He mentioned how their dispositions changed as a result of being members of the CBRDG. (In the beginning, both boys were shy in front of the camera, awkward

using technology, and easily frustrated with the slow and outdated computers. Moreover, the open dialogue format was new to them. In the beginning, I initiated questions to get responses from the students. As time passed, the students became less apprehensive and uncertain as their technology knowledge and skills increased.) Mr. O. was particularly impressed that Brock and Stewie emerged as peer tutors in the group.

Mr. O attributed the positive changes in the students to my work, teaching style, and interaction with the group. I responded by thanking him for his comments. However, I also attributed the individual growth of knowledge and skills to Brock and Stewie's desire to learn. My belief in them crafted a specific situation that created the opportunity for success to occur. As I thought about how Mr. O had anticipated the possibility of students with disabilities creating a negative situation in his computer lab, I admitted to myself that I, too, had had similar concerns. As a teacher who works in a special education setting, I am aware of the sudden and spontaneous outbursts that can occur. In my six years of teaching, I have worked with self-contained students classified as emotionally disturbed. I have witnessed my students' aggressive behaviors, such as bullying, physical altercations, and the destruction of property. While I always tried to see my students as individuals rather than the sum of their disabilities, unfortunately I saw their challenges as prominent. In the CBRDG, I made it a point to get to know the members as people while remaining proactive in regard to any possible disruptions. Upon reviewing the videotape of vignette figure 4-1(see Chapter IV) in which the school bell rang during the writing session, I saw my fear in anticipation of potential disorder. Given my experience as a self-contained teacher of students classified as emotionally disturbed, I could not help but recognize the warning signs of student frustration (e.g., sighing, mumbling under their breath, making abrupt sudden moves such as pushing the chair or slamming their fists on the desk) in response

to slow computers that frequently shut down. While I appreciated Mr. O.'s positive comments about the CBRDG, I shared with him that I, too, was surprised by the participants' capacity to cope with their frustrations in the computer lab. In fact, it is likely that, the positive outcome in the computer lab would not have been predicted by most teachers in the school because of the widely held deficit perspective of students with disabilities.

After leaving Mr. O's computer lab, I continued to reflect on the events and activities that had taken place over the past six weeks. I recalled how at the end of week three I began to review the video footage, students' work, and my notes. Excerpts from my writing indicate my amazement with the accomplishments of these young urban students labeled emotionally and in need of specialized educational services. I began to see that the student behaviors, demeanors, dialogue, learning styles, and mannerisms in the CBRDG conflicted with my understanding of students with disabilities in District 75 (D75). Teaching in District 75 for more than six years had exposed me to students with varying levels of emotional and behavior disturbance compounded by the presence of learning disabilities. Over an extended period of time, I had witnessed the significant difficulties that self-contained students with disabilities (D75) displayed in regard to exhibiting appropriate behavior and/or maintaining positive relationships with peers and teachers. In the CBRDG, the students' classification as emotionally disturbed could have translated into a potentially dangerous situation for all. However, I think students from different educational settings, the dialogue format, and the establishment of mutual goals fostered a good working academic situation. Moreover, since September 2007, four of the five students have been educated in the general education setting. I believe that students educated in the general education environment, Stewie and Brock in particular, had a positive influence (coteaching, sharing, and membership) on KK who remains in a self-contained setting.

As a researcher, I continually examined the dialectical relationships between schema|practices and agency|structure in the CBRDG. I did not want my agency or the structures of the CBRDG to truncate student agency by adding unnecessary oppressive schemas (e.g., mandatory seating arrangements and posture, raising hands, rigid rules). In reflecting upon the membership of the CBRDG, I recognized how each student faces multiple structural challenges in his or her daily life – poverty, disability, race—that intersect with in-school policies in ways that can negatively impact academic growth and agency. Traversing the different school structures of PS/MS South Bronx is difficult for the CBRDG students on many levels. In chapter four, I discussed how the structures of one building separated the student population by classification and ability. In other words, self-contained students in District 75 schools are segregated from general education students. Such segregation creates feelings of shame for the CBRDG students. The CBRDG students placed in general education classrooms with support were adamant about not wanting to be affiliated with their District 75 home school.

As District 75 students in general education classes, Brock and Stewie remain on the attendance roster of their home schools. Both Brock and Stewie have commented the most embarrassing feeling is to be dismissed from their home school and not their general education class. For example, when the host school dismisses the grades early the D75 students in general education classes must return to their home school. During one of our sessions, I was fortunate to overhear a conversation among the CBRDG's members about their negative feelings toward D75. In short, they collectively said that they "didn't want to be part of it." It occurred to me how much these students like being accepted by and associating with general education students. For example, one identifying mark that separates D75 students who attend general education

classrooms from their self-contained peers is the host schools' uniform policy. Brock, Daniel, and Stewie wear their uniforms with pride as a symbol of belonging in general education

As inclusion students, Brock and Stewie experience immeasurable freedom as compared to their self-contained peers. For example, middle school general education students enjoy freedoms (such as changing classes without adult escorts and changing clothes in the locker room) that self-contained students do not. Brock and Stewie enjoy mingling with their general education peers and acquiring new hip gestures and style. Both boys talk about how much they enjoy the freedoms afforded in general education, making astute comparisons between their experiences in self-contained classrooms and their experiences in general education. The following dialogue between Stewie and KK illustrates how students speak about the differences between self-contained classrooms and general education.

Stewie: "KK, why can't you write without Ms. Wilson's help?"

KK: "In my class, we don't do much work 'cause they be fighting all the time. It be hard for my teacher to teach 'cause he old and stuff. And, yeah he write stuff on the board, but like ya know, we don't be doing it 'cause they be fighting. I don't think he knows what he doing."

Stewie: "Do you fight?"

KK: "Yeah, sometimes. I try not to but they be bothering me all the time. They don't stop."

Brock: "Ignore them."

KK: "It's hard. Y'all don't know what it like inside all day with them cursing and bother me. So they make me mad then I fight. Y'all fight?"

Stewie: "Not really, not anymore. Our teachers are strict and the other kids are afraid so we work a lot. Except in Science sometimes cause ah Mr. Science is small and sometimes we play, but

then we get our work done. See if we don't work we get uhm?? Brock, what is that thing called when we do the wrong things in class?"

Brock: "Charged."

Stewie: "Yeah, we get charged and the dean comes in and talks to us. He's a big Black guy. So, like, when he tell us to do something we do it or else. For me I don't want to go back to a class like the one you're in. I like being with the other kids."

There is a clear difference between "being" a District 75 student educated in a self-contained class and "being" a District 75 student educated in the inclusion program. Based on the above conversation, it appears that KK has accepted her emotionally disturbed classification and position as "a problem child" and reacts to negative in-class situations accordingly. The hegemonic structures limit her social habitus and make the self-contained setting feel "normal" to her. The conversation between the CBRDG students awakened in me a series of thoughts about how the education of students with disabilities intersects with social positioning, power, access, and equality—all of which impact the agency of students with disabilities. Looking at KK, Brock, and Stewie, I saw individuals—all born with the potential to exercise agency—in educational settings that afford them very different opportunities. I wondered *who benefits* from the placement of these students with disabilities into general education classrooms with support in a way that preserves the students' affiliation with District 75. On the one hand, the students are considered "good enough" to attend general education classes; on the other hand, they are not considered to be students of the host school because they do not appear on the attendance roster. Although educated in the host school, these students are not fully included because they are required to return to their home school (D75) for daily dismissal as well as for administration of state examinations. Most appalling is the fact that self-contained students, like KK, are

completely excluded from participating in general education and associating with general education students.

In this chapter, I contend that "separate is equal" treatment has been revived by the power and mandates of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in NYC schools. In turn, the power of NCLB has suffocated the *Individuals with Disability Education Act* (IDEA). As a result, special education students classified with learning or emotional disabilities are responsible for the same curriculum and same standardized examination as general education students yet may be relegated to one degree or another to separate educational settings. The different educational settings have significant implications for students with disabilities in regard to the quality of their education (e.g., teaching methods) and even the modified standardized curriculum to which they may be exposed.

Critical Theories Give Birth to Deceptive Accessibility

I use critical theory to examine American school's culture and revisions made to education policy (NCLB and IDEA) that focuses on student academic achievement and impact educational settings. The American school's culture is based on the White upper and middle class standards (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). In chapter one, I address how NCLB and IDEA's view student achievement (standardized test scores) as a priority and requirement for producing a competitive and competent workforce to meet global demands (Spring, 1998). The policies also highlight technology as a tool that when utilized is capable of enhancing academics and closing the achievement gap between the races and scientifically based research as the method to measure, interpret, identify, and sort students based on their abilities. Since the language of IDEA mirrors NCLB, poor urban students labeled with disabilities who are incapable of achieving will be sorted and segregated as part of the placement continuum. According to

Madison (1988) it is important to understand who and examine how data (test scores) is interpreted. He questioned why certain interpretations of data results are more readily accepted and others are dismissed by educational stakeholders. When I apply this thought to special education in New York City schools, I wonder: why segregated students labeled with behavioral or emotional disabilities are educated according to traditional White standards that focus on standardized curriculum and standardized examination? I contend the main problem associated with segregating students into special educational settings is the reliance on test scores and how it is interpreted which results in eligibility/placement classification. The analysis and utilization of student data leads to the notion that truth always lies within a community of interpreters who has accepted it as such. For example, the scientific results (which could be negative or positive) presented by researchers will be accepted because it can be interpreted in a way that is "promising … with greater meaning" (p.15) to the beholders. Madison furthered offered that, "All interpretation works under the promise of truth … because we believe it to be the best" (ibid). What is clear in both quantitative and structural scientific explanations is that reductive explanations of the human and personal are neither human nor personal. Such arguments make it impossible to achieve any self-understanding because it is precisely the self that is excluded from the equation. In my school, I look at the poor students with disabilities in segregating settings and realize they are judged based on their test scores. The educational policies that focus on achievement do not account for their individual students' lived experiences.

Harding (1998) identified scientific research as the main problem with the American educational system. She explained how the products of scientific research have often been used to benefit those in power and oppress or exclude those already on the margin. Critical theory introduces the notion of political ideology and the struggle between power and class into school

reform and modern-day segregation (Giroux, 1997). If we apply critical theory to the current NCLB and IDEA within public schools, we see the tension that exists between policymakers and students with disabilities. The scientific research tools include curriculum, testing, and attendance to measure achievement and promotion (IDEA, 2004). I use critical theory to argue that these measures are used to sort students on the basis of disability and academic ability (Skrtic, 1995). Yet, the use of the medical model of disability precludes acknowledgement of how our practices can negatively impact the lives of children with disability. In this sense, it is difficult to include students' lived experiences (van Manen, 1990) in a self-contained environment. Therefore, it is impossible to understand the negative impact segregation could have on their education.

