Transforming Teacher Voice through Writing for Publication

By Tracy L. Smiles & Kathy G. Short

If you're a teacher researcher and you are sharing what you know, then you've found a voice for yourself. I think once you find that voice and find the people who will listen to it, then it's hard to turn it off.

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The voice of this teacher researcher reflects the transformative potential of engaging in research. This potential is one we have personally experienced in our work as teacher researchers and as teacher educators supporting other teacher researchers. We know the power of teacher researchers being able to immediately use understandings from research to inform teaching and, at the same time, gaining "voice" with other educators. We have experienced the thrill of having something to say that others value and that can inform the field. We share the excitement of realizing that the process of preparing for and presenting understandings to others transforms and deepens our understandings as well as influences the transformation of others.

We have completed our teacher research projects and courses with teacher researchers at a level of great

excitement, ready to share what we know with others only to see all of us get caught up in the reality of surviving the everyday struggles of life as educators. In the end, we are grateful for new understandings, but decide to be content with that. As journal editors, we see this reality played out in journal submission statistics that reflect the low number of submissions from teacher researchers and the even lower number of manuscripts accepted by reviewers. Despite a commitment to publishing the work of teacher researchers, little changes beyond the publication of a couple more articles a year.

When we began working with the editorial team for a major journal in our field, we decided to go beyond commitment to taking action by establishing support structures for teacher researchers who were novice writers and who wanted to publish their work in professional journals. Through our interactions with many teacher researchers and their manuscripts, we gained insights into the major struggles that they encountered in trying to shape their ideas into a publishable manuscript. This article focuses on identifying these struggles and sharing the ways in which we worked with teacher researchers to respond to the obstacles they faced, both in writing a strong manuscript for submission and in making their way through the review process. Before describing these struggles, we first establish a context for this work through examining the role of writing for teacher researchers and describing the project within which this work took place.

The Role of Writing for Teacher Researchers

There are many ways in which teacher researchers express their voices and share with others, such as conducting workshops for other teachers (Stock, 2001). For teachers who want to reach beyond these immediate audiences to the broader field, one possibility is writing for publication in journals. Teacher research, however, continues to be underrepresented in professional publications, even though many educators recognize the potential of teacher inquiry for building knowledge and generating theory about teaching and learning (Mills, 2003).

This lack of representation is understandable, considering teachers lead hectic professional lives that require their full time and energy, leaving little time or incentive to write. Furthermore, teachers who do make the time to write have difficulty finding forms and forums to publish and present their work. Often their research does not take forms familiar to conference planners and journal editors, many of which are based in an experimental research tradition (Fleischer, 1994). Yet, teachers have published their research, both in journals and books, and this work has had tremendous influence on the teaching community, some transforming the profession in important ways (Hubbard & Power, 1999). Classroom teachers such as Nancy Atwell, Bobbi Fisher, Karen Gallas, Linda Christensen, Vivian Paley, and many more have authored seminal works of rich classroom descriptions and theoretical reflections. Because teachers are important partners in the creation of knowledge about education, their writing for publication benefits the field by improving teaching and the profession,

developing teachers' credibility, and broadening understandings of the teaching profession (Crowe, 1992). Hubbard and Power (1999), whose work has profoundly influenced teacher inquiry remind us, "We need more voices from teachers in journals and books, more accounts of how complicated and exciting learning can be when teachers look closely and aren't afraid to write about what they are seeing" (p. 180). Perhaps, most importantly, teachers who write gain a sense of professional gratification and of being an insider (Monroe, 1992).

As with all research, writing plays a vital role both in conducting and sharing teacher research, particularly in supporting researchers in discovering new insights and sharing with others (Hubbard & Power, 1999, Murray, 1982). Teachers who write for publication have the opportunity to reflect deeply on their practice by exploring the beliefs, values, and images that guide their work. Writing also offers the opportunity to document how ideas evolve and belief systems change through reflective inquiry (Shubert, 1991).

Although writing is generative for researchers, we agree with many proponents of teacher research that writing need not be an essential part of this mode of inquiry. Teacher research does not have to be published to be a quality piece of teacher research; if it informs practice through the data collection and analysis, then it is good. Hubbard and Power (1999) note that, "Adding the layer of writing up the findings and bringing them to the larger audience is a step many teacher-researchers don't want or need. And yet. . . ." (p. 180).

