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Demystifying Publishing: A Collaborative Exchange Between Graduate Student and Supervisor

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Bonny: Hi Ena. I have an idea I'd like to share with you. I've been invited to contribute to a collection of articles in an edited volume, *Writing for Publication: Behind the Scenes in Language Education*. Because the audience for this publication includes graduate students, I wonder if you'd like to coauthor the chapter with me. I'm hoping we can enter into a discussion about some of the questions that you have about writing for publication. I'm sure that your questions would echo those of many graduate students in the field of language education. Also, writing on this topic with a real person in mind will help make my writing a lot more focused and enjoyable. Are you interested?

Ena: Of course! This is a great way to clear up what I'm sure are my own misconceptions about the world of publishing. It'll also compel me to face (and, I hope, resolve) my own fears about publication and graduate studies—fears that I know, talking with my fellow classmates, are not just my own. If you ask graduate students interested in pursuing academic careers what one of their greatest worries is, I wouldn't be at all surprised if the word *publishing* was at the top of the list. Hearing such phrases as *publish or perish* constantly reminds us how integral this activity is to

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our future careers and forces us to face this fact. What is it about publishing that causes so much anxiety and panic in students?

Bonny: If it's any consolation, when I was a graduate student, I had exactly the same fears as you. When I had completed an honors thesis in applied linguistics in South Africa, I was encouraged to publish it. However, I had no idea where to start—and I was doubtful that anybody would be interested in the work of an unknown student in an isolated region of the world. I had done a good deal of reading and knew the work of many scholars, but everybody seemed so remote—geographically and intellectually. It was difficult for me to connect with a larger scholarly community. This is why, in my graduate classes, I show videos of scholars that are well-known in the field; I discuss the scholars I have met and talked to; I examine the controversies around published work. My purpose is not only to demystify publishing, but to demystify authors.

It's comforting to hear that you had the same concerns about publishing when you were a grad student. Most of the time when I read articles or books, I don't think about the processes the authors went through to get to this point in their writing and publishing careers. I forget that at one point they were graduate students like me trying to find their own niche. I guess I'm fortunate in my opportunity right now to be able to talk with someone who has been there and has gone through the very same process that I'm about to embark on. But where to begin?

Bonny: I wonder if it's helpful to think about publishing without first thinking about ideas. For me, publishing is the final part of a process that begins with an idea, a question, a desire to understand. As I have moved from place to place during my academic career, I've been confronted with questions about the way learning and teaching are structured in the diverse communities I have lived in. I've always asked myself whether I can make a difference to the opportunities to learn in that community—whether I'm working with children, adolescents, or adults. It's been through grappling with the complexities of teaching and working in a given place, at a particular time, that I have sought to document, reflect on, and investigate my practice. The rigor involved in attempting to articulate my ideas through the written word helps me to make sense of my teaching, my community, and myself.

I know that your current research interests revolve around issues of identity and language learning. So you're saying that you look

at your publishing as a means of reflection or self-reflection—as a way of sorting through issues like these that are important to you?

Bonny: Yes, I think that moving from one place to another, one country to the next, has led me to question where I belong; how I can meet my different responsibilities as scholar, mother, teacher, daughter, friend; what contribution I can make to both my local and international community. Because I have worked with diverse groups of immigrants, younger and older, I have seen them grappling with similar issues. It was access to poststructuralist theory that liberated me from the desire to make my life coherent and reconcile my multiple identities. And it was a great relief to know that I did not have to abandon my history as I moved from place to place! Because such theory was so influential in my own life, I wondered to what extent it might be helpful in understanding the experiences of diverse language learners. When I saw how powerful the theory was in relation to my research, I wanted to share my insights with a larger community.

Ena: I guess publishing is one way that we communicate with others, especially in our field. It's a way of sharing our interests and our research findings. It's this open forum, however, that worries me! I know for myself, my fear of publishing stems from my fear of being revealed for the fraud that I am. After all, what makes me think I have anything of worth to say, let alone anything people would actually want to read about? Perhaps even more frightening, what happens if what I write is wrong? That is, what if someone well-respected in my field reads my work and feels compelled to respond to it only because they can't believe that someone would say such dumb things? Who knows? Maybe I'm being a bit too melodramatic, but these are the concerns I've been grappling with for a while. There are also a lot more basic concerns that prevent me from even getting anywhere near my fear of rejection and ultimate "exposure." For example, what do I write about? How do I write? Where do I write? There are so many questions I want to clear up.