I explore the learning development of the CBRDG students, Brock and Stewie, who attend general education classes as compared to the learning development of KK who attends a self-contained class. In this way, I am able to understand "learning" within the contexts of their respective educational settings. I interpret the CBRDG students' "lived experiences" within a critique of policy tools in order to refute the scientifically based research that justifies segregation. I believe it is imperative for each stakeholder in this research process to have a voice and to participate in activities that are seen as accomplishments—both of which are not recognized by the rigid, hegemonic IDEA. In doing so, I use their micro (individual) enactments to address meso-level (CBRDG classroom) activities that are immersed in macro structures (standardized exams, attendance, curriculum).

Deceptive Accessibility

In this section, I apply the notion of "deceptive accessibility" to NCLB and IDEA in order to reveal how White, middle class, cultural standards of stakeholders operate under the

guise of child interest (see Chapter I). Stakeholders hold the interest of the country in trust and view education as the key to success in the global economy (Spring, 1998). As a result, education policy is constantly changing to fit and further the interests of the elite. Special education policy includes the inclusion or removal of students with disabilities based on academic performance. Skrtic (1995) asserts that the practice of segregation or removal of disabled students from the general student population is considered racially biased, unproductive, and socially and psychologically damaging.

Deceptive accessibility is an outgrowth of critical theories that focus on education and pedagogy of the oppressed in the classroom. I define deceptive accessibility as the promotion of knowledge and social justice by critically exposing the complex psychological combinations of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of the powerful dominant stakeholders and their aim for cultural exclusivity. Stakeholders present their intentions for all students as just, equitable, and honorable. However, they use their capital—global business, economy, government—to promote personal, social, and cultural interest through education. Thus, students incapable of conforming to White cultural standards are justifiably removed. Since the focus of educational policy is to promote the stakeholders' goals (see Chapter I) which are measured through academic achievements, the policy usurps the needs of students with disabilities. In other words, students in New York City who cannot make the grade, regardless of being classified with a disability, can be relegated to the self-contained division.

Scientific Research Validates Segregation

IDEA emphasizes standardized curriculum, testing, and academic achievement through the use of technology as an educational tool. This assertion is justified in terms of scientific

research (see Chapter I). The stakeholders' enforcement of academic standards and measurements into policy represents the "norm" or White upper and middle class principles to reproduce "Whiteness" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). The desired outcome is the reproduction of a socially acceptable student body that embodies the future workforce. While it is the responsibility of the federal government to react to the growing needs of an increasingly more diverse society, this country does not have a history of embracing racial, educational differences, economic or social changes equitably (Ferguson, 2001). According to Ferguson, the school system is created around a dominant cultural hegemony that holds White middle class culture to be the norm and does not acknowledge cultural differences. The NYC school system does not recognize the impact of societal racism on students and reinforces the notion of "personal choice." In this sense, "power relations play an important role in helping to shape the way individuals, organizations, groups and institutions react to the reality of multiculturalism" (p. 2). Stakeholders have the power over education and resources, and decide who can gain "access to it … and how it will be used" (Harding, 1998, p. 21). The stakeholders responsible for consciously designing educational policies infuse their views that non-White children are disabled, deprived, and academically incapable of achieving the American goals.

Scientific research is a powerful tool used by stakeholders who view the world as orderly and rational (Skrtic, 1995) to revise and enforce stringent academic standards on the student population. This viewpoint serves the purpose of the stakeholders and is set firmly in the culture of education (Madison, 1988). A perfect and orderly educational system does not have room for or the capacity to care for students with differences. Given that schools are considered to be orderly and disabilities are considered to be pathological, stakeholders are able to design solutions they deem appropriate for these children. Unfortunately, children with disabilities who

are unable to conform to the rules or make the grade are identified as needing special educational services. The beauty of the positivist framework is that they create ways to categorize students with disabilities and highlight special education settings as a “safety valve” (Skrtic, 1995, p. 127) to contain recalcitrant or low-achieving students and prevent contamination of the good student population. The safety valve or sorting system also prepares children for their place in the social hierarchy (Ferguson, 2001).

Medical Model and Social System

The overall delivery of special education services seems to be driven by two types of services, the medical model and social system model. Special education's knowledge traditions are "grounded in psychology and biology (medicine), which means that special educators presuppose that school failure is pathological, and school organizations are rational" (Skrtic, 1995, p. 68). According to the National Research Council, the medical model positions children with disabilities as having an intrinsic “condition” that will respond to “treatment” such as therapy or resource room services (Donovan & Cross, 2002). If disability and school failure are connected, then there is nothing that educators can do to remedy the problem. However, this view of the pathology of disability creates an unequal educational opportunity for those students subjugated to the special education ranks. The social system model conceptualizes students classified with emotional or behavioral disturbances in terms of external social structures (e.g., poverty, class, disability, parental educational status, and race) that interfere with learning (McDonnell, McLaughlin, & Morrison, 1997). In this sense, the students’ external social environment is the main focus and considered the cause of their disabilities.

Skrtic (1995) deconstructs the field of special education and applies "*immanent critique*" to the major assumptions used to legitimize the services and segregated setting. *Immanent critique* is a form of criticism that questions whether public education's institutional practices are consistent with its democratic ideals—"a means of exposing the contradictions between our claims and our conditions, between our values and practices" (p.47). The major assumptions are: failure in school is a pathological condition of the student; diagnosis is objective, and specialized programs are rational and beneficial to the student. The notion of homogeneity validates the use of standardized testing without regard to the cultural backgrounds of the students or different ways in which students accumulate knowledge. This, in turn, "fosters diagnostic-prescriptive teaching in which programs for special education students are designed on the basis of test performance" (p. 69). In a segregated school system, students are deemed inferior based on their classification and are therefore denied equal access to educational resources. This type of structure becomes a technique for regulation and identity formation (Ferguson, 2001, p. 51)

The joining of scientific authority and moral obligation grants teachers, administrators, and school districts the power and autonomy to decide the educational setting and future for students with disabilities. In other words, while parents have the right to refuse a decision, if a teacher, administrator, or school district pushes for a student with disabilities to be segregated and educated in a separate setting, it will most likely happen. In my school, I have experienced urban poor parents who did not fully understand their rights to contest decisions that were made for their child. As a teacher who works in special education, I could endorse the purpose of settings and services if it were really focused on the interests of the child, but from my standpoint, the real purpose is to reform unacceptable behaviors by reconditioning individuals to the rules of society. Therefore, I agree with Skrtic (1995) that the removal of children labeled

with a disability from the general student population is racially biased. Based on my exposure to the students labeled with disabilities in the CBRDG, I can also say that, “Self-contained students who are classified as emotionally disturbed, yet mandated to take state exams, are not academically prepared.” In my school, I attribute the lack of preparation to the teachers focus on the classification, behavioral disruptions, and stereotypes rather than trying to teach the individual. I have heard the teachers in my school say “They can’t learn,” or “We are just overpaid babysitters.” Moreover, based on my experience, grouping and educating students based on disability classifications (e.g., emotionally disturbed, learning disabled) is not educationally sound. I have witnessed the negative impact on behavior and learning as a result of grouping students with similar disabilities. In other words, segregation is not beneficial for students with disabilities. During the CBRDG sessions, I noticed qualitative differences in the dialogue, writing, and sharing between Brock, Stewie, and KK. All student participants are classified with emotional disturbance as well as learning differences, anxiety, and other characteristics. However, there is a marked educational difference between self-contained students and those students placed in a general education classroom with support. Brock, Daniel, Elliot, and Stewie are in an educational environment where the students and teachers are not focused on their disability. They are free to be students and to learn the same information from the same curriculum as the other general education students with minimal disruptions. In KK’s self-contained classroom, the students’ disruptive behaviors are foreground as a major issue and a cause that prevents her teacher from teaching. The behaviors of the students in the self-contained classes cause the teachers to utter statements such as “They can’t learn,” or “We are overpaid babysitters.”

Impact of De/Segregation: A Micro Level Look at Brock, Stewie, and KK

In the above conversation between Stewie and KK, Stewie wanted to know why KK had difficulty writing independently. KK's response was truthful and indicative of the different issues self-contained students must face when grouped with students with similar disabilities. The connection between the disruptive behaviors in her classroom and her inability to work independently was not apparent to me, at first. However, as I reviewed the video data, I began to identify and understand the specific classroom cultures that Brock, Stewie, and KK brought with them. In week one, we engaged in group dialogue and writing the comic book summaries. KK played with the camera, displayed hesitation in sharing her story idea, and had difficulty writing. Brock and Stewie engaged in the dialogue discussion, shared ideas with each other, and focused while writing. I was intrigued and decided to highlight week one because this was the first time we met in the CBRDG and the effects of segregation were immediately evident. Since students were educated in different special education settings, the shared learning space of the CBRDG played a prominent role in the enhancement of their individual academic, technology, and social skills. The images below depict the group members engaged in writing and KK being assisted by me.

Brock, KK, Stewie – The Writing Session (Week 1)

The first image, figure 6-1, shows Brock and Stewie immediately writing their comic book summaries that they shared during group dialogue. Brock (left) folds his left arm to his chest on the desk and rests his head comfortably on it. He is silent and engaged in writing. Brock rereads his work and occasionally erases what does not make sense to him. This section of the video segment covers 12 minutes. Stewie (far right) is also fully immersed in his thoughts and

writing. Being left handed on a right-handed desk, he repositions himself to support his writing arm. Holding the paper with his right hand, he is able to write comfortably. Brock and Stewie's body positions are in full writing mode. Their legs extend back and their bodies lean forward.

KK is not writing. Folding her right leg under her left, KK's upper body slouches forward as she occasionally looks at me. Unlike Brock and Stewie, the distance between KK's hands, face, and the paper demonstrates that she is not fully engaged. When I notice her, our eyes lock and she shrugs her shoulders. Tilting her head a little to the right, KK arches her eyebrows in a way that indicates she needs help. Although my upper body is turned towards her, I do not want to offer assistance until she asks for it. The dropping of my left arm indicates that I am approachable and open to helping her. However, I do not immediately offer help. I realize as time passes, KK is unable to recognize my signals. I begin helping her. As we start to work, it is clear that she does not know where or how to start her summary. Her confusion appears to be a result of not fully participating in the dialogue when others shared their story summaries. (I anticipated that KK would have difficulty writing her summary. During the previous dialogue, Brock discussed his Ninja plot and Stewie talked about the boy who goes into TV world. However, KK did not have an idea. Although she came up with the idea about a girl leader, KK did not know how to expand it into a summary.)

Image Figure 6-1. Students and teacher in common structure engage in writing activity

(left to right) Brock focuses on his work.

Wilson looks and helps KK.
KK asks for Wilson's help in developing her summary and writing. In the midst of the interaction between KK and Wilson, Brock and Stewie remain engaged n their work

Stewie focuses on his work.