This "yet" is what Dahl (1992) describes as "breaking old habits and engaging in new conversations" (p. 1). Dahl discusses "old habits" as those that keep teachers isolated from each other and the research being conducted on them and their classrooms. Some would argue that the teacher research movement grew out of a need to challenge assumptions about teachers and classrooms that have been shaped by fragmentary perspectives on the complexity of the practice (McCarty, 1997). Teacher inquiry offers an important point of view into the everyday drama of teaching by presenting more complex understandings of classrooms and classroom life.

Although writing offers many professional benefits for teacher researchers and the broader educational community, the journey from writing to actual publication is a daunting one. Teachers' lack of familiarity with the publication process leaves them uncertain about publishing their work, thus opening it up to scrutiny by the public, their colleagues and their students (Crowe, 1992). Our experiences have led us to believe that effective support can be offered, but that this work involves learning a particular genre of writing and making a personal time commitment for both editors and authors.

The Context of Our Project

To meet the challenge of representing more teacher research in literacy journals, Kathy and a colleague, Dana Fox, who had both been recently appointed

as editors of different journals wrote a grant to create contexts within their professional communities supporting teacher researchers in writing for publication. They saw their editorial positions as offering powerful learning opportunities for themselves, their students, and their colleagues. Because of Tracy's prior experience with and interest in teacher research, she took the lead in directly working with teacher researchers who wanted to publish their work while on a one-year leave from her full-time middle school teaching position to work on her graduate studies.

The center of this work included locating teachers who were conducting research in their classrooms and were interested in publishing their work. We searched for networks of teacher researchers and publications that specifically focus on teacher inquiry, including local, national, and international efforts. In addition to networking, we assisted teacher researchers in preparing manuscripts for review and directed them to a variety of publication opportunities.

After networking with teacher researchers and teacher educators, Tracy began assisting teacher researchers in preparing manuscripts for the review process. In collaboration with Kathy, Tracy helped these writers with all facets of the publication process, from providing critical feedback on writing to moral support when manuscripts underwent review.

The first part of the project involved locating and encouraging teachers who were conducting studies in their classrooms to consider writing for publication. The National Writing Project was an especially significant network for locating teacher researchers who were interested in publication. Tracy began receiving inquiries from individual teachers similar to the following,

> *I am a HS teacher in Las Vegas who would like to publish in* English Journal. *I would love for you to look at my pieces and give suggestions. My paper is actually in two parts. I'm not sure how to put them together or if I should leave them as they are. Should I add a table or two? Pictures? Your suggestions are welcome, as I would really like to publish.*

Additionally, teacher writers who had submitted a manuscript to the journal Kathy co-edited, *Language Arts,* were referred to Tracy when the editors saw the piece as having publication potential, but needing more work than time allowed under established editorial guidelines. Tracy worked with these teacher writers in revising their work, providing space for them to rework their drafts before resubmitting them again for the formal peer-review process.

Once manuscripts began arriving, the challenge we faced was how to support the writing of these teacher researchers to optimize their chances of getting published. One way in which we assisted teachers was by offering close, careful, and safe readings of their manuscripts. Many did not understand and, as a result, feared the formal peer-review process. Tracy read through their drafts, keeping in mind the key features of published teacher research that she had identified through her professional readings and conversations with the editors. She wrote extensive comments directly on the manuscripts along with a letter of suggestions for revising.

A problem we encountered, however, was that teachers often struggled with implementing those recommendations because they were not experienced with using review comments to guide revisions. To address this we put together an exemplar packet of published articles by teacher researchers .These articles became a highly useful teaching tool because they offered concrete examples of the successful use of writing strategies that Tracy and the editors were suggesting in their review comments.

Another issue was that teacher researchers were often not familiar with the range of journals where they might publish their work. Tracy contacted editors of professional journals that publish teacher research, inquiring into their experience with publishing this research and advice in supporting teacher writers in successfully fulfilling their submission guidelines. These editors expressed enthusiasm for the project and strongly encouraged us to recommend that participants submit to their journals, suggesting that the interest in publishing teacher research was high and the writing valued. Also evident was their struggle with finding teacher research to publish. One editor noted that they got very few submissions that were "true" teacher research. Instead, most came from university professors who were reflecting on their prior practices as teachers or from graduate students who were completing classroom research as part of their coursework, often resulting in research that seemed contrived.