Bonny: I'm not sure that all the questions you have will be cleared up. If the answers were simple, somebody would have retired early with a how-to book! Although I've learned a great deal through experience, I've found that learning to write for publication is an ongoing process, involving constant surprises. But I do understand how vulnerable you feel as a newcomer to the publishing community. Every time we enter new communities, whether

they are publishing communities, sporting communities, or workplace communities, we take risks. We don't know how much of our history will be valued, and we are uncertain about the contribution we can make to the new community. And just when we think we have a handle on the community, it changes! The publishing community is no more stable than other communities: debates shift; editors come and go; editorial boards change. So how do we proceed, Ena?

Ena: I guess I'd like to start off with questions about the writing process, since that's where it all logically starts. Thinking about what to publish is probably the most difficult part of the process. Then I'd like to investigate more closely the contentious (at least for me) issues of authorship and ownership and the politics of publishing. I would think that publishing involves going through a certain amount of red tape. And finally, there are so many details about publication structure and even etiquette that, although mundane, seem important to ask ...

Bonny: I also have some questions for you. What has been your experience of writing thus far in your career? It would be good to know your own particular history with research and collaboration. Could you fill me in as we go along?

FROM TERM PAPER TO PUBLICATION

Okay, well, so far, my writing experiences have been limited to term papers and other types of writing that students have to do for courses. But since the beginning of my graduate program, I've been told that whenever we have to write a paper for a course, we should approach the task as if it were potentially publishable. Talk about pressure. Most students have enough trouble writing term papers as it is without having now to worry about trying to get them published. This might explain, however, why, in most cases, we've been given the liberty to choose our own topics of research for term papers. In a small way, this freedom makes the challenge of writing that much more bearable. I'd like to think that I choose topics for term papers that I'm personally interested in learning more about; however, if I think about term papers as potential journal articles, then all of a sudden choosing a topic isn't just about what interests me. Perhaps my first question then is: When students write papers for courses, what is more important to consider: our own interests, publishers' interests, what's cur-

rently being researched in the field, or new innovations (which can be difficult)?[1]

Bonny: I am guilty of advising students to write a potentially publishable paper for their term papers. I do this because when I entered the PhD program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto, I had already completed an undergraduate degree, an honors degree, and an MA degree, and I had spent many years agonizing about what my professors thought of me and my work. By the time I reached the PhD, I wanted to wean myself from dependence on the views of my professors. It wasn't that I didn't care what they thought, I simply wanted to enter into a healthier relationship with them. The only way I could do this was to widen the audience for my work: Instead of writing for my professors, I tried to write for a larger community. I saw each graduate course as a window on a different scholarly community within the larger field of language education, and as I read diverse texts from that community, I felt more comfortable about contributing to it. Clearly, the challenge was to see whether there was a match between my own interests and the interests of this community. When I encourage students to write a term paper that is potentially publishable, I'm trying to encourage students to think of themselves as members of larger scholarly communities, and I'd also like students to think about the possible contributions they can make to such communities.

Ena: Hmm ... "members of larger scholarly communities" ... I've always felt so overwhelmed by the whole concept of being a part of a scholarly community. You read so much throughout your academic studies, and although not all of it is absolutely profound, sometimes you read something that's just amazing. "Wow!", you know? And then you think, "I'll never be able to match that." It sets up almost impossibly high publishing standards in grad students' minds. Yeah, but then again, afterwards you'll read other articles that are NOT so great and you realize, "Oh. My mistake."

But seriously though, I assume that writing for a general audience is a lot different from writing for your professor or for yourself. Up to now, I've written term papers with a closed audience

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[1] In an aside, though, are there such things as new innovations anyway? Pennycook (1996) argued that "language use is marked far more by the circulation and recirculation of words and ideas than by a constant process of creativity" (p. 207). He quoted Goethe, who said, "everything clever has already been thought; one must only try to think it again" (cited in Pennycook, 1996, p. 208).

in mind. I've depended on knowing that the professor has a pretty good grasp on what I'm writing about. That is, although writing clearly and concisely is never far from my mind during my writing process, I know that there is a certain amount of information that I don't need to touch on in my paper or include for reasons of brevity or redundancy. However, now that I have to worry about readers who may not come from the same field or have the same knowledge base as me, I wonder how I need to adapt my writing process. This relates to my next question: How does writing for publication differ from writing a term paper? For example, how much theoretical background or history do you need to give your readers in order to set up your current work? Does any of this depend on which journal you choose to submit to?