In image figure 6-2, as I get up to walk around and look at the students' work from a different position, KK gets my attention by tapping her pencil on the table and looking at me. Her facial expression indicates that she does not want me to go; she wants me to sit and help her. In figure one, KK's left hand is holding the paper and her right hand depicts some writing as I sit with her. However, in image figure 6-2, her right hand moves away from the paper to the edge of the table where she begins tapping. Brock continues writing, but Stewie stops to observe the exchange between KK and me. The only change in his posture is the motion of his head. Stewie's pencil remains in writing position as his right hand holds the paper. The image indicates that Stewie is looking at KK. His attention shifts because KK begins tapping on the desk as she increases her volume to speak to me.

Image: Figure 6-2. KK and Wilson's interaction impacts Stewie

(Left to right) Brock continues writing.
I decide to get up and walk around so I can visually observe Brock and Stewie without disturbing them with questions.

As I stand up, the position of KK's hands change. Her right hand moves away from the paper and she begins tapping on the desk I stop to assist KK.

KK looks at me for help. Stewie stops writing, but

his pencil is still in position as he focuses his attention on the exchange between KK and me.

At the time, I did not notice the fear that manifests in KK's shoulders and eyes. She is tense, nervous, and doubtful of her own abilities. Her shoulders are raised and held tightly against her neck. Although she is looking at me, her head is not tilted upwards to speak. Only KK's eyes are shyly averted toward me. In the self-contained classrooms in my school, the student-to-teacher ratio is usually 12 students, 1 teacher, and 1 paraprofessional. In a group of three or four students, the teacher and paraprofessional consistently help rather than foster independence.

In image figure 6-3, the educational differences between the students labeled as disabled who attend general education classes and those in a self-contained class become foregrounded. For example, Brock is not afraid to explore his surroundings. In a traditional classroom, students are expected to remain in their assigned seats. (The use of the word traditional with classroom or teacher refers to my experiences in the self-contained setting in my school.) They are not free to explore their educational settings. Brock walks around the lab, unaware or oblivious to the camera, to the different technologies. He also reads the information that accompanies each item. Brock touches the items with respect and when he is unclear about something he inquires about it. In the traditional self-contained classroom, "look but do not touch" is the underlying schema regarding instructional materials. Students are not permitted to freely explore their learning environment unless the teacher directs them to an activity. However, in the CBRDG, students are not restricted to a specific seat or space. They are allowed to discover their surroundings, as long as they do so with care. On the other hand, KK is very conscious of the camera and often plays in front of it. At different times, she looks at the camera, performs dance moves, or gestures peace

signs. I believe her attitude toward school and her behaviors probably result from her experience as a student in a self-contained classroom setting.

Image: *Figure 6-3.* Educational Differences – Brock and KK

(left to right) (KK and Brock)

The camera settles into the background for Brock. He walks around the lab and inquires about the different technology. Brock reads and asks questions about the technology and the components. The "look, but do not touch" micro-level schema is removed.

The camera remains in the foreground for KK. She manages to locate camera and interactively play with it.

In these images, the students demonstrate learning styles that reflect their respective educational settings. Brock and Stewie, as students with disabilities placed in a general education classroom with support, demonstrate the benefits of being educated by general education teachers and alongside their general education peers. In the general education classes in my school, great emphasis is placed on academics; therefore, students are more responsive to academics. KK, a self-contained student, appears to suffer academically as a result of her educational setting. In her class, as she expresses, the students fight and she fights rather than works. She also believes that her teacher is not concerned with teaching. The overflow of these characteristics into the CBRDG also has the potential for a far-reaching and longitudinal impact on the lives of students. For example, Brock and Stewie's ability to work independently is a style that is fostered in the general education class. In the CBRDG, Brock and Stewie independently begin writing their summaries. Although Stewie is distracted by me helping KK, he is still able to continue his writing. Another micro-level schema that overlapped from the traditional

classroom into the CBRDG is the need to raise hand one's hand to speak and the fear of touching the computer equipment. In the CBRDG, we had to work against the fear of being scolded for raising a hand or touching equipment. In fact, Brock's cultural enactment of the CBRDG practices motivated him to investigate and touch the objects in the computer lab.

Beyond the Classroom: Meso Level Movement for Stewie and Brock

The competitive nature of public education (e.g., grades, achievement levels, promotion, and leadership) is evident in Brock and Stewie. During the instructional sessions on technology (see Chapters III and IV), I never selected a student to be first to the Smartboard™ because I felt that it was more important to allow students be motivated by their own desires. On one hand, I thought the turn taking would occur based on their seating, as adults do. However, upon review of the video data, I noticed that either Stewie or Brock rush to the Smartboard™. They appear to like being the first to try and to show the others their abilities. In chapter four, I describe the instruction on scanning. At the end of the instruction, I made room at the Smartboard™ for a student to come forward. In this instance, Brock made it to the Smartboard™ before Stewie. Incidentally, Stewie raised his hand ahead of Brock's movements. Stewie became upset that Brock did not raise his hand, thereby making it to the Smartboard™ first. He expressed his displeasure verbally to Brock and physically by putting his head down (see Chapter IV). Brock's response to Stewie supports my earlier comments about the way students are asked to function in a traditional classroom. Moreover, Stewie told me that he thought I liked Brock more than him. His comment and behavior are clear indications of his competitive spirit. I think he needed to hear me refute his belief, thereby reassuring him.

Vignette Figure 6-1: Brock Instructs KK on Technology

The learning differences between students in self-contained and inclusion settings also manifested after each technology instructional session. For example, when I instructed the group on the functions of scanning, they also had the opportunity to practice in front of the group with me. The one-on-one practice sessions allowed me to see what additional help could be provided. In chapter four, I highlight Stewie and KK because they engaged in private conversations during the whole group instructional session. Brock was fully attentive. Although Stewie was occupied with KK, he still managed to follow along and master the scanning function. However, KK was lost. This was apparent after I went through the steps with her and asked her to try on her own. After she agreed, she paused at the Smartboard. Brock got up and enacted the coteacher role. In the vignette below, Brock moved to help KK with scanning. Close analysis shows Brock's teaching ability as well as the time and consideration he takes to ensure she understands each step.

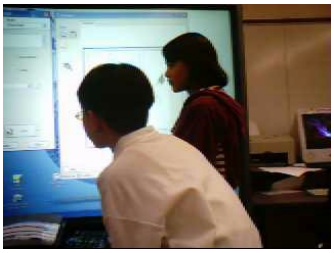
Individual Instruction

Brock: 

(Brock is standing on the left side of the table. He looks directly at KK's face as he talks. KK is standing on the right side looking at Brock.)
"First you put the paper face down. The paper should be at the top right corner."
(Brock points to the white markers on the glass)
"Shut it."
(Brock closes the cover)
"I don't know if it resets or something, so you might want to press the green start button."
(Brock instructs KK to perform a function)
(KK presses the green button)
"Then this will be there, the pop-up window of the directory."
(Brock moves to the right side of the table to use the mouse)

(Both are viewing the image on the Smartboard)
"To improve your coloring, you choose either pure black and white or color.

Then you press preview." *(machine noise and KK mimics the sound of scanning – Brock looks at KK and she stops)*
"To preview how good it comes out. If the preview is good you then – scan it."



(Working in the pop-up directory – Brock continues)
"First, you change the name.
Okay, then you press browse to see what folder, my folder Brock. We already have the folder open.
And, press save to start scanning."

Brock: *(At the end, the two are looking at the folder of work that was scanned and locating the new images.)*

"And that is all there is to scanning."
(With their backs to the group, Brock and KK look at each other)

KK: "So, that it, right there in the folder."
(She points to the screen and looks at Brock)

Brock: *(Looking at her, Brock gave her a directive)*
"Brock – you tell me, where is it?"

(KK points to the last uploaded image)

In subsequent conversations with the students after I viewed this vignette on videotape, it became evident that the deficit perspectives held by traditional classroom teachers had profound effects on the students' perceptions of themselves and what they felt they could do. Students shared that they are afraid to do anything different because they do not want to be told that something is wrong with them. Because they are classified with disabilities and receive special education services, these students have come to believe that they cannot learn. I had to reassure and commend each individual on his or her abilities and efforts. It is unfortunate that some students with special needs accept their status as "disabled," a hegemonic label that translates to

incompetent and incapable. The CBRDG students are faced with potent hegemonic forces in schools that inhibit their individual approaches to learning. Moreover, they carried with them into the CBRDG, a history of negative comments from traditional classrooms.

I use this vignette to argue that such deficit views are related to the association that comes with being a subject in the traditional self-contained classroom. As previously mentioned, the homogeneous placement of students with the same classifications (such as emotionally disturbed) in the same education settings is educationally unsound. In the long run, the results are higher dropout rates. In June 2005, The Advocates for Children filed a report that looked at the dropout and graduation rates of self-contained students in New York City who receive special education services. The Advocates for Children report relied on data provided by the New York City Department of Education which indicate the graduation rate for students with disabilities is lower than the rate of almost every other state in the country. The data also demonstrated that Black and Latino students (two-thirds of public school student population) who received special education services in New York City graduate with diplomas at a far lower rate than Asian and White students.

Strong Identity: Leader, Coteacher, Membership

In traditional educational settings, teachers are trained to maintain control over their classrooms, teaching, and students' ways of learning. The traditional teachers in my school replicate societal hegemonic teaching and learning practices. Instead of collectively building trust and distributing the management to all in the learning environment, teachers usually think of classroom teaching and learning as their sole responsibility.

The culture produced in the CBRDG support the agency of all participants and their activities, particularly Brock and Stewie who enact leadership, coteaching, and group member roles. Through the agency afforded in the CBRDG, both boys feel co-responsibility for their peers. Brock and Stewie's participation in group discussion, spontaneous information sharing, leadership abilities, and coteaching demonstrate their move toward more meso level enactments of technology and literacy knowledge. During the teacher led technology instruction, Brock and Stewie's ability to replicate similar teaching tones is evident. They were able to recreate similar forms of social practice when coteaching their peers. Brock and Stewie's work and activities address the need to alter the traditional classroom and teaching structures that exist at the meso and macro levels. Moreover, their activities raised the emotional energy in the group. For example, KK's inability to scan made her feel inadequate and left out. I believe that her decisions to talk or play during instruction are reflective of cultural overflow from her position as a student in a self-contained class. When I tried to assist KK, I think that my position as a teacher may have triggered bad feelings within her in regard to negative comments she has heard about her classification and special education placement. In contrast, KK was very responsive to Brock when he stepped in to help her. In fact, KK is working alone scanning images in image figure 6-9. The energy that Brock and Stewie brought to the group emboldened their friendship while bolstering the members on the periphery with the "can do" spirit. In turn, Brock and Stewie's identity as coteachers was solidified.