Although some kind of writing community is usually integral to writing successfully, teachers rarely belong to communities where they can benefit from the support and encouragement for writing that are commonly found in university settings. Being part of a writing community that can meet together is ideal, but we found that having someone who is willing to be a writing buddy could provide the support needed to encourage teacher researchers to continue in their writing. We defined a writing buddy as someone who supports novice writers by providing feedback on manuscripts, relaying information related to the publication process, and offering encouragement through what can be a long and intimidating process, especially when reviewers ask the author to revise the manuscript for another round of reviews.

Being a writing buddy was one of the most significant roles Tracy played in her work with teacher writers. One teacher researcher reflected,

> *Your feedback arrived today. Thank you for putting so much time into reading my article. After all your work, I can't stop now, so I will persevere. You will receive my next version in due course. Once again, I appreciate all your effort.*

Through the Mentoring Teacher Researchers in Writing for Publication project, we were able to support teacher researchers in getting their work accepted for publication and in establishing contacts that helped bring together different groups of teacher researchers and teacher educators. We also learned a great deal about the challenges that teacher researchers face in writing for publication and the obstacles that often prevent their manuscripts from being seriously considered by journal reviewers and editors.

The Challenges of Shaping Teacher Research into Journal Articles

Based on our interactions with the manuscripts of teacher researchers over the past five years, we have identified some of the common problems that hinder these manuscripts from being accepted in a particular type of professional journal. This type of professional journal is a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal that reaches out to a broad audience of teachers and teacher educators with accessible articles that reflect on theory, research, and/or practice, such as *Language Arts, The Reading Teacher*, *Science and Children, Social Education,* and *Teaching Children Mathematics*. Many teacher researchers prefer to write for this type of journal because they want to share their work with other teachers as well as to teacher educators who interact with preservice and inservice teachers. Some teacher researchers, however, want their work to count as "formal" scholarly research and to directly inform the research community. Their focus is on writing research reports for research journals and so they face a different set of writing challenges than the ones we discuss here.

Many of the issues that we identified through our work with teacher researchers resulted from the use of manuscript formats that were not appropriate for a professional journal. In particular, many sent manuscripts in the form of course papers. Sometimes this was because the research was originally written as a course paper or thesis, and other times because this format was the most familiar to them even though they were no longer in university contexts.

The intended audience for course papers is typically a university professor and other students within the course as reflected in the format and the voice used for the paper. Often, there is too much assumed knowledge between the writer and the professor because of the shared context of the course and of personal knowledge about the teaching situation that is lost once the manuscript goes to reviewers. Typically, a course paper is not crafted enough as a piece of writing and there is not enough depth in the analysis and reflection—a result of having to develop and complete a project as well as to write about it within the fairly short time frame of a course. Commonly, a course paper is written not for the purpose of engaging a reader, but for reporting to the professor on what was done and so there is too much description and not enough reflection on the data. The course paper may be excellent, but not suitable to share with the broader field without significant revision.

This is not to say that course papers do not contain the content or potential to be a published article. Teale (1992) points out that giving professors what they want has similarities to writing for a professional journal in that a journal is produced by real people with strong beliefs about what is right for the field. He goes on to say, however, that, "it is not simply giving the editors what they want. It's more the case of giving the field what it needs. An editorial board helps to ensure that breadth of perspective is brought to bear in making a decision on a particular manuscript" (p. 110).

Helping teacher writers see how their papers could be crafted into an article was

a central challenge of our work and focused around issues such as using a teacher voice, writing from a point of tension, integrating theory within the manuscript, reflecting on research findings, having a central focus, using supportive classroom examples, avoiding teacher heroism, and considering the broader implications of the research.