Bonny: To some extent, writing a term paper is not very different from writing for publication. Even if you have your professor in mind, you still need to make assumptions about what that professor does or doesn't know. In fact, most professors don't want you to make assumptions about what they know; they want to know if you, as the graduate student, are familiar with the literature the professor knows and whether you can integrate it with your own research. So when I wrote my term papers at graduate school, I tried not to rely on the professor's background knowledge. Instead, I always tried to link my experience with the broader literature—not only to gain a better understanding of my own work, but also to find out where the gaps in the literature might be. In general, I would identify one or two journals that might be interested in the topic of my term paper. Because each journal already has a broadly defined audience, I would write the term paper with this broadly defined audience in mind and provide as much background as I thought the average reader would need to have in order to make sense of my paper. Simple, eh?

WHICH JOURNAL?

Ena: Yeah, right. Easier said than done! Anyway, I see that you've touched on my next question about choosing journals for publication. I mean, there are so many different journals out there. Where does one begin? I doubt that in the publishing world, all journals are created equal. I think it goes without saying that if a journal is published with the same paper, format, or tone as the *National Enquirer* as opposed to in a more permanent (and more respectable, in some readers' opinions) bound form, we can safely assume that they are held up to different standards. That

said, I guess the question is: How does one choose a journal to submit to? Or, alternatively, how does a journal choose you?

Bonny: On the question of the *National Enquirer*, you'd be interested to know that the research I've been doing with *Archie* comics is considered by some scholars as not "real" research because comics are deemed educationally undesirable. Not properly bound! It's been a bit of a battle to convince some colleagues that this is respectable research. So to gain legitimacy, I feel a need to have the research published in a journal that is particularly well-respected in the field. Much research, however, is not this contentious. The way I see it is that different journals represent different communities, and when I choose to submit my work to a particular journal, it's because it represents a community I would like to have some affiliation with. Because I enjoy being part of a variety of communities, I send different aspects of my work to different journals. For example, if I'm working on a project that has particular relevance to language education in Canada, I would submit my work to the *Canadian Modern Language Review* or the *TESL Canada Journal*. If I'm working on a project that may have broader relevance to the field of language education, I would submit my work to the *TESOL Quarterly*, *Applied Linguistics*, or the *Harvard Educational Review*. Clearly, whenever I choose a particular journal, I try to ensure that I am up to date with current issues in that journal and that I can link my work to existing debates.

Ena: That sounds pretty overwhelming. As much as I'd like to have my hands in as many cookie jars as possible, I'm intimidated enough about just getting into one journal, let alone a number at the same time! It sounds like there are so many publishing opportunities we can choose from, but for some reason, I always thought that for a graduate student, it would be next to impossible to get published because of stiff competition and incredibly high publishing standards. Because of this, I always fear that my work is destined to occupy the pages of only the most obscure journals in my field. And with the mantra publish or perish, I'm torn about whether this is a good or bad thing. I figure at some point, I'll just have to take what I can get; however, my question is: If your work is only being accepted and published in journals with limited distribution, is that bad? As they say, any publicity is good publicity, but when publishing is so crucial, to what degree should we be more concerned about quality versus quantity?

Bonny: An "obscure" journal to one person is very central to another, and I think all writing should reflect our very best efforts. I think that no matter where we publish our work, the quality should be never be in question. It may be that one publication turns out to be more significant than another, but I think every publication should reflect careful and meticulous scholarship. Having said this, I don't think every written contribution needs to be ground-breaking. There are many ways that both novice and established scholars can contribute to a field: Book reviews are central in many journals; forum pieces are important; "notes from the classroom" are welcome; published interviews are engaging. All of these contributions reflect a scholar's interest in and commitment to a field.

Ena: Interesting—I never thought about publishing in this way. I always had this vision that because I'm a graduate student, I would need to prove myself through groundbreaking research, and it's this pressure to produce seminal work that has made me so nervous about publication. I must admit, I'm very relieved to hear that this isn't the case.

Bonny: But Ena, I expect you to produce seminal work!!

PHD THESIS TO BOOK

Ena: Umm ... let's just start with that "publishable term paper" and work from there, okay?! Anyway, Bonny, I understand that your book *Identity and Language Learning* (Norton, 2000a) is based on your doctoral thesis. I know that this sort of publishing (from a thesis to a book) has been done by many people. So I'm wondering, what is the process one goes through to publish a thesis (either a master's or a PhD) into a book or into articles? I know this is a broad question, but if most of what we write for a course should be geared towards publication, it only makes sense that your most ambitious research paper would be aimed for some degree of major publication. Also, related to this question, I've wondered about issues of recycling and reusing previously published work. I ask this question because a colleague and I have noticed that a particular prominent professor in an English as a second language (ESL) field turned his thesis into a seminal book. However, we have since noticed that many of his articles in different journals seem eerily similar to chapters of his book. This leads me to ask: Can you submit the same article to other journals even af-

ter it's been published somewhere else? Or do you have to re-work it to some degree first?