In the following section, I focus upon Brock and Stewie's micro-level enactments in the CBRDG (e.g., demonstration of literacy and technology skills, leadership, coteaching, and successful group membership) because these enactments are not usually associated with students labeled as emotionally disturbed. I use evidence of these enactments as a tool to argue against the

meso and macro level structures that invalidate lived experiences of students labeled with a disability in favor of scientifically based results.

Interpreting CBRDG's Members Lived Experiences

According to van Manen (1990), government and school reliance on the medical model of disability usurps the lived experiences of students with disabilities. I believe that we have yet to translate the individual experience of disability into effective policy language. While the medical model of disability can be useful in determining the existence of some disabilities, Skrtic (1995) argues that there are many problems with reliance on this paradigm. Like the IDEA, the medical model of disability does not account for variations within socio-economic levels, class stratification, and/or cultures that impact our society. As a result, the school system is not designed to meet the needs of the children who are considered different (academically challenged or labeled with a disability).

My technical knowledge as a teacher and researcher is enriched by the lived experiences (e.g., practices, dialogues, membership) of the CBRDG that informed my work, language, and power (van Manen, 1990). In focusing upon the nature of lived experiences in the CBRDG, I have "given over to some quest, a true task, a deep questioning of something that restores an original sense of what it means to be a thinker and researcher" (p. 31). My particular quest led me to explore computer usage and students' lived experiences through the creation of computer generated comic books. I am committed to integrating technology in education. For me, it involves the appropriate use of computers in instruction as well as the delivery of quality instruction. If I can understand the lived experiences of students in the CBRDG, I can begin to understand how to design an instructional matrix that is welcoming to teachers and students. I

approached the phenomenon of student experiences in the CBRDG through investigation of their dialogue, technology skills, and production of comic books as well as their lived experiences as students labeled with disabilities in special education settings. As van Manen (1990) suggests, students are encouraged to dialogue as a way to describe their experiences located within specific situations. The following dialogue is a last transcript of the CBRDG as a group. In attendance are Brock, Stewie, Daniel, and me.

Vignette Figure 6-2 – Expanded Student Roles in the CBRDG

In my role as facilitator, I begin this session with a question that focuses on how each member feels about the comic book process. As Brock, Stewie, and Daniel discuss their feelings, I remember thinking that their voices would not be heard or legitimized in most traditional classrooms. In a space like the CBRDG, teacher and students have equal turns talking and all voices are valued equally. The nature of social life often dictates that certain individuals hold the role of the leader in a social field. Although, I begin this discussion, Stewie carries the conversation. He inquires about Daniel's comic book title, story development, and offer suggestions.

Wilson: "How do you guys feel about the comic books?"
Stewie: "Well, I feel excited, 'cause before I did less work 'cause I had trouble. But now I know exactly what to do and I got more further."
(Stewie speaks first and his voice is clear)
Wilson: "What trouble were you having?"
Stewie: "Well, I had difficulties understanding what to do and how to draw things the way I wanted."
Wilson: "Did anybody help you with that stuff?"
Stewie: "Yes."
Wilson: "Who helped you?"
Stewie: "Brock."
Wilson: "Brock helped?"
(Wilson looks at Brock and asks)
"What did you help him with?"

Brock: "I helped him to understand how to scan. I helped him when he had some problems writing the summary. And that was pretty much it."

Wilson: "Excellent. I am glad."
"So, what do you think was the most important thing you learned about the creation of a comic book?"

(Daniel says "oh, oh" and raises his hand at the same time. Then hesitates to answer the question. He starts by saying)

Daniel: "Well the most important part about creating the comic book will have to probably be … I don't know … maybe Brock can answer it."

[Daniel first stretches out the short statement then defers to Brock to answer the question he started]

Brock: "I think the most important part for me was making my conclusion. It was so hard that I actually had to put "to be continued.""

Stewie: "I think the most important thing I learned about the comic book was how to scan and how to plan it out."

Wilson: "So, what did you learn about planning?—Anybody?"

Daniel: "About planning?"

Stewie: "Well, first about planning out I had to brainstorm." *(Wilson repeats "you had to brainstorm.")*

Daniel: "The most important or trouble?"

Wilson: "Either one."

Daniel: "Um, for me, the most trouble I had in planning was coming up with the title and what the story was going to be about - were they real. It was hard, I was asking like, [inaudible] it was really hard."
(Wilson – I was about to ask "So which one did you …," but Stewie inquires about Daniel's work)

Stewie: "How did you come up with colors of emotion?"

Daniel: "Yeah, uh, thank you. Well I picked the colors of emotion because…"

Stewie: "Or did you want to do a story about a kingdom using and exploring the colors and just put them together."

Daniel: "I did that."

This vignette is important because Stewie emerged as the leader as he directed questions to Daniel, Brock was identified as coteacher, and the students shared their appreciation for learning how to use technology to create a comic book. Although, I facilitated the dialogue in the group, Stewie changed the flow of the conversation by speaking first. Looking back at the video from week one (described in chapter IV), Stewie was a little shy and his voice was soft and low. However, as time progressed, he became a vocal, active, and central figure in the group. In this

vignette, he projected his voice clearly saying, “I feel excited.” His feelings of excitement grew out of his positive experience of peer assistance, which enabled him to finish his comic. Stewie’s statement “I feel excited” summarized many of the feelings that the other students had about the comic book process. His comments appeared to reflect a need for action among the group members. As he spoke, he acknowledged Brock’s assistance. Then Brock spoke about the help he had given to Stewie. The rate at which the conversation switched focus was amazing and speaks to the ability of students to focus on an existent goal once they share a collective need for it. Next, the dialogue switched to Stewie inquiring about Daniel’s comic book title. I sat back and listened to their conversation. I thought about how the teacher in a traditional classroom facilitates and controls the flow of conversation. The teacher gives the information then the student answers back. The student is oppressed and obligated to respond to the teacher. There is rarely an opportunity for student-to-student dialogue about their shared experiences. By creating a space where stakeholders can talk across the boundaries of disability and traditional classroom roles, the CBRDG transformed the conventional educational setting into an arena where all participants had a vested interest.

Success as it is Measured Through My Socio-cultural Framework

As the teacher, researcher, and participant in the CBRDG, I had the privilege to witness the most wonderful lived experiences of students labeled with disabilities learning technology and literacy skills. Students labeled as emotionally disturbed came to the CBRDG with some technology knowledge and literacy skills. Over the six-week project period, all students were exposed to various technology devices, applications, and skills from navigating the Smartboard™ and Microsoft™ environment to mastering Word, PowerPoint, Scanning, and internet research. The group also learned how to write storyline components, how to write in

comic book style, and how to manage their time in completing projects. While all members acquired skills in this time period, Brock and Stewie reached unexpected levels of expertise in a short period of time. Unfortunately, at the macro level, such achievements are not acknowledged.

Macro level tools (mandated by the government) define learning in public schools. Macro level tools are enforced at the meso level in order to structure and control classroom activities at the micro level. Government tools used to determine grade promotion are student attendance, standardized test scores, and standardized curriculum that outlines the course of study. In the following section, I use micro level enactment of learning as evidence to refute deficit perspectives of special education students at the meso and macro levels. In the CBRDG, I captured the students' lived experiences of learning and accomplishment as applied to four general macro measurements—attendance, applied learning, achievement, and promotion. These measurements are defined below according to the CBRDG development over the six-week period and supported with still images and accompanying descriptions.

Micro Level Enactments of the Scientific Tools for Equity

Attendance covers the six weeks that the group was in session and the students who attended. Since the CBRDG was not a classroom exercise or experiment, I did not take student attendance. However, I did video and audio tape each session for the purpose of data collection. Although collection of attendance data was not an intended reason for video and audiotaping, serendipitously I am able to isolate and record student attendance. Attendance is salient to student learning. In the CBRDG, each session was dedicated to exploring a new facet of technology. As indicated in chapter three, week two was dedicated to students typing their handwritten summaries into MS Word after my instructions and their practice. Brock, Stewie,

KK, and Elliot (who is not video or audio taped) were present the first and second weeks. However, Daniel was not present the first week and felt lost during the second week. While I was demonstrating and outlining steps, he was busy writing his summary. Daniel's absence resulted in his inability to fully participate and work independently in MS Word during week two. Brock and Stewie attended all sessions. KK was in attendance weeks three and six, Daniel weeks two, three, and six, and Elliot weeks four and six. In chapter one and two, I addressed the issues around low school attendance in the poor urban communities.

Applied learning refers to how much and how well each student learned and applied technology/literacy skills during the six-week curriculum. In the CBRDG, group dialogue enhanced the students' writing and technology abilities. Then applied learning measures how each student applies the new knowledge toward the completion of his or her comic books. The video data and artifacts provide evidence of applied learning in the form of drafts, sketches, and ultimately the completed comic books.

Applied Learning - Knowledge in Action

Image Figure 6-4: Brock Technology

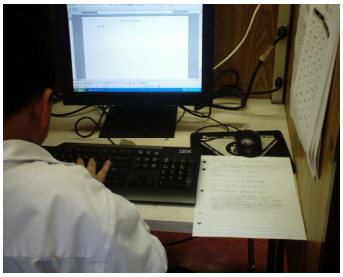
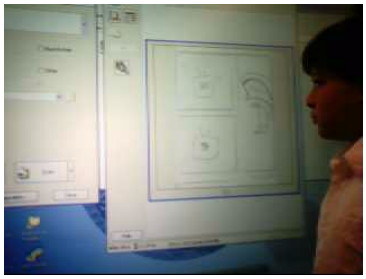


Image Figure 6-5: Stewie Technology



In the images above, Brock and Stewie enact the CBRDG's curricula at the micro level in ways that expand their learning. In figure 6-4, Brock demonstrates his newly acquired technology and writing knowledge by working independently in MS Word to input his comic

summary and character information. In figure 6-5, Stewie scans his images. In front of the group, Stewie provides step-by-step directions on how to use the Smartboard and navigate the Windows environment to locate the images.

Image Figure 6-6: Stewie Literacy -

Image Figure 6-7: Brock Literacy –

Brock and Stewie produce micro and meso demonstrations of literacy skills. In figure 6-6, Stewie focuses upon writing his story while adhering to the basic writing format. A close look reveals identifiable markers for the introduction, setting, and conclusion. These markers guide him as he summarizes the sections prior to writing the full story. In Figure 6-7, Brock shares the finished draft of his comic book storyline and images with the group during the dialogue session. At this time, Brock also entertains questions about his story, the status of his comic book, and ability to complete his writing ahead of schedule.

I use the attendance and applied learning as indicators of students' learning and achievement in the CBRDG. In the CBRDG, the six-week curriculum covered various technology applications, equipment, and writing. Brock and Stewie's focus on the content applied their knowledge to creating their comic book draft in stages. Their regular attendance and active participation prove to be crucial in the learning of different technology applications and language necessary to create their comic books. Brock and Stewie's regular attendance and active participation enabled them to emerge as skilled leaders and coteachers in the group.