1. Writing in the Voice of a Teacher

One common struggle we noted was that some teacher writers wrote in a voice that was removed from their own voices as classroom teachers, particularly in the introductions to their manuscripts. Often these pieces began with a stance of "this is what I'm going to do" (a feature of course papers), or opened up with a long formal literature review as opposed to engaging readers by getting them into the classroom right away. We suspect that often this distant voice resulted from teachers' misperceptions about what professional journals expect in an article. Fleischer (1994) explains that the problem of teacher researchers writing in this way is that they are trying "to reconcile the irreconcilable: they consider the problem, see the data, and write up their studies in terms that cannot describe their work" (p. 102). We encouraged teachers to write in a conversational first person voice and to begin their manuscripts using this voice to share the tensions that led to their initial questions. One strategy that we suggested to teacher researchers because it had been useful for us personally was presenting our research at local conferences before writing so we could develop an organization for sharing the work and so our voice flowed more naturally when we went to write.

Because one of the strengths of teacher research is that it is based in the real life of classrooms, we worked with teacher researchers to find ways to signal that context and to use their own voice. An effective way of inviting the reader into the classroom is by opening the article with a classroom vignette that sets the context for the central focus or tension, indicating to the reader that the piece is written from the perspective of a teacher. For example, Lundsford's (1997) article on literature-based mini-lessons begins with, "One day during writer's workshop, Emily raised her hand. She was trying to draw a picture of a puppy sitting on a doorstep. The holes worn through her paper by her eraser told me she attempted this task many times before" (p.42). Immediately the reader knows this writer is in the classroom observing a phenomenon that will be significant to what is presented in the piece. This opening vignette is not just an interesting story from the classroom but one that reflects and establishes the focus of the article.

Other effective strategies that we saw teacher researchers use included beginning with student artifacts, such as entries from student logs (Monahan, 2003), or a short interview or discussion transcript, followed by the researcher's reflections. Another opening strategy was for the teacher to reflect on a tension that could no longer be ignored and that sometimes came from other sources outside the classroom or within the teacher's own thinking. For example, Cook (2005) began by reflecting on the tension of realizing that the advice she gave to parents of what to do at home with their children was not advice she followed in her own home.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) argue that teacher researchers are "uniquely positioned to provide a truly emic, or insider's, perspective that makes visible the ways that students and teachers together construct knowledge and curriculum" (p. 43). We encouraged teacher researchers to write from this "unique position" and to not feel that they needed to silence this voice in order to appear "scholarly."

2. Writing from a Position of Tension

Another important distinction between course papers, reports of projects, and book chapters (all of which are often more familiar to teacher researchers) is that a journal article is based in reflecting on a specific tension, not just reporting on what happened in the classroom or covering a particular topic. A journal article offers a fresh perspective; some insight or twist to what is already out there in the field. Some of the pieces that teachers sent to us were good examples of putting ideas into practice that other educators were talking about, but they did not offer new insights. We worked with these writers to refocus their manuscript around the tension that led them to that research, instead of just describing their practice. That tension might lead teacher researchers to develop practices and ideas that are new to the field or to revisit familiar practices to generate new insights for themselves and their readers. Descriptions of how to do writing workshop and teacher/student conferencing are not new for most classroom teachers, but trying to understand why some children resist teachers' suggestions within these conferences provides the potential for going beyond description (Nickel, 2001). Even when a practice is not new, a manuscript can challenge others to think differently about a particular practice or understand it from a different theoretical perspective.

3. Writing within a Theoretical Frame

Another common struggle for teacher writers was how to ground their work within the professional field of literature and how to write up that theory effectively. Too often, and again this speaks to the problems associated with course papers, writers either put all the theoretical grounding into one section, usually at the beginning of the piece as would be done in writing a formal paper, or they include little to no theory at all.

The problem with putting all of the theory up front is that readers can quickly lose interest because it takes so long to get to the actual heart of the article. In addition, a long literature review section tends to become a research synthesis that is separate from the data and, therefore, from being used to make sense of that data. We encouraged teacher researchers to weave the theory and discussions of related research into the piece, briefly discussing the key theory that informed their research right after the introduction to provide a theoretical frame for the rest of the article. As the piece evolves, other relevant theory and research studies could be used to discuss their interpretations of that data to reach new understandings. Integrating the professional literature throughout the manuscript helped writers develop deeper

and more reflective insights to share from their data and also provided readers with a much stronger understanding of the theory. It is easy as a reader to skip a long literature review section and so gain little understanding about the theoretical arguments and ideas that grow out of that study.