Bonny: As you suggest, Ena, it certainly makes sense to publish aspects of your PhD thesis in article or book form. Since PhD work is expected to make a contribution to a given field, it would be a waste not to seek publication in some form or other. The advice that was given to me was to publish different aspects of my thesis in the form of a number of refereed journal articles, and then, if there was interest in my work, rewrite the thesis as a book. The important point is that refereed journals seek work that has been previously unpublished, while publishers of books are some-what less stringent. In fact, book publishers prefer to publish authors whose work has already been well-received by peers.

Sometimes, when I'm invited to write on a previously published topic for an edited collection of book chapters, I ask if I can submit a reprint. I do this not because I am unwilling to make changes to a previously published article, but because I don't want to pass off previously published work as original. For this reason, my practice is to keep the original title and text so that there can be no confusion in the reader's mind. Reprints, however, are often not considered desirable to publishers. As far as refereed journals are concerned, the accepted practice is that work that has been submitted for publication should not have been published elsewhere. Clearly, however, one project can have different facets to it and thus more than one publication associated with it. Each publication, however, would assume a distinct scholarly community and a different set of research questions, review of the literature, and analysis.

Ena: Okay, so there should be new angles to our research—looking at it through different lenses. Also, your answer reminds me of how important it is to think about the journal's potential audience when writing anything for publication. I guess a change in audience alone warrants reanalysis and a certain degree of rewriting of your research. Going back to the thesis-to-book question for a moment though, in trying to get our theses published, is there anything we can do—like make connections with editors or network with others in the field? That is, besides schmoozing like a pro, do you have any other suggestions for graduate students?

Bonny: I think that if you want to have your work taken up by a field, whether you wish to publish a thesis or write a journal article, it

helps to show a certain commitment to the field. I am always amazed when people turn up at conferences, expecting a full house at their own presentations, but then spend the rest of the conference on the beach! I see the networking you talk about as an opportunity to share ideas and discuss issues relevant to the field. Presenting at conferences is an important part of this process. I think that if editors and publishers see that you have an active interest in the field, they are more likely to show an interest in your work. Sometimes, however, a publisher might consider the topic of your thesis alone sufficiently interesting to warrant publication, even if the author is not particularly active in the field.

OWNERSHIP OF WORK

Ena: Onto more political matters: So Bonny, if I produce a publishable thesis, and you supervise it, who "owns" it? Alternatively, if I help you on one of your research projects, can I claim to "own" at least some of it? This relates to an issue I've thought a lot about: authorship and ownership in publishing. The notions of authorship and ownership are especially important to me because of the high regard I have for intellectual integrity and my awareness of the debate around the concept of intellectual property.[2]

Bonny: Talk about a can of worms! This is such an important question, with few guidelines available. My colleagues and I sometimes talk about this issue in the "corridor chats" in our building, but it seems everybody has their own take on what is appropriate practice. I also think that acceptable practice differs from one field to another, and from one discipline to the next. I've come to the conclusion that one has to make decisions on a case-by-case basis and be creative in trying to meet the needs and investments of all parties. I am sensitive to the fact that there is an unequal relation of power between graduate students and their supervisors or principal investigators and that graduate students may be reluctant to raise the issue of ownership with faculty. So in my meetings with graduate students and research assistants, I always put publishing on the agenda and try to have a frank discussion of the issues. Some students welcome the opportunity for joint authorship be-

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[2] I recognize that it has been argued that words and ideas cannot or should not be "owned." Miller (1990) argued against this commodification of language when he asserted, "words are shared assets, not personal belongings" (p. 79). Further, Pennycook (1996) asked, "in terms of what is understood as shared language or knowledge and particular language or knowledge: At what point does a phrase or an idea become owned? And at what point does it become public?" (p. 204).

cause they see this as part of the mentoring process; others prefer to take sole ownership of their particular contributions. I also recognize that although two people can set a particular agenda and define a set of expectations at the outset of a project, events may change in the process of data collection, analysis, and writing. During the course of a project, and particularly when preparing work for publication, I generally find it useful to revisit the original plan and determine if relative contributions have shifted.

Ena: There seem to be many complex issues involved in the ownership and publication of work, but there's also another issue: What about the way the work is read and interpreted by the larger community? Whenever I write a paper, it's obvious to the reader that I hold particular beliefs (usually strong) about what I'm researching. I'm not afraid to take very clear stances on issues. However, because of the nature of language itself and because published work is in the public domain, I would think that some people are inevitably going to misinterpret my beliefs or my work in general.[3] I know that misunderstandings happen all the time; however, I'm concerned about misunderstandings in such a public forum where people may start putting words into my mouth. What do you do when people misinterpret what you're trying to say?