Perhaps their active involvement could be attributed to their interest in technology, comic books in general, friendship, or all three.

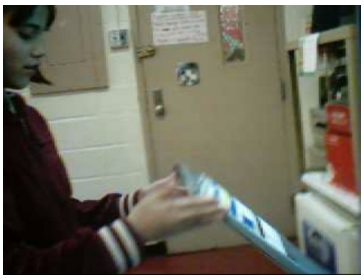
Achievement in the CBRDG looks at the evidence of student emergence from novice learners to peer tutors and leaders. By isolating each aspect of technology and literacy within the video data, I am able to identify the kind of tutoring that Stewie and Brock promoted within the group. Unfortunately, students' achievement is based on standardized test scores, which might not reflect the kind of real learning that occurs in the classroom. For example, The *National Assessment of Educational Progress* scores for reading and mathematics demonstrate that the performances of students with disabilities in New York City are similar to their Chicago and Los Angeles public school peers (See Figure 2 in Chapter II). Based on standardized test scores, students with disabilities consistently underperform in comparison to students without disabilities in grades four and eight for both reading and mathematics.

Brock and Stewie's achievement is documented on the videotape which shows how they teach and help others in the group. For example, in vignette figure 5-2 (chapter V), Stewie displayed his comic while explaining how he integrated different technology applications into the creation of his work. In vignette figure 6-1, Brock quickly mastered the skill of scanning and used his knowledge to assist KK who struggled with the concept. The enactment of the CBRDG practices along with regular attendance demonstrate that students labeled with behavioral or emotional disabilities are capable of achieving. In the CBRDG Brock and Stewie achieved academically and socially. Brock, Stewie, KK, and Daniel learned different technology applications and the technical language. And while the educational policies do not recognize the lived experiences of the CBRDG as academic achievement, the students exhibited different degrees of technology skills.

Achievement – Coteaching

Image Figure 6-8: Brock and KK

Image Figure 6-9: KK



In figure 6-8, KK struggled to with the steps on scanning. Brock realized her difficulty and immediately offered assistance. Brock and Stewie reinforced their learning of the different computer applications by writing the steps. Brock shared this information in a step-by-step procedure with KK. In this sense, he realized that in order for the CBRDG to run efficiently, it was necessary to support the learning of others. In addition, as the teacher, I had to be willing to release some of the power that comes with my role and distribute it to all individuals in the group. This required a valuing of capital that students bring to CBRDG. In figure 6-8, Brock established the CBRDG structure in which he enacted coteaching that supported KK's learning. In figure 6-9, KK was able to enact micro level learning by scanning on her own following instructions from Brock.

Promotion, I define promotion as the attainment and maintenance of a privileged position in the group because an individual holds symbolic capital, expertise, and social bonds through working successfully in a group. In the CBRDG, promotion came about as a result of successful completion of the comic book project. In chapters three, four, and five, I focused on the evolution of Brock and Stewie from students who learned technology to users of technology. They continued to evolve into coteachers in the group. This transformation resulted in their

elevation in status to experts and leaders in the group. Brock and Stewie achieved expert level technology knowledge and skills that they shared with their peers. In addition, the completion of the comic book project was a considerable accomplishment for both Brock and Stewie. It is noteworthy that urban students classified with emotional disturbance are generally not perceived as having the ability to create social networks out of sharing learned information with others, assisting peers, or developing skills associated with academic achievement.

Promotion - Membership, Socialization, Completed Comic Books

Image Figure 6-10: Brock

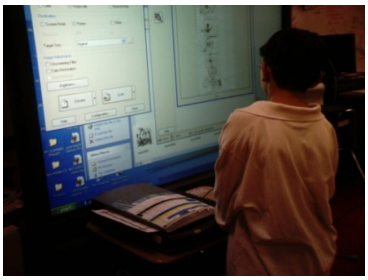


Image Figure 6-11: Brock and Stewie

Brock and Stewie produce micro level demonstration of literacy and technology knowledge and skills. As seen in figure 6-10, Brock demonstrates leadership skills as he displays his dexterity with multiple applications to the entire group. In figure 6-11, Brock and Stewie exhibit a measure of happiness at the completion of their comic books.

Image Figure 6-12: Brock

Image Figure 6-13: Stewie

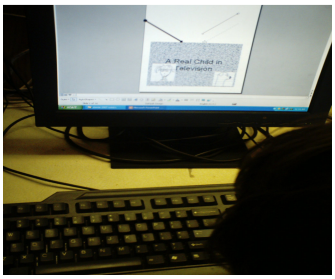
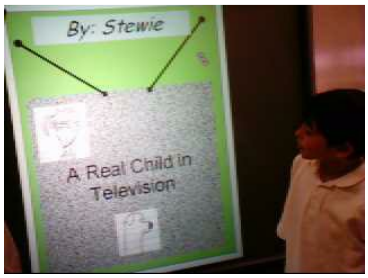


Image Figure 6-14: Stewie



Brock and Stewie's micro enactment seemed to connect them more fully to the practices and learning process in the CBRDG. In figure 6-12, Brock is creating his comic book using multiple technology applications. He uses MS Word, PowerPoint, and the shared directory. In figure 6-13, Stewie is creating his comic book using multiple technology applications. He uses MS Word, PowerPoint, and the shared directory. In figure 6-14, Stewie presents his comic to the group via PowerPoint on the Smartboard. The other members wanted to get a closer look of his work. Brock is standing at the screen because he forgot his glasses.

Macro Level Longitudinal Impact

At the end of the research, I was truly interested in finding any CBRDG residual impact upon the students that might have manifested within their classrooms. Being a teacher, I allowed my curiosity to get the better of me. I was able to make contact with Brock and Stewie's classroom teacher to inquire if academic and behavioral changes had been observed in the classroom. To my surprise, I found out both were more engaged in class participation and group activities. In other words, their teacher had noticed improvement in their classroom behaviors or what was described as "considerably more acceptable behaviors." Brock and Stewie have taken a greater interest in reading different types of materials and writing summaries. Additionally, I was told that they make regular visits to the in-school library to check out books. At the end of school year, I ran into Brock and Stewie's teacher who told me that their English Language Arts (ELA) scores increased one full level from two to three. (In the New York City school system, test scores are indicated by four levels, one is the lowest, and four is the highest.) The CBRDG is one educational setting that I found to work in regard to responding to the learning differences of each individual. Regardless of the classifications of students, I interacted with, instructed, dialogued with, and treated everyone as an individual. Each member had equal access to lab

resources, the information, and me. In other words, learning was equal and equitable for all. Based on my experience with the CBRDG members' different ways of learning and functioning levels, I do not think it is fair to apply the scientific tools used to measure academic achievement to the general education population and it is even less fair to students with disabilities. The educational settings and learning opportunities differ between the inclusion and self-contained students. Stewie's earlier inquiry about KK's inability to write without my help highlighted the many obstacles to learning she faces in her classroom. In KK's class, her peers' behaviors disrupt teaching and interfere with learning and the potential enactment of newly acquired skills. While she did experience some growth within the group, KK was not able to implement her new skills into her class. However, Brock and Stewie have the opportunity to take what they have learned from each other and me in the CBRDG and apply it in their classrooms. In this sense, Brock and Stewie's learning is enhanced. In the case of Brock and Stewie, I cannot say for sure that the changes are a result of being in the CBRDG; however, I am certain that their experiences in the group had a very positive impact upon on them.

Deceptive Accessibility - All Students Are "Not" Equal

Based on my observations, I believe that the worth of a student is based on the ability to conform to White cultural standards in education and to achieve according to those standards. Reflecting on the words "separate is equal," I focus on the word *equal* in relation to how educational policy uses the result of scientific research in education and the negative effects upon students in self-contained classes. Based upon my experience as a special education teacher in the New York City public schools, urban, poor, minority students labeled with disabilities in self-contained classes are not viewed the same as their nondisabled peers. In addition, since self-contained students are not treated equally, only a few are considered eligible for inclusion

classes. In fact, this appears to be a trend in District 75. For example, in District 75, out of 23,000 self-contained students, less than 2,000 qualify to be educated in the general education setting, the district's inclusion program. It appears that considerations are based upon academic achievement and appropriate classroom behavior. Brock and Stewie happen to be part of the minority. Based on my observation of them, they benefit from being among general education students, unlike KK who struggles in a class filled with constant disruptions. Although there are many reasons behind the low percentage of students participating in inclusion classes, the more prominent reasons are linked to the prevailing hegemonic ideologies and structural forces that promote schools as orderly and rational and attribute failure to the student. These beliefs, reinforced by IDEA's endorsement of scientific research, are used to influence and shape the educational system.

IDEA – A Product of Hegemonic Ideology

I believe that the IDEA is an instrument of hegemony that promotes the ideology of stakeholders who are not concerned about educating students with differences. Giroux (1997) revealed the workings of contemporary schooling by introducing power, race, and class into educational discourse. He was able to expose the relationship among these factors and their governing influence over the student processing or sorting in school. In a competitive academic environment that fosters the ideals (e.g., achievement, competition) of American government, students with disabilities like Brock, Stewie, and KK do not belong. Giroux, like Skrtic, believes that the manner in which American educators view knowledge and structure classroom experiences reflects an impersonal, universalized, and context-free knowledge that is driven by a positivist ideological undercurrent. In my school, their belief is evident in self-contained classrooms where teachers appear preoccupied with students' disabilities.

As highlighted by Skrtic and Giroux, American education is a social construction of positivism, which views human behavior as predictive and rational. I contend that teachers are human and their work is complex and hardly predictive. Teaching, like every other aspect of human development, is a journey that enables one to experience changes. It is a social act where knowledge is constructed and reconstructed by individuals at different times, places, and cultures. Likewise, professional knowledge (e.g., technical knowledge acquired through teacher education) is important, but according to Van Manen (1990) must be supplemented with lived experience to inform the teacher's work, language, and power.

The notion of deceptive accessibility promotes knowledge and social justice by critically exposing the complex psychological combinations of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of the dominant group and their goal of cultural exclusivity. Stakeholders use a combination of their entities (e.g., global business, economy, government) and tools (e.g., standardized test, curriculum) to promote personal, social, and cultural interests disguised under the rubric of child interest. This group is able to present the illusion of fairness, equality, and equal access in the educational system while supporting the labeling students who are incapable of academically achieving as disabled. The classification of a student with a disability, such as emotionally disturbed or learning disabled, marks that student throughout his or her academic life. For example, if a child is labeled with a disability and does poorly on a standardized exam, the child is blamed. The child's abilities, social profile, and home life are closely scrutinized by the educational heads, school administration, and teachers based on the scientific tools to ensure the child is at fault and not the educational system. Of course, finding the child incapable of functioning in a general education environment, justifies his or her removal. Although educational stakeholders uphold educational equality and equity for all through educational

policy, they also covertly support the labeling of students as “disabled” which encourages segregation of students based on their academic abilities and disabilities. Deceptive accessibility focuses on the importance of desegregation of students with disabilities from self-contained classes and measuring students achievement based on lived experiences based on the students lived experience and not standardized test scores.