Some teacher researchers took the opposite approach and had little or no theory in their manuscripts. Instead, they described what they did and what they found but without a theoretical frame or reference to the broader professional literature. We found they often viewed our request to add more connections to the professional literature as just a matter of locating some citations to sprinkle throughout their manuscript and as a "hang-up" of university professors. They failed to grasp that without the theoretical grounding to frame their discussions of the data, the manuscript remained at the level of a descriptive report with a surface-level analysis. They needed a theoretical frame to dig deeply enough into the data to offer readers something new to think about. In addition, when the theory is not sufficient, reviewers do not see the piece as representing the journals' intent of generating knowledge and so typically reject it for publication. The decision to submit a manuscript to a professional journal is a decision to inform the larger field and so teacher researchers have a responsibility to position their work within that field.

4. Writing to Reflect on Research Findings

The problem of manuscripts that only describe classroom practice or report on the research was one we addressed over and over again. We pointed out to teacher researchers that journal articles for our type of professional journal were not reports or *descriptions of* a particular project, research study, or classroom practice, but were instead *reflections on* research, theory, and practice. Instead of writing a report that overviewed the study, our readers wanted the primary focus of the article to be around reflections on findings from that study that could inform their own practices and beliefs. They wanted a brief discussion of the study design, methods, and questions as a quick context for a focused look at some particular aspect of the findings from the study. Instead of reporting on all of the findings, we worked with teacher researchers to select a particular set of findings that were of most interest and reflect on only those findings for an audience of other teachers.

5. Writing around a Central Focus

A related issue to the tendency to write a report was the difficulty of choosing a central focus for the manuscript and framing the entire manuscript around that focus. Teacher researchers have typically spent a great deal of time living with the research and gathering a wealth of data, which is both a resource and a burden. And, as is typical of classroom research, the research has often gone in multiple directions that reflect the complexity of classrooms and learners.

We often found that teacher researchers tried to write about all of those directions and so failed to say enough about any one of these foci to provide depth

to the article. We worked with them to figure out what they most wanted to say. What was the issue or tension that was THE central focus for this manuscript? One strategy that helped was looking at a draft and listing all the possible foci within that draft and then asking teacher researchers to make a decision about which one they wanted to be the central focus for this particular piece. We found that once they saw a list of foci that had been extracted from their manuscript, they were able to reflect on that list and figure out their goal for this manuscript. We also pointed out that the other foci would not drop out of the manuscript but would be discussed within that central focus. Once a teacher researcher had chosen a particular central focus, we encouraged that writer to center the entire article around that focus, so that this focus was explicitly stated in the introduction, used to select the theoretical frame and the findings to share from the study, and returned to in the final conclusions and recommendations.

6. Writing from within the Details of Classroom Life

One strength of teacher research is the availability of incredibly rich data sources for analysis and for sharing with other educators. We found that sometimes, however, teacher researchers failed to use that data to provide examples to support statements they were making from their research. They made general statements about children or the classroom, but did not include specific examples of transcripts, field notes, or artifacts that provided support for those statements. The details of their classroom life seemed to have become so commonplace for them that they failed to realize that readers need those details to bring the classroom alive and to evaluate that data and consider alternative interpretations. One strategy we suggested for selecting details of classroom life was to search through the data for what Hubbard and Power (1999) call "break through moments" in the research. Teacher researchers can then illustrate in their writing what they saw, felt, heard, and struggled within those moments.

When teacher researchers do not provide details to support their findings, they expect readers to simply accept what is said as "truth." The details are what allow readers to connect those statements to their own lived experiences in classrooms and to gain a deeper understanding of these ideas. Teale (1992) lists several characteristics he observed as an editor in teacher-authored manuscripts that set them apart, including discussions of specific children the teacher worked with, as well as programs, activities, and resources that grew out of the teacher's experience in the classroom. "What you'll see is that these authors talked specifics, they talked about learning and teaching, and they talked about children" (p. 113). We found that the specifics of classroom life were what brought a teacher research article alive and made it compelling and engaging for readers.

7. Writing about Problematic Aspects of Classroom Life

Another common problem was teacher heroism. Teachers often wrote themselves heroically, rather than from the place of tension that led to their original inquiries. It is this place of tension that has the greatest potential for offering fresh

and honest insight into the field. Many teachers, however, tended to write about a problem they identified and how they solved their problem through innovative teaching techniques that appeared to have been implemented without a hitch, yielding miraculous results. We understood this tendency, considering that when we have finished researching or reflecting thoughtfully on a long-term classroom project, we are excited. By the time teachers write up their projects, what they have done in the classroom is working, and so they are "in the afterglow." Other teachers who live the day-to-day realities of teaching find this kind of reporting unreal and the ideas impossible to implement.