Bonny: This is a very complex area. I know how disturbed I was when I read the *TESOL Quarterly* responses to my articles published in 1989 and 1995 (see Norton Peirce, 1989, 1995; see Dubois, 1990; Price, 1996). "How could the articles be read this way?" I asked myself. It should not have come as a surprise to me, however. In my own work (see Norton, 2000b; Norton & Stein, 2001; Norton Peirce, 1992), I've seen much evidence to the effect that the way an article is read may not necessarily be consistent with the way the author intended it to be read. Thus, in my view, the issue is not necessarily about misunderstanding, but about investment. Differ-

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[3]I relate this possibility of misinterpretation to Bakhtin's (1986) notion of "heteroglossia":

> Heteroglossia ... is *another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way.... It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse there are two voices, two meanings and two expressions. (p. 324)

Thus, words and utterances can carry many different meanings and interpretations depending on the context and the people involved. Every time the words are said, they have the possibility to take on entirely new meanings.

ent readers have diverse investments in a given text, and the way that they read the text is partly determined by their own histories, identities, and desires for the future. This is why Foucault (1979) talked of the death of the author. The larger question is one of meaning construction. Where does meaning originate? In the text, in the author, or in the interaction between reader, text, and author within a larger social context? The answer to this question depends to a large extent on which theories of meaning you consider most persuasive. It was from this perspective that I re-read the critiques and was thankful that I had been given the opportunity to elaborate on my research and theories.

I also got another nasty shock when I was doing some work on what I thought was an original idea: imagined communities. I had been working on the notion of resistance in language learning and had read some of Wenger's (1998) work on the role of imagination in learning. As I reflected on my data and his theories, I wondered to what extent language learner investments in what I called *imagined communities* were important in language learning. I was excited by this idea and wrote a paper on the topic (Norton, 2001). After the article was published and began to circulate, it was brought to my attention that Benedict Anderson (1983/1991) had written a whole book on imagined communities! Clearly, his context was very different from mine, but the notion of imagined communities was not as original as I had initially thought. After my initial embarrassment, I have found ways of incorporating Anderson's work into my research, and I've benefitted greatly from his insights.

JOINT AUTHORSHIPS

I think that to a certain degree, many, if not all, of the ideas we now hold have been shaped by those around us, especially in an academic setting. For example, whenever I write a term paper, I see so many different readings, professors, and colleagues reflected in my work.[4] If we relate this to the process of writing for

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[4]Bakhtin (1981, 1986) has written extensively on the notion of language appropriation and "dialogization":

> Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-own-ness," varying degrees of awareness and attachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate. (1986, p. 89)

Currie (1998) further pointed out, "the intertextuality of discourse renders it difficult indeed for any writer to be the sole originator of his or her words or ideas" (p. 1), thus challenging the notions of textual authorship and ownership. (For an interesting analysis of how children appropriate language, see Lensmire & Beals, 1994.)

publication, the circumstances of joint authorship, and the notions of authorship and ownership, it leads me to ask this burning question: At what point does a person's contribution warrant joint authorship? For example, people thank others in the acknowledgments section of an article. To what degree these people aided in the writing process, I don't know. Perhaps it was with words of encouragement; perhaps it was in the initial development stages; perhaps it was in the editing process. No matter what these circumstances may be, though, I think it's important to ask: What is the quantifiable boundary (if there is one) between a thank you and joint authorship?

A related question is whether it's easier to get published by doing joint work with an established person (case in point). I acknowledge, however, that opportunities such as these don't appear every day for most graduate students. Perhaps then, the question I should be asking is: Does one have a better chance of being published writing a joint paper? Or, more broadly, what is the industry view on jointly authored work? I ask this question from personal experience as I've written many term papers with other school colleagues. I've always wondered, from a publishing point of view, are two heads really better than one?[5] I realize that joint authorship doesn't always result in a good writing experience (spoken from experience), but when it does, the writing process is so much more rewarding (also spoken from experience). No matter what the result of the joint authorship experience, however, one is left with some serious implications around issues of authorship and ownership.

Bonny: Let me deal with the simpler question first. I don't think it's necessarily easier to get your work published if you write with an established person. This may be the case for an edited collection of articles, but not for a refereed journal article. Refereed journal articles are generally blind reviewed (i.e., the author doesn't know the reviewer, and the reviewer—generally—does not know the author). The question of a quantifiable boundary between a thank you and joint ownership is far more challenging. If a student, for example, makes a unique contribution to a given project, is active in data analysis, and contributes to the writing of a paper, the student can expect to be a coauthor; if the student only transcribes or proofreads transcripts (difficult though this is!), the student may

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[5]Roen and McNenny (1992), for example, seem to outline only negative attitudes toward jointly authored works in academia. In their arguments, adjectives such as "dishonourable and treasonable" (p. 2) and "suspicious" (p. 5) abound.

simply be acknowledged by the author. There are many grey areas between these two extremes, however, and these often need to be negotiated. On the question of thank you's, however, don't forget to acknowledge your funding sources!