Moving Away from Deficit Frameworks

"I find that the great thing in this world
is not so much where we *stand*,
as in what direction we are *moving."*
Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894)

In this chapter, I use critical theory to expose NCLB and IDEA’s fixation on scientifically based research which validates the separation of students with disabilities from the mainstream. Using critical theory to deconstruct scientific research and the field of special education, I discuss the notion of deceptive accessibility within the CRBDG’s lived experience. Relying upon the experiences of Brock, Stewie, and KK, I show how deceptive accessibility exposes the politically dominant utilization of standardized curriculum and standardized examination as a way of presenting all students, regardless of educational setting, as equal. However, the tool used to interpret the test scores, scientifically based research in the hands of the educational stakeholders, is used to justify segregation of students based on academic ability and eligibility. For example, students classified as emotionally disturbed (like KK) may be educated in a “separate” setting, yet they are considered “equal” because they must take the same standardized exams as students in general education. Unfortunately, KK must contend with students’ disruptive behaviors while in the self-contained setting. For KK, the learning environment is mostly dysfunctional.

I use Holmes' quote to open this section because it sums up how I feel about the abilities of students classified with disabilities. Entering the group as a D75 teacher, researcher, and participant, I was aware of the behaviors of students labeled as behaviorally or emotionally disturbed. Fortunately, I was not held hostage by preconceived ideas about the students' behaviors, old experiences, or false hopes about their learning. To focus on the students' disability classifications could have hindered our growth in the group. I believe in the possibility of giving students the freedom to express their culture, speech, learning styles, and in the case of the CBRDG, teaching abilities. Teachers must learn to move past the labels and see students as individuals capable of mastering technology and literacy knowledge and skills. We must hope that both technology and literacy becomes part of their lives in and out of school.

Brock and Stewie are two amazing boys who demonstrated great academic abilities through the use of technology. In the group, they initiated dialogue, demonstrated various technological functions and activities on Smartboard, and offered assistance to their peers. The academic practices of the CBRDG cannot be quantified by governmental standards. Based on my exposure to both self-contained and inclusion classrooms, I believe enactment of the newly acquired skills may happen for Stewie and Brock in their general education classroom, but most likely will not happen in KK's classroom. According to Brock and Stewie's general education teacher, their standardized reading scores increased from level two to level three. Additionally, based on their teacher's comments (e.g., improved classroom participation, increased reading and writing performance) their involvement in the CBRDG validates the CBRDG's practices. We met as a group and we let our desire to learn from each other and our shared experiences lead us. I walked away from the CBRDG a renewed person and a better teacher and researcher. I

thought I would be offering something brilliant to these children. However, they gave me something words cannot express.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Reflection - The Closing of the CBRDG

The last dialogue session of the comic book research dialogue group (CBRDG) was salient because I was able to see the growth of all members, specifically Brock and Stewie. Thinking back to the first time that we met as a group, I remember how Brock was the first to discuss his thoughts. His voice quality was loud and clear. If Brock was nervous, I did not know it. In fact, Brock was the first to initiate questions to his peers. On the other hand, Stewie was a little shy. This came across in his voice, which was low and very soft. After I reviewed the first video data with the boys, Stewie made a point of saying, "I was a little nervous, but also KK was very distracting. Then I decided to replace my nervousness and attention to KK's behaviors with eyes focused on the speakers." I noticed that Stewie made a conscious effort to ignore the disruptions from KK by facing the speakers and being engaged in dialogue. The micro level enactment of these conscious behaviors manifested in Stewie's significant growth. In working with young, urban students labeled as emotionally disturbed, I saw and highlighted their voices, comments about self and need for changes, and development as an example of their extraordinary agency. For example, Stewie's admission about his need to change specific behaviors allowed him to be more productive. This type of acknowledgement is not usually attributed to students labeled with his disability, and yet, throughout the process, I noticed how his ability to focus enabled him to further develop technology and literacy skills as well as interest in his peers. Stewie's most notable changes are evident in chapter six, in which he

comments before Brock and initiates an inquiry into Daniel's work while, at the same time, providing him with suggestions and solutions.

As we came to a close, I found myself a bit emotional for different reasons. I was moved by their participation. I no longer would have the pleasant company of these great students. In addition, I did not and will not have the opportunity to experience their enactment or role expansion in their respective classrooms. However, the most challenging feeling for me was guilt. I knew that, once we stopped meeting as a group, the students' exposure to technology and expanded agency would diminish because of the prevalent traditional classroom structures. I knew this would be particularly true for KK whose self-contained special education teacher is more focused upon controlling student behaviors than enhancing academic skills and abilities. Back in her self-contained classroom, KK will not be able to freely walk around and explore her environment. The structure of her classroom restricts her agency and inhibits her ability to enact practices (dialogue, technology and literacy skills) learned while in the CBRDG. In her classroom, the computer is primarily used for its entertainment value. As a teacher in a self-contained setting, I am aware of my colleagues' positions on technology as a teaching tool. Although my research only included five participants labeled as emotionally disturbed, I believe that the CBRDG's practices (e.g., small group discussions, technology, sharing, and coteaching) can be used to transform traditional classrooms-especially concerning the teaching and learning of technology in my school.

Research Summation – What Did I Learn?

This critical auto/ethnographic research explored the roles of an alternatively certified teacher, students classified with disabilities, and technology as a tool to improve literacy skills through the creation of comic books in a new social field, the CBRDG. The objective of the

CBDRG was to create a space that included a wide range of tasks that were both “classroom” and “non-classroom” related. In this way, some of the constraints associated with teaching and learning of technology could be reduced, particularly due to easy access to more sophisticated resources, such as computer lab, computers, the required applications and peripherals, and technology teachers. Throughout the process, I foregrounded the meso (school and local policies) and macro (government policy, disability, technology) structures and considered their impact on the CBRDG’s culture, agency, community, and identity. I illustrated that learning situations like those observed in the CBRDG, could be used as spaces for cultural production and transformation. In the CDRDG, the students and I were able to gain insight into one another, acquire technology skills and confidence, expand our roles through dialogue and practices, and assist one another’s learning through coteaching.

In chapter one, deceptive accessibility was introduced as a form of social justice that critically exposed the dominant social groups’ (policy makers, traditional teachers) intentions to perpetuate their cultural standards in school. In chapter three, I focused on my experience as an alternatively certified teacher who tried to implement educational policies in my classroom. The dominant traditional teachers, also referred to as gatekeepers, were able to use their position and power to grant or deny access to highly qualified teachers based on the best cultural fit. In particular, I explored how teachers in my school infiltrate the school community with their attitudes toward technology, alternatively certified teachers, and the pervasive culture of the surrounding external neighborhood. I relied upon the notion of deceptive accessibility to highlight differences in the educational settings that the CBRDG members attend. In chapter four, I discussed the school experiences of the CBRDG members. Each member is a student labeled with a disability who is exposed to the same standardized

curriculum and exams as his or her nondisabled peers. On the one hand, they are told that they are equal, yet on the other hand, the labels, physical structures, and segregated educational settings remind them that they are not. In chapter six, I use deceptive accessibility to foreground the government's policy and the true intentions of policy stakeholders to perpetuate White cultural standards of academic achievement, thereby avoiding concerns of students with disabilities. Unfortunately, based on the mandates of educational policy, students deemed "incapable" of conforming to school policy and learning within the general education setting are justifiably removed and segregated into special education classrooms.

Being a member of the CBDRG along with the self-contained/inclusion students from the surrounding economically depressed South Bronx, I focused on our experiences as part of two learning communities – the larger PS/MS South Bronx schools and the smaller field of the CBDRG. More importantly, I endeavored to attend to the deceptive accessibility between the misalignments of educational policy, traditional teaching, technology, and learning with action research.

Revisiting the Research Questions

My research was guided by two overarching questions:

(1) How will my technologically mediated instructions based on the government's mandated standards contribute to the re/production of culture and re/construction of identity in a small special education learning community?

(2) How will the introduction of a new field, the CBRDG, serve as a catalyst for inventing culture that could be brought back into the larger learning community, the classroom, and to aid in the creation of highly qualified, technologically equipped, and culturally responsive special education teachers?

I narrowed my focus by asking four sub questions:

(a) What aspects of the CBRDG's participants' cultural capital are helpful in accomplishing the goals of successful integration of technology as a teaching tool for learning and connecting what students know and are able to do?

(b) In what ways did the culture of my school contribute to my ability or inability to use technology as a tool with my student participants?

(c) In what ways does the introduction of new fields (e.g., alternatively certified teacher, and CBRDG) serve as foundations for new culture that could be brought into the classroom to help with the technology integration process?

(d) How did participation in the research group contribute to the reproduction of culture and re/construction of identities as the students became technology users? (It is important to note that the questions were refined based on Brock and Stewie's practices and expanded roles in the CBRDG.)

In the following section, I address the four sub-questions, and in doing so, I also provide answers to the first two.

What aspects of the CBRDG participants' cultural capital are helpful in accomplishing the goal of successful integration of technology as a teaching tool for learning and connecting what students know and are able to do to? Teachers and students have diverse forms of cultural capital and ways of knowing that they carry with them. What they know and how they acquire knowledge influence the way teachers and students approach their goals. As the alternatively certified teacher in the CBRDG, I presented my cultural experiences in chapter three as a person who transitioned from the business world to education. I often visualized technology and literacy in ways that could be applied to students' lifeworlds outside of the CBRDG. My format for the

students to improve or learn technology skills allowed for students to use the computer themselves rather than only observing me using the computer. In this way, the boundaries separating teaching, technology, and learning became transparent to me. In chapters three through five, I discussed how I was able to teach technology in ways that enabled the students to enhance their literacy skills. Additionally, my associations with Mr. O, the technology teacher, also prove useful. For example, the CBRDG was able to use Mr. O's computer lab, which has individual computers and other necessary technology equipment. In addition, as foregrounded in chapter five, Mr. O let Brock and Stewie practice and work in the computer lab independently. Brock and Stewie's individual interests in their work enabled them to enact the CBRDG's technology practices to create two-dimensional digital comics.