Newkirk (1992), concerned about this tendency, describes the problem of "creating the role of 'super teacher,' one more ideal, without cracks, that creates a sense of inadequacy in all of us" (p.23). Newkirk suggests these stories do not reflect the emotional complexity of teaching, and that forums are needed where teachers share honestly their failure stories as well.

8. Writing beyond the Study

Some teacher researchers ended their manuscripts with a summary of their study findings, but without connecting the study to the broader field. They failed to address the "so what" question that haunts all researchers—"So you have done this study and learned these things, but so what? What does your study have to do with anything else?" Their manuscript remained a nice story about classroom life, but the point of the story was not clear. Instead of writing a summary to end the manuscript, we asked them to think about the ending as a final reflection on how the study has informed and challenged their thinking and practice as well as that of other educators and the broader field. We encouraged them to return to their theoretical frame and their central focus in this reflection and to write about the implications of the study for theory and practice.

This final reflection is essential if teacher research is to be viewed as adding knowledge to the field. Some teacher researchers primarily focused on the theoretical understandings that their study generated by revisiting their theoretical frame to reflect on how their data added to existing theory and research as well as is informed by it. Others focused on recommendations for practice based on their findings or reflected on how the research has affected their thinking and practice in the classroom. In both cases, however, this final reflection took readers beyond the study into thinking about their own work as educators and researchers. The final reflection also often included a discussion of the lingering tensions and new questions growing out of this teacher research, indicating the lifelong nature of teacher learning and inquiry.

Challenges within the Review Process

We found that some teacher researchers were hesitant to submit their work to a professional journal because they were unfamiliar with the review process and not

sure how to proceed or what to expect and whether or not their work would even be considered. Others had submitted their work to a journal, but their initial submission was rejected and so they had given up. Several aspects of the review process were particularly challenging.

Many teacher researchers were surprised at being asked to make revisions beyond a few fix-ups of conventions and clarifying details and did not realize that lots of revision is the norm, not an exception (Jalongo, 2002). Additionally, they were surprised at the length of the publication process for a peer-reviewed journal. Because of the support structure that we had developed where Tracy worked with teacher researchers who were novice writers for a number of drafts before the manuscript went into the peer-review process, the time frame was even longer as were the number of drafts. Many had only experienced writing course papers where there might be time for one rough draft before handing the paper in. One teacher researcher shared,

> *The best way to improve the process is to find a way to speed up the acceptance and publication process. For me it has taken a couple of years, and though I have other good ideas for another article, I don't feel motivated enough to follow through until I actually see the first one in print. Of course, I do realize that since it is my first time, there is a learning curve to be taken into account.*

Additionally, teacher researchers did not realize that they would receive both reviewers' and editors' comments and that they needed to focus on the editors' suggestions in making revisions. They needed support in recognizing that if the editors did not comment on something raised by a peer reviewer, either the editors did not agree with the reviewer or were leaving that particular suggestion to the discretion of the writer.

Novice writers also were not sure what to do when an editor or reviewer asked them to make a revision that violated the intent of the article. We suggested that they first try to understand the problem. By asking the editor for clarification about the issue, they might then be able to propose an alternative solution. If there was no alternative, then we explained that they had the right as an author to not make that revision and to write an explanation to the editor for their decision. One teacher researcher withdrew her manuscript after being invited to revise and resubmit, because she did not agree with an editorial suggestion for revision and assumed she had no option except to do what the editor suggested if she wanted to be published.

Last, sometimes teacher researchers thought that a revise and resubmit decision was a rejection and so did not resubmit. Other times, they decided to resubmit, but did not attend closely to the due date, given by the editors, because they did not realize the reality of the tight deadlines that journal editors have to deal with, particularly in a themed journal. They were unaware that very few manuscripts are accepted for publication when submitted to a journal and that the majority of manuscripts published in a journal go through a revise and resubmit process before being accepted. We could provide reassurance that their experiences were the norm and part of the

process. In addition, many did not realize that they could use the suggestions from a letter of rejection to revise the manuscript and send it to another journal.