One particularly successful example of how three of us resolved joint authorship challenges was the study on Levi Strauss that I undertook with Barbara Burnaby and Helen Harper while Helen and I were still graduate students at OISE (see Burnaby, Harper, & Norton Peirce, 1992; Norton Peirce, Harper, & Burnaby, 1993; Harper, Norton Peirce, & Burnaby, 1996). Barbara, a member of the faculty and principal investigator, had invited us to help her on a research project that investigated the workplace literacy practices at three Levi Strauss jeans factories in Canada. Helen and I did most of the data collection, but we met with Barbara on a regular basis. At the conclusion of the project, we produced three jointly authored publications. The first publication, in which Barbara was first author, described the study and summarized our central findings. The second article, with me as first author, provided a focus on second language learner issues in the three respective factories. The third article, with Helen as first author, focused on gender issues in literacy practices. All three researchers contributed to each of the three articles, but it was the first author who took on the major responsibility for writing, revising, and submitting the article for review.

CHALLENGES OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

That sounds both fair and logical. I posed the question about authorship and ownership because I am currently grappling with my own dilemma about joint authorship. Three years ago, I coauthored a paper with another student in my class. We had similar research interests and held similar stances on educational issues. We decided that it would make sense to work together on a major term paper, and so our process of joint authorship began. Each of us would do some readings and then make sense of the issues through constant dialogue with each other. We would then put our ideas into writing by dialoguing all the way through the typing process, taking turns typing while the other played devil's advocate in the constructing of each and every sentence. It was a collaborative paper in every sense of the word.

Three years have passed and we remain good friends. We both continue to pursue graduate studies, but our research interests have since diverged from the original paper three years earlier. Although our general research interests remain the same,

the major topic that once brought us together is no longer a common interest. I have since revised the paper so it now reflects my current interests. Some of the ideas are still recognizable from the original paper we wrote together; however, they have been modified, and new directions have been added. I have discussed issues of authorship and ownership with my colleague and we have agreed that we can use the original paper however we see fit; from an ethical standpoint, though, I am still torn. It would be nice to publish the paper as a sole author, but at the same time, I realize and admit that I wouldn't have had anything to revise or rework in the first place if it weren't for the ideas that my colleague and I originally developed together. The fate of the paper is still in limbo, in part because of this situation.

Bonny: I can understand your dilemma. When I was in graduate school, I had a slightly different experience, but one that also left me in a quandary. I developed a term paper that drew on my research with a practicing teacher. We each had a different perspective on and experience of the topic in question, and my term paper compared our two approaches. When it came to preparing the paper for publication, I thought the ethical approach would be to submit it as a joint authorship. My colleague was excited by this idea and offered to revise the paper so that his voice could be more appropriately represented. After many months and numerous reminders, no revision was forthcoming. The paper would have been stronger with my colleague's contribution, but I felt unable to speak on his behalf. I decided in the end to simply rewrite the paper, focusing on my work alone. It was a frustrating and time-consuming experience. Since then, I have approached collaborative research with greater care. Whereas collaborative research can be a pleasure, we all know it can cause tremendous hardship if different parties do not contribute actively to the project. Because research and writing is so time-consuming, I try to work with people who are responsible, creative, and not overly sensitive. A good sense of humor is a major plus!

THE REVISION PROCESS

Ena: No kidding! I think not being sensitive and having a good sense of humor will help with dealing with publication rejection as well. As a graduate student just starting my career in academic publishing, I expect rejection to be a huge part of my publishing experience (unfortunately). However, I need to know what rejection really means. When it comes to getting rejection letters from

publishers, does rejection always mean that your attempts at publication are hopeless, or does it simply mean that you need to rework your paper from another perspective? How do you know whether it is the former or the latter situation? The optimist in me would like to think that the work just needs some fine-tuning; however, at the same time, I realize that fine-tuning may not always be enough. Therefore, I feel that it's also pertinent to ask how many times should you attempt to resubmit a piece to the same publisher or journal before figuring that, for one reason or another, it's just not going to be accepted? I don't ask this question to imply that all rejection letters are hints that you're just not cut out for this sort of thing; rather, I ask this because I realize that the revision process plays an important role in the scheme of publishing and that revising the paper could mean the difference between an acceptance letter and a rejection letter.

