

Chapter 2. The Haecceitic Production of Writing in Emily's Classroom

In Chapter 1, I argued that, if we are to look through the lifespan at writing development, we need to see development as participation in social action. Toward that end, I suggested an ethnomethodological orientation may serve as an appropriate base from which to build a complex, coherent theory of lifespan writing development—or, more specifically, lifespan *literate action* development. Using the example of Alice, I identified a *candidate moment of literate action development* that highlighted both the possibilities of such an approach and the questions that arise when we attend to social action as the centerpiece of our understanding of development. In this chapter, I expand the ethnomethodological framework I began in Chapter 1, introducing several new terms to fully bring researcher attention to an actor-oriented perspective—and, more specifically, an *individuated* actor-oriented perspective through the serial production of social order.

The Scenic Aspects of Literate Action Development: Focusing on Practice

Alice's example in the previous chapter underscores the importance of attending to the *scenic* aspects of literate action. Instead of attempting to frame Alice's decision-making as internal—that is, the result of cognitive work—I traced the material work of Alice: the way she organized her desk, the pace of her writing, the ways in which she seemed responsive to her colleagues and the language of her teacher, her patterns of interaction with both the writing on her desk and the writing on the classroom television, etc. Ethnomethodologists argue that social action is located in these *haecceities*: the just-here, just-now, with-just-these-people, just-these-tools, and just-this-talk (Garfinkel, 2002). Turning to an internalized series of choices, an identity of a *whole person* (Rawls, 2005), or structures standing independent of interaction is a turning away from the constitutive work of social order, social action, and—by extension—individuated participation in that social action. In other words, “turns” away from the constitutive work of social order risks *losing the phenomenon* of that order, and creating understandings of social action (and, by extension, *literate action*) that obscure the sites of its accomplishment.

For these reasons, ethnomethodology has been understood as radically empirical, as it attends to that which is scenic—that is, available at the scenes of the co-construction of social order. Alice does not compose her drawing of falling off of a trampoline in her mind and realize it through her pencil: she engages in the practice of drawing to participate in the social action of the classroom and, by extension, sets the stage (that is, creates the product) for her later literate action

when she is writing her “river teeth” stories. Her co-constitution, with her classmates, of the ~~✍writing activity✍~~ in Emily’s class that day was an accomplishment of social ordering and, perhaps, a springboard for her own literate action development. As Alice engaged in the ~~✍writing activity✍~~, she made her actions intelligible to both others and herself, and they did the same. The mutually-recognizable, interactive work that these actors did is expressed in ethnomethodological language as *practices*.³ Practices are the ways in which we make our actions recognizable to others as well as ourselves; likewise, practices make others’ actions sensible to us. Alice, in her co-construction of the ~~✍writing activity✍~~ in Emily’s class, was engaging in practices with others in order to engage in that co-construction.

The observability of practices is what allows ethnomethodology to remain rigorously empirical in its studies, as well as what allows it to move beyond the focused studies of specific sites of traffic stops, debates, etc. For ethnomethodologists, what matters is not whole individuals but *actors*, aspects of individuals brought to bear on moments of social action that have competence in creating situated order through mutually intelligible actions. A good launching point for thinking about this—though it perhaps risks too-easy (and, later, obfuscating) connections with Goffman’s work—is to consider actors on a stage. An actor on a stage is playing a particular role, participating in a scene in order to move along a production of a particular play or show. What we see of the actor in the instance of the scene of a play is analogous to what we see of a person in any given social interaction. It is a particular aspect of an always-in-process person. Ethnomethodologists aim to see what this actor does to produce social order through practice. Practices are the means through which mutually intelligible actions are accomplished, and the ability of readers to make sense of particular sites of study—i.e., the rendering of these actions as *intelligible*—carries with it more general implications for social order.

But the use of practice in this text has a different purpose than ethnomethodologists: in this text, I am interested in using practices to highlight how individuated actors *transform the practices they engage in* while performing literate action. To continue the theatre analogy above, while an ethnomethodologist might look at the performance of an actor in a given scene, but a focus on development would encourage us to look across multiple scenes, to identify the ways in which an actor can transform their acting in one performance and carry that transformation into future performances. Practice, then, is an important term in our growing understanding of literate action development. Individuated actors work with other individuated actors in groups through *practices* to form those groups and create situated social order in those groups. Tracing the practices at work in Emily’s classroom can bring to our attention the production of social order, such

3. “Practices” is a frequently-used term in Writing Studies and the research traditions that much of Writing Studies draws from. I have avoided these connections to the moment in order to treat “practice” as it is ethnomethodologically understood.

as ~~✎writing activity✎~~ and other social orderings like it, and bring forward from those social orderings acts of individuated development. Balancing an analysis of the production of social order with individuated, enduring transformations is a difficult act, and practices is the mechanism that can support such difficult work.