As the CBRDG members accessed their own cultural capital, I focused on my own cultural impact upon the students and the technology rituals and practices. Using my agency often meant negotiating between my goals as a teacher and the goals of the CBRDG members. In chapters three and five, I showcased the students' skills that emerged as I unconsciously used my agency in ways that could have truncated their agency. In chapter three, for example, I discuss how I attempted to go through the steps of MS Word after the participants had practiced and probably mastered the requisite skills. In chapter five, I noted how I interjected several comments, directions, and questions as Brock was teaching Daniel. After reviewing the videotapes, I quickly and consciously made an effort not to be an obstacle within this learning environment. Rather, I allowed the students to become fluent in the culture and practices of the CBRDG, thereby opening the opportunity for students to become fluent in technology on their own terms. While my attempts to curtail my teacher role and allow students to enact culture and expand their agency did not always work, my ontology changed. I discovered that students

labeled with a disability might express their ways of knowing and being in different ways depending upon the environment. My exposure to the CBRDG students helped me to understand that technology is not magical nor does it have special powers to transform individuals. The presence of technology did not improve student attendance, engage all students in the same way, or enable students to learn at the same rate. The students helped me to acknowledge that I had succumbed to traditional practices and had allowed such practices to overflow into our space. I no longer enforced my teacher-constructed beliefs of how a group of students should learn and interact in an educational setting. In structures like the CBRDG, the enactment of coteaching on the micro level afforded the transformation of my traditional classroom teaching and the students' learning practices.

In what ways did the culture of my school contribute to my ability or inability to use technology as a tool with my student participants? In my school, educational policy, school physical structures, dominant teacher culture (meso and macro), and outdated computer equipment are forms of cultural misalignments that the CBRDG members faced. Due to the macro and meso structures, I, along with the students labeled with disabilities who are educated in different educational settings, felt pulled in different directions. For example, in chapter one, I laid out the policy goals of NCLB and IDEA that include technology in education as a means to enhance teaching and learning. Although the members structured the CBRDG, I, as the teacher, prioritized teaching, technology, and literacy goals to satisfy both the needs of the government/school standards and the needs of the students.

The CBRDG students faced other macro and meso structures that impacted their micro level access to technology and the CBRDG. In chapter one and six, I itemized the academic promotional tools (e.g., standardized curriculum, standardized examinations, attendance) that the

government utilizes as indicators of achievement. In my school building, the members of the CBRDG also faced the physical barriers that distinguish the general education and special education settings. In chapter four, I highlighted the meso structural impediments in PS/MS South Bronx and described how Brock, Stewie, KK, and Elliot traverse the hallways of different schools in one building to get to the computer lab on the fourth floor.

The fear of scrutiny from general education peers (because of the negative stigma associated with "special education" and the fourth floor computer lab) could have prevented the inclusion students from participating in the CBRDG. Once the students overcame such external obstacles, they had to face outdated computer equipment that often malfunctioned. These structural conditions created difficulty for us as a group interested in accessing and using technology. In other words, such conditions are all aspects of deceptive accessibility. On the one hand, students are presented with the idea that public schools are fair to everyone; on the other hand, various structures in place within public schools prevent ease of use and/or passage for some students. The idea that all students are equal is deceptive, an illusion. Given that students with disabilities are subjected to the same standards as their nondisabled peers, the law suggests equality for all students. However, the existence of segregated educational settings means that self-contained students with disabilities are not truly acknowledged or considered equal by their peers in general education, traditional teachers, and administration in our school. In my building, physical barriers among the various schools remind District 75 special education students of their differences from mainstream students. However, the micro space created by the CBRDG melted the students' fears about their value as a student labeled as disabled and the associated negative stereotypes.

In what ways does the introduction of a new field, CBRDG serve as foundations for new culture that could be brought into the classroom to help with the technology integration process? In this dissertation, I presented cogenerative dialogues, as a new tool not previously used for technology integration in urban special education classrooms nor within special education research on technology use in urban special education classrooms. In chapter two, I explained the inclusion of cogenerative dialogues into the active research and theoretical frameworks of the CBRDG as tools for democratic research practice. Cogenerative dialogues also foregrounded the teaching and learning differences between the CBRDG and the traditional classroom. While cogenerative dialogues have been used in urban science education, practices, and education research (Tobin, 2005), they have not been utilized as an approach to technology integration in special educational settings. As I engaged in my research, I found that the creation of a space outside the traditional classroom and school structures where students and teachers could culturally interact required an understanding of the value in cultural differences among participants. Once I recognized this value and it became a shared premise within the CBRDG, opportunities for the development of shared responsibility for dialogues as well as teaching and learning technology/literacy practices became evident. For example, in my school, the traditional classroom teaching is centered upon White middle class designs of taking and maintaining control. In chapter five, there are images that depict Stewie's sitting positions while the others are writing. The other students were engaged in writing, but Stewie looked around. In a traditional classroom where "think time" is not implemented by the teacher, Stewie's position and inactivity could be misconstrued as noncompliance. However, within minutes, Stewie was in full writing mode and had changed his body position. Had this been a traditional classroom, the teacher would most likely have corrected his body posture. I now know that had I corrected

Stewie's sitting position, his concentration and train of thought could have been interrupted. In the CBRDG, experiences like this one altered my teaching practices and created opportunities for students to learn from what I enacted.

Dialogue practices in the CBRDG enabled the transformation of Brock and Stewie's roles from receivers of information to peer tutors. In the CBRDG, coteaching proved to be a key component. This is evident in chapter four in which I describe how Brock, during his interaction with me on scanning, also executed the function in a manner that helped his peers understand all of the steps. In chapter five, I show how Brock and Stewie's efforts transformed the CBRDG through their coteaching. For example, Brock felt comfortable enough to teach Daniel how to use MS Word and to teach KK how to scan. Stewie adhered to various effective teaching elements when presenting his digital comic book to the group —e.g., he ensured all could see the Smartboard, he paused at different times when questions were asked or interest was expressed in his work, and pointed to the areas as he talked. More importantly, Stewie explained the different steps while linking literacy and technology together. In these instances, KK, Daniel, and Elliot learned, too. They were receptive learners serving as an example of passivity within this research, which is dialectically related to agency. These scenarios provide vivid examples of how the connection between teaching and learning in a micro field, like the CBRDG, permitted cultural enactment.

How did participation in the CBRDG contribute to the reproduction of culture and re/construction of identities as the students became technology users? Early in the research, Brock and Stewie manifested as coteachers of technology. Essential to this work and discussed more extensively in chapter four, peer tutoring or coteaching is defined as one child instructing another child on material in which the first has become an expert and the second is learning

(Damon & Phelps, 1989b). In this respect, our experience with peer tutoring in the CBRDG was different from what we normally experience in our respective traditional classrooms. As I reviewed the chapters in this dissertation, I found that the salient feature among them is the search for moments where students built interest and solidarity around learning technology and literacy as well as moments of cultural enactment. In chapter three, I described in detail the members' interactions with each other and the technology of MS Word. In this setting, I instructed the functions of MS Word and each member was fully engaged in technology through practice with me. However, Daniel's absence from the group the week before resulted in his inability to recall the steps. Brock readily offered his assistance and taught Daniel the functions of MS Word. This resulted in positive group energy, a rise in confidence, and an increase in interest for learning technology. Brock and Stewie's leadership and teaching abilities helped others in the group to recognize their own skills. These specific characteristics along with the members' successful interactions are highlighted because they refute the deficit perception of students classified with disabilities. For example, in my building, teachers, administrators, and school staff do not readily associate such characteristics with urban students labeled emotionally disturbed. The students' affiliation with the CBRDG also eliminated any divides that may have existed among them because of their separate educational settings. I strongly believe that for Brock, Stewie, KK, Daniel, and Eliot, being part of a community in which they were instrumental in designing the structures facilitated connections to each other and to their own learning. Unfortunately, on the macro, meso, and micro levels, government, policymakers, school administrators, and traditional teachers do not recognize the CBRDG's practices or members' enactment of these practices as valid indicators of educational growth. Therefore, if the CBRDG's teaching and learning practices for technology integration are not accepted as

valid, it raises questions about what knowledge is, what acceptable teaching practices are, as well as how knowledge and teaching practices are validated—by whom and for the benefit of whom.

Implications for Policy Makers, Administrators, Special Education Teachers, and Students

Technology integration into education as a tool to improve teaching and learning is not something teachers simply learn once and then possess for life. It is a process that requires continuous collegial support and sharing. It has become abundantly clear to me that the actors within a particular social field can define what is significant within their field. Our powerful government made it clear that technology must be used in our daily teaching activities to improve standardized test scores. Although I contend that this mandate is a hegemonic belief, grounded within positivistic research and unfair and undemocratic to students with disabilities, it is a mandate that is enforced on state and city levels. This mandate has led to a disconnection between government goals and what is actually occurring for students in different educational settings – both inclusive general education classrooms and segregated self-contained classes according to disability.

The hierarchy that privileges some students and dismisses others is implicit in many urban settings, but exhibits itself in various contexts in different ways. For example, the available research on the impact of technology upon improving academics for students classified as emotionally disturbed or learning disabled is sparse. However, for some time, educational research has highlighted the positive impact of technology upon teaching and learning and has linked academic achievement in general education classrooms to highly qualified teachers and their use of technology as a tool (Rundle, 2004). In my school, I have found that teaching

students with disabilities is viewed differently in the general education and the self-contained settings. In the general education setting, the environment is academically driven and teachers are willing to attempt the use of technology in the classroom. However, in self-contained classrooms where students with emotional disturbance are grouped together, traditional special education teachers are more focused on students' disability classifications and addressing classroom disruptions. Based on my experience, I feel that due to homogenous placement of students labeled as disruptive, special education teachers are trained to focus more on addressing behaviors than academic needs. As an alternatively certified special education teacher, I worked in the self-contained classes with students classified with emotional and behavioral disorders. However, based on my experiences in the CBRDG, I learned that students labeled with emotional and behavioral disabilities could enact practices not afforded in the rigid traditional classroom filled with labels.

As I worked with the CBRDG members, I witnessed how they re/constructed their identities as technology users because they saw themselves as members of a community that used technology. Since students cannot learn technology in isolation or in traditional classrooms with teachers who are not properly trained, it is necessary to create spaces where students and teachers can learn together. It is essential to have a space where they can imagine, share, and envision together what is possible outside traditional classroom teaching and learning. As in the CBRDG, students need a space where they can learn together with a supportive group of peers who can provide them with the confidence and energy needed to enact cultural changes in their classrooms. Without such a space, students may simply continue to adapt learning practices to fit within the existing culture of their classrooms and schools. For some of our most underprivileged

urban students in self-contained settings the traditional school culture and classroom teaching could have severe detrimental consequences later on in life.

As the government revises educational policy to include technology as an academic tool to improve teaching and learning, it is important to consider what it means to be a teacher who uses technology in the classroom. We might ask ourselves questions such as the following: What impact might technology use have upon self-contained students homogenously grouped together based on their disability classification? What does it mean to provide access (knowledge, practice, skills) and does access translate to equitable education? What is the relationship between technology use in the classroom and standardized test scores? What is relationship between technology use in the classroom and student attendance?