Bonny: I can say unequivocally that the review process is the most important practice in writing for publication. At the outset of this discussion, you expressed concern that you might write something that is "wrong," something that might heap scorn on you as a novice scholar. If there is a fair and thorough review process, most egregious errors would be identified at the review stage, prior to publication. I am always impressed by the meticulous care that has been taken in the review of articles I have published, and my publications have benefitted greatly as a result of careful and sympathetic reviews. I have found editors in the field of language education to be very supportive people who consider it part of their responsibility to encourage and mentor graduate student writing. Many academic conferences offer symposia in which editors discuss the mandates of their respective journals and offer advice on the submission process.

Having said this, it is also true that different journals may value one kind of research over another. For example, qualitative research has, until recently, struggled for legitimacy. Furthermore, some controversial topics may invite critical reviews. However, if the author of a controversial paper defends her or his claims with careful analysis and thoughtful argument, there's a good chance that the paper will be published. Clearly, a great deal depends on the orientation of the editor and the willingness of the editor to take some degree of risk. It is important for authors to recognize that if a poorly researched and incoherently written article is published, the reputation of the editor, the journal, and, ultimately, the field suffers. On the other hand, if the editors reject a well-researched paper, simply because it challenges received wisdom

in the field, the author is faced with a choice. The author can defend her or his views in a carefully written letter of rebuttal, or the author can submit the work elsewhere.

As to your specific question about the nature of the rejection you might receive: I think editors try to be as explicit as possible about journal expectations. Very few submissions are accepted "as is," and most papers require at least some revision before they are published. You may get a letter that says "accept with revisions." If you do the required revisions, the paper is generally sent to the same reviewers who initially reviewed the paper. If your revisions are satisfactory, your paper should be accepted for publication. You may, however, be asked to "revise and resubmit." In this case, you have a reasonable chance at publication, but the review process will be lengthier. If you receive a rejection letter, the editor may suggest other venues for the publication of your work.

When I receive a letter that says "accept with revisions," I am sometimes caught between contradictory advice from reviewers. One reviewer might say that a particular idea is not central to the paper and should be deleted; another reviewer might say that the idea is important and should be developed. I take each reviewer's comments very seriously and try to revise the paper with a view to improving its overall logic and coherence. Where I have followed the advice of one reviewer and not another, I explain this in a covering letter to the editor.

Ena: Okay, now that I understand that the review and revision processes are key steps in publishing, it brings up important issues for me that relate back to issues of authorship and ownership.[6] Although some revisions are expected to a certain degree, Brian Morgan (1997) raised the issue of more political types of revisions when he recounted his own experiences with the revision process. In a recent article, he talked about his own experiences publishing in an English language teaching journal and how he felt that many of his key theories and conclusions about issues of social justice and language teach-

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[6] I think it is interesting and pertinent to point out that Scollon (1995) also questioned these notions in publishing when he called attention to the fact that

> by the time the public sees [his] article, other readers will have read it and made suggestions for editing. A single person has referred to himself as *I* throughout [the] article, and in doing so has taken responsibility for its positions.... But again, by the time the public sees it, the article will have involved other animators. (p. 13)

Thus, besides the potential political nature of the review and revision processes, it is the very processes themselves that call into question issues of sole authorship.

ing were trivialized in the editing process.[7] Taking his revision experiences into account, I'd like to know: What do you do when the suggested or mandated revisions don't remain true to what you're wanting to say (i.e., to what degree, if any, do you have to compromise or water down your original ideas?)? Do you ever have to fold under the demands of publishers just because publishing is so imperative?

Bonny: I'd like to think that I wouldn't compromise the central arguments in a paper just to get it published. I try to distinguish between what I think of as substantive and relatively minor changes to a text. While I am happy to compromise on relatively minor changes, I resist compromising on fundamental issues. However, I've come to realize that if what I say is controversial, I shouldn't expect a universally sympathetic audience. It's incumbent on me to provide much evidence to support my ideas and findings. In general, providing more evidence and tightening an argument strengthens rather than weakens a paper.

WHAT TITLE?

Ena: Bonny, I just have a few more questions about the more minute details of publication. First of all, how important is the title of your paper? I figure that it is the first thing people will read, and therefore I assume that one should give it some degree of thought.[8] I've read articles with the longest, most boring titles ever, and I seem to carry that impression with me while I read the article. On the other hand, when I read a title that seems to defy convention (i.e., like a successful ad slogan, it's snappy and catches my eye), this also seems to have an effect on my reading of the article. A fellow graduate student even told me once that what she chooses to read is almost entirely dependent on whether the article or book considered has a good title! (Talk about literally "judging a book by its cover.")