In this framework, the concept of practice solves one of the issues raised at the end of the introduction to Part I: how to identify moments of change when any given moment of literate action is, in so many ways, unique to that particular moment. It resolves the contentiousness between difference and repetition (Pennycook, 2010) in terms of literate action as a next move toward an *actor-oriented perspective*. Through practices, we can identify the repetition of action by the mutually-identifiable practice that emerges in members' co-construction of social order. As Alice engages in ~~✎writing activity✎~~, then, we can turn to the ways in which other actors in Emily's classroom sequentially (Rawls, 2005) coordinate their own literate actions in order to identify her work as another instantiation of the practice of ~~✎writing activity✎~~.

Practice solves the problem of how to identify repetition, so that an actor-oriented frame for identifying and describing literate action development can be further articulated. But the issue of repetition was only one part of a two-part problem. The second part is identifying the ways in which differences become meaningful, come to transform a social practice for an individuated actor so that (a) mutual intelligibility remains and (b) the actor is able to act *through* that mutual intelligibility in "new" ways that endure, whatever "new" may mean. The second part of this problem will emerge after an actor-oriented perspective on practice is more fully articulated.

In order to engage in this articulation, I turn to a description of Emily's classroom. Emily's classroom will be a site through which I examine, in Chapters Three and Four, several instances of candidate literate action development. From these candidate moments, I will be able to draw, in Chapter 5, a concept of the *totality of the literate experience*, which we can then use to make sense of the lived reality of literate action development. In this chapter, I provide an actor-oriented perspective of the ebb and flow of social ordering in Emily's classroom, based on my year of observations in her room. Emily's classroom offers a strategic and perspicuous site for tracing literate action development through an ethnomethodological lens: strategic because it provides a wide range of literate action that is new for the writers engaged in it, and perspicuous because the writing often happens in the classroom, making it easily available for view via participant observation.

Below, I provide an outline of the social order produced with, for, and through literate action in Emily's classroom. This detail will inform the individuated acts of literate action development that I articulate in Chapters Three and Four. I begin this detailing with the work of Emily, the teacher in the classes that I observed. I do this in order to highlight the material decisions that Emily makes, which will in turn shape the production of social order in the classroom. Emily has a very material power to produce social order in her class that her students to not: she

can be in her classroom before the start of the academic year; organize the desks, posters, books, and other materials; decide what copies of which materials will be made and available to students; and organize seating assignments.

To be sure, the students in Emily's classroom talk and act Emily's organizational attempts into being, but they do so as a response to the work that Emily has already done. If we think of the academic year as a continuing series of interactions, Emily takes the first move in the work that she does to organize her classroom at the start of the academic year. Because of this initial move by Emily, I begin detailing the production of classroom order with her. From there, I work my way into how the classroom is further talked and acted into being, which I use to frame the literate action development I witness in later chapters.

Emily

Emily is a fifteen-year veteran of the classroom. A graduate of the University of California system with a BA in English, Emily earned her teaching credential and M.Ed. through the UC system as well before moving into the classroom. Emily is a National Writing Project fellow who frequently participates in her local NWP branch. The year before the current study, Emily completed her submission for the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). She was awarded National Board Certification during the winter of my data collection, which she earned on her first submission—an accomplishment that only 48% of NBCT candidates accomplish in any given year (MacKenzie & Harris, 2008).

The start of Emily's career, by her own account, had been rather difficult, particularly in terms of classroom management issues. This difficulty led her to focus on developing her classroom management skills, which can be easily observed in action: students have clearly demarcated rules for participation and activity, neatly defined times for assigned reading and writing activities, and regularized routines that students have learned throughout the day.

In addition to her extensive classroom management skills, Emily is well-versed in the English Language Arts subject matter. Emily possesses the outward credentials (NBCT, M.Ed.) to signal that she understands how her subject matter works and how to teach it to her students in multiple, effective ways, and her activities within the classroom realizes those credentials. During her time as a classroom teacher, NWP Fellow, and leader within her department, Emily has constructed a set of understandings about teaching her craft that she would deploy in order to deal with the constant reforms that she has endured throughout the duration of her teaching career.

Sequences of Activity in Emily's Classroom

Activity in Emily's classroom is organized collaboratively around a series of timed activities. When students walk into the classroom at the start of the period, they

can see a list of activities on the board directly ahead of them. They can also see, on the television screen above the board, the $\{Do\ Now\}$ activity that they are to begin class with. This is normally an activity to build what Emily refers to as *sentence sense* among students, although students use the $\{Do\ Now\}$ to copy tasks in their agenda at the start of each week. Regardless of the activity, however, Emily greets the class with a “Good morning” or “Good afternoon” (what I label, in ethnomethodological terms, as $\{Good\