Final Reflections

The problems we have described did not exist in all manuscripts; they are problems that exist for many novice (and some experienced) writers of journal articles, not just teacher researchers. These problems were not the only challenges we encountered as we assisted authors in revising their work. Each manuscript was unique, with its own set of needs to be addressed. Because of the structures we had created, we were able to work with many of these authors individually. These observations represent what we identified as the most common challenges, and they helped us establish initial needs to address in order to optimize teachers' chances of getting their work published. These observations provided Tracy with direction as to how to proceed in her interactions with teacher writers in encouraging them to submit their work for publication and in supporting these writers with their writing and publishing. Once Tracy finished her work with the grant and returned to full-time teaching, Kathy and the other editors were able to use these insights and strategies as part of their regular work as editors to encourage the publication of teacher research. Because of their workload, they had to be selective and choose manuscripts that seemed to have the most potential to offer new insights for the field, but they were able to provide specific revision suggestions to teacher researchers who submitted to the journal but whose manuscripts needed more mentoring before being publishable. The packet of articles that provided examples of particular revision strategies continued to be very helpful for authors.

The most important lesson learned from this project was the power of establishing personal relationships with teacher writers as a way of supporting them in working toward publication. Tracy's role as a writing buddy and her personal contacts seem to be what participants found most useful. One teacher researcher commented to Tracy that, "Having one person to keep me on track was very helpful. You also gave me constructive feedback, which helped a lot. The sample article was also helpful." Another participant noted the importance of moving into a relationship, noting that, "In a very short time we went from being formal to being comfortable enough for me to ask seemingly inane questions like, "What does the reviewer mean by the word [sic]?" and protesting, "But I like this cliche. It says it to a t," or, "Are the verb tenses OK?"

We recognize that the role of a journal editor in a large peer-review journal precludes the formation of this kind of relationship due to time and to the evaluative nature of that role. Most editors' workloads are such that they cannot work with someone over long periods of time such as we have done with potential authors who participated in this project. The implementation of writing buddies is an alternative track for novice writers that can be established by journal editors. The project

provided us with structures, resources, and writing guidelines that could be used to support a group of educators who are willing to work with potential writers. For example, there are a number of teachers in our community who have finished their doctorates and are working in local schools and who know about teacher research and writing for journals. There's also a pool of graduate students and teachers who know journals and who could be contacted through the various teacher research networks. They are committed to teacher research and have been involved in publishing. These individuals could potentially be collaborators with journal editors in increasing the possibility of more teachers writing for publication. Furthermore, because of technology, a writing buddy can be long distance.

We know that these individuals will still need some guidance in figuring out how to support other writers and in being metacognitive about the process of writing for a journal. Our goal is to take the understandings discussed in this article about the common writing problems faced by teacher researchers and to use these to develop guidelines for this type of network. The guidelines will need specific examples pulled from journal articles to actually be useful. We also want to continue to develop our list of published articles that are good examples of successful approaches to these problems.

One major issue that remains, however, is the challenge of searching out and inviting teacher researchers to submit a manuscript to a journal. At least half of the manuscripts we published from teacher researchers did not come in through the normal calls for manuscripts but through personal invitations to submit to the journal through an electronic teacher research or writing project network or through attending conference sessions given by teacher researchers. The invitation was followed up with emails and personal contact to encourage and support the teacher researcher in moving from intention to action. We recognize the difficulty of returning to a context of full-time teaching where there is no time, expectation, incentive, or support for writing, and being able to resist those pressures to work on a draft to submit, especially when the chances of that draft being rejected remain so high for most peer-review journals. Clearly, there is a tremendous need for structures that go beyond the ones we have discussed here.

If teachers develop the strategies, incentive, and forums to write and publish their important research, then we are creating contexts where teachers find and transform their voice. Teachers' unique position to document the complexity of classrooms and teaching through making known their insights and experiences expand the conversations that are necessary if long-term solutions to the complex problems facing schools are to occur. Through writing and publishing, teachers, along with teacher educators, administrators, parents, students, and other members of the educational community can together explore the complex life of schools and move beyond offering narrow solutions to respond to complex problems. We see this as a collaboration that benefits all members of the field.

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