Bonny: I do think the title is a very important part of a paper, and I spend a good deal of time thinking of appropriate titles for my articles. In

[7]Morgan (1997) wrote, "to my mind, these edits seemed to be at some variance with the staff editors' claims that they were only concerned with 'sentence structure' and to 'make my work clearer'" (p. 23); however, he would later qualify that he did not necessarily believe that this was a deliberate effort to alter his ideas.

[8]Morgan (1997) pointed out that "titles, layouts, fonts, and highlighted quotes ... are not entirely neutral in formulating a superficial impression of an article" (p. 25).

fact, as I plan the publications for a given research project, I find experimenting with titles a very helpful way of trying to consider the project from different angles. I remember how devastated I was when the title of my very first publication (Norton Peirce, 1989) was changed without my knowledge. I had wanted the article to make a general argument about the need to rethink notions of communicative competence in the teaching of English internationally, and it was my first attempt to bring poststructuralist theory to the field of ESL. To strengthen my arguments, I drew on research in South Africa. My original title was "Toward a Pedagogy of Possibility in the Teaching of English Internationally." This was already a long title, and, in retrospect, I could have reworded it "Power and Possibility in Teaching English Internationally." When the journal arrived at my home, I opened it with great excitement only to find the following title: "Toward a Pedagogy of Possibility in the Teaching of English Internationally: People's English in South Africa." Not only was the title a very long one, but I was convinced that the focus of the article had shifted from a more general argument about the politics of teaching English internationally, to a focus on the teaching of English in South Africa.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Ena: On another note, I've read a bit of your work and have wondered about the varying forms of the name you have chosen to use in each of your publications. Peirce, Norton Peirce, Norton—I'm sure there is some significance to this, and I'm curious to find out more about this: What is the significance (if any) of the names we use when we publish? Are there any implications for the names that we choose to write under?

Bonny: I can't really speak for others, Ena, but I can tell you that my name has given me a few sleepless nights. And I often wonder if other female academics have had similar experiences. I certainly doubt that Chris Candlin or Jim Cummins has agonized about his name! But I'm getting ahead of myself. For a number of complex reasons, I added my partner's name (Peirce) to my name when we got married. Norton, my original surname, became a middle name. At first, I thought it wouldn't be a problem in publishing, thinking of people like Shirley Brice Heath as role models. However, because of the way that a person's work is referenced, the name Norton seemed to have less and less significance. As a feminist, I was in a quandary. Apart from which, copyeditors kept

changing Peirce to Pierce! After much agonizing, I decided to go through the whole bureaucratic process of dropping Peirce from my name. Although some people warned me that this was professionally risky because the scope of my research would be lost, I figured that I'm the only person who has my life to live. Further, the changing nature of identity is central to my work—and I'm living proof!

During the process of dropping Peirce from my name, I discovered at the passport office that I could choose any middle name I liked. So, Peirce is now a middle name and I've regained Norton as a surname (though my children did ask me if I was still a member of the family!). By the time I did this, I had published many articles and book chapters under Peirce, and I reference these as Norton Peirce in an attempt to inform readers that we are one and the same person (but with multiple identities!).

PUBLISHING ON PUBLISHING

Well, Bonny, this discussion has clarified a lot of issues about publishing for me, and I'm glad (and pleasantly surprised!) to say that it has really quelled a lot of my fears as a graduate student embarking on the next level of my academic career. Although I can attribute this change as due partly to the content of our conversation here, I have to admit that, for the most part, it's due to the very writing process I went through for this paper.

It's interesting that you mentioned the notion of academic "legitimacy." You talked earlier about how you had a hard time convincing people that your research on *Archie* comics was really research. Ironically, I was wondering whether we'll have to do the same for this paper.[9] After all, looking at the "academic" articles and books that I've read, none of them read like the way we've written this chapter. To say that it's unorthodox would be an understatement. However, I'm glad that we decided to maintain the conversational tone throughout the text. I think this experience has really helped me to reflect on what publishing is all about—and to me, it seems that it's about finding my own voice. I guess this is what you meant when you talked earlier about issues of identity and publishing. Here I thought that academia and publishing was all about theories and other "serious" stuff. Who

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[9]Academic researching and reporting against the grain is what Canagarajah (1996) focuses on in his thought-provoking article. He advocates "energetic experimentation with alternate forms of research reporting that would better reflect our emerging realizations on the nature of research and knowledge production" (p. 321).

knew that "academic" writing could actually be enjoyable? Having fun publishing—that's allowed, right?

Bonny: Yes, if I didn't find writing enjoyable, I doubt that it would be worth all the time and energy. Just think how many drafts of this chapter we have written, Ena! And I think what you say about finding your own voice is crucial. This IS serious stuff!

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