As I see it, the problems with technology integration, traditional school culture and classroom teacher go to the very core of what it means to be an educator of urban students classified as disabled. Technology integration initiatives need to begin by asking questions related to structure, access, and training. For example, we might ask, what structural conditions do teachers and students face when attempting to use technology as a tool to improve academics? Such a question might give rise to other questions such as, what support is the school providing to traditional self-contained teachers to help them integrate technology into the curriculum? What support would teachers have if they wanted to create micro groups, like the CBRDG, to instruct with technology? Could self-contained teachers receive support on implementing student-coteaching roles? If a school is wired for Internet access, why are there no computers in the classrooms? Why is there a computer lab with outdated equipment that malfunctions? Why are there no available computer labs or portable laptops in the school? If there a school has Internet access and there are working computers in the classrooms, why are teachers and/or

students not using them? Why do teachers and students conceptualize computers only in terms of entertainment value? What message does the school's physical condition send to teachers and students in the special education division who are mandated to take standardized exams and wish to use technology yet are not granted access to technology? Questions such as these must be addressed if technology is to be used as a tool to improve student academic performance on standardized exams and if education is to be truly equitable.

My study is located in a specific place with a limited amount of students. I wanted to explore how students classified as emotionally disturbed are viewed within my school by teachers, administrators, and nondisabled peers. I wanted to show how the existence of a space to teach and learn technology is the key to the transformation of traditional classrooms in my school. It is the means by which students labeled as disabled not only comprehend their situations and abilities in local contexts, but also dispel stereotypes, stigmas, and the injustices. In all, the CBRDG provided marginalized students with the opportunity to be heard and seen for their abilities without the constraints of demeaning labels or segregated physical structures.

APPENDIX A

The Comic Book Dialogue Group
The 6-Week Schedule

Hardware	Software	Utensils
Scanner Smartboard Video Camera discs	Word Powerpoint MS Picture Viewer MS Paint / Photoshop MS Publisher MS QuickTime Player MovieMaker	Paper Folders Pencils Pens Colored Pencils crayons

Week 1 Time: 10:45 – 11:35	**<u>Introduction</u>**: • Understanding the Comic Book Group dialogues discussions • Overview of rules and how to respect each other • Describe what will be accomplished over the 6-weeks **<u>Start</u>** • Any type of writing has a format • What are some things that a story needs? (title, <u>characters</u> : people, <u>setting</u>: places, times; <u>topic</u>: situations (issues) event that creates a story) o Title: frames your story o Characters: Do we need 50 or 60 characters in a story? o Setting: how many places, times will you use? o Topic: you can have an issue or a situation that makes the whole story. • Writing has a format: o You need a title or a topic heading o How many parts must a story have? Three - (beginning, middle, end) • The Comic Book takes the same format • You need to have 1) title 2) storyline or a topic 3) characters 4) setting 5) situation • Create our stories, Discuss our stories, Get feedback, Edit our story lines **<u>The Comic Book – Start (The Draft)</u>** This storyline will be on the inside cover of your comic books. • Today, we will explore the Comic Books / Graphic Novels – 10 minutes to write 1) Think of the main topic – what story would you like to create 2) Characters, Situation or issue, Share Information 3) Typing the story - 10 minutes • Next, - 10 minutes 1) Sharing your story and getting constructive feedback 2) Editing your story 3) Create a folder for work 4) Typing your story on MS Word. Next week, we will: 1) Edit our storyline and type it out on the word processing application, if we haven't done so. 2) Then, you will begin constructing 2-3 characters based on the storyline that will interact with each other.
Week 2 Time: 10:45 – 11:35	**<u>Quick Review -</u>** Group Discussion: • Last week you began writing the storyline for your comic books. • Gave each other constructive feedback • Today we will discuss our storylines for our comic books • We will split into two groups and have the second group type their stories • APPLICATION: MSWORD and Editing

	<u>The Comic Book – Today</u>: • We will: 1) discuss the characters who will express the storyline 2) share and critique each others story for edits and proofing 3) edit our stories in MS Word Processing application 4) Format - Breakdown the story - Layout the story on the comic strip 5) Create the characters for the storyline 6) Side-by-side story and characters Next week, we will: 1) Discuss the storyline, edit it on the word processor, breakdown the story into a comic strip layout, create characters side-by-side.
Week 3 Time: 10:45 – 11:35	**Quick Review –** Group Discussion ➢ Last week we discussed the characters who will express the storyline ➢ Shared and critiqued each others story for edits and proofing ➢ edited our stories in MS Word Processing application ➢ APPLICATION: SCANNING **The Comic Book – Today:** 1) Learn about scanning Next week, we will: 1) Learn about scanning and creating a cover that summarizes our work
Week 4 Time: 10:45 – 11:35	**Quick Review –** Group Discussion 1) Format - Breakdown the story - Layout the story on the comic strip 2) Create the characters for the storyline 3) Side-by-side story and characters **The Comic Book – Today:** Scanning images and the cover **Learn how to scan an image** 1) Layout the story on the comic strip with Images and float text 2) Format – images 3) Float text
Week 5 Time: 10:45 – 11:35	**Quick Review –** Group Discussion 1) Layout the story on the comic strip with Images and float text 2) Format – images 3) Float text **The Comic Book – Today:** putting it all together 1) Finalizing your comic books (formatting images, background, and text) 2) Illustrating the cover
Week 6 Time: 10:45 – 11:35	**Quick Review –** Group Discussion and party Wrap-up our project by reviewing what we have accomplished over the 6-week period. Reviewing each others work **Each student should know:** 1) Knowledge about the writing process 2) Technical skills 3) Socialization skills **Each student should have:** 1) Comic book

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agency: The power of an individual to act in a certain field. Often referenced to as being dependent on the structures that impact the field.

Alternate Assessment Classroom/Students - Alternative Assessment classes are generally 12:1:4 and 6:1:1 to accommodate students with multiple disabilities (such as mental retardation, blindness, and orthopedic impairment.

Cogenerative dialogue: Conversation that individuals who are in the same field are engaged in where the goal is co-creating a plan of action to improve future experiences in the field.

Cultural capital - is comprised of the skills, knowledges, behaviors and dispositions acquired throughout a person's life as she participates in cultural practices

Deceptive Accessibility. I define deceptive accessibility as the psychological underpinning related to the dominant cultural groups (government leaders, business leaders, parents, traditional teachers). Deceptive accessibility identifies the group that maintains the power to control and marginalize the less powerful and their ability to presents the illusion of fairness, equal access, or equality among all. It foregrounds the dominants groups' behavior, thinking, motivation, and relationships along with their tools of control (i.e., educational policy, membership, information) to grant or deny access.

Dialectic: The relationship between two seemingly opposite and interacting ideas that pronounces the fact that they are dependent on each other in order to exist. The sheffer stroke (|) is placed between the two concepts to indicate the existence of the two parts on either side of the sheffer stroke as constituting a whole.

District 75 (D75) - is a separate school district that provides citywide educational, vocational, and behavior support programs for students who are on the autism spectrum, severely challenged, and/or multiply disabled. District 75 consists of 56 school organizations, home and hospital instruction, and vision and hearing services. The schools and programs are located at more than 350 sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island and Syosset, New York. The mission of District 75 is to provide appropriate standards-based educational programs, with related service supports, to approximately 23,000 students with severe challenges, commensurate with their abilities

Field: A physical and temporal place where individuals interact with each other. This may include a two-person conversation or a city full of people. A field may be nested within other fields. Culture in one field will always try to be enacted within others. Fields are structured with resources that support the expression of agency.

Hegemony: A social system where one group's power over another is established and accepted without questioning its origin or implications. In a hegemonic system, the power imbalances are oftentimes so ingrained into the social psyche that attempts to uncover

them are resisted by the victims of its oppression.

Cultural Identity - is the (feeling of) identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as he or she is influenced by her belonging to a group or culture

Immanent Critique - the philosophical or sociological strategy that analyzes cultural forms by locating contradictions in the rules and systems necessary to the production of those forms. The method thus aims to contextualize not only the object of its investigation, but also the ideological basis of that object; both the object and the category to which it belongs are shown to be products of a historical process.

Inclusion Program (District 75) - the practice of integrating disabled students into schools. The inclusion program allows students labeled as emotional disturbed to be educated with the general education population. The District 75 (D75) inclusion program is designed to move self-contained students who demonstrate academic, social, emotional, and behavioral improvements to the least restrictive educational setting.)

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) - In the United States an **Individualized Education Plan**, commonly referred to as an **IEP**, is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In An individualized educational plan means one that is designed to meet the unique educational needs of one child, as defined by federal regulations. 34 CFR 300.320. The IEP must be tailored to the individual student's needs as identified by the evaluation process and must help teachers and related service providers understand the student's disability and how the disability affects the learning process. In other words, the IEP should describe how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning and what teachers and service providers will do to help the student learn more effectively.

Legitimate Periperiphal Participation (LPP) is the process by which newcomers become full members by learning from old-timers and by being allowed to participate in certain tasks that relate to the practices of the community. It suggests an opening, a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement.

Lifeworld: Refers to one's lived experience prior to reflective processes and analysis. The summation of all everyday experiences as they are being enacted combines to become the lifeworld.

New York City Teaching Fellow (NYCTF) Program The New York City Teaching Fellows (NYC TF) (The NYC Teaching Fellows is an alternative certification program that was founded in 2000 in response to the largest teacher shortage the NYC Department of Education. The program's goal is to raise the quality of education in New York City Public schools by attracting professionals from other fields into the classroom as teachers. Many accepted Fellows have almost no teaching experience, and accepted Fellows include recent college graduates as well as former accountants, nurses, chief, executives, secretaries, artists, journalists, and retirees. http://www.nycteachingfellows.org/)

Practice: Actions that an individual performs. Multiple patterned actions become

practices and multiple practices become rituals.

Self-contained classroom - classrooms are a therapeutic educational setting where students classified with the same disability (e.g. emotional disturbance, learning disability, autism) are placed with a special education teacher and support staff.

Stakeholder. The term "stakeholder" is used to identify a group of prominent individuals in any cultural field. The stakeholders in any setting are able to impregnate structures with their values, culture, and goals.

Standardized Assessment Classroom/Students - are generally 12:1:1 or the more restrictive 8:1:1 setting (12 or 8 students, 1 teacher and 1 paraprofessional.) The students assigned to these academic settings are considered to be as capable of taking the New York State Standardized Examinations (with testing accommodations) as the general education population. The academic program for the Standardized students is geared towards earning a regular high school diploma.

Structure: Used in this paper with a dual meaning. In reference to agency, it is the physical, symbolic or temporal resource that causes an individual or group to enact its power to act in a certain way. Structure also refers to a system or unit that has been set in place as the norm.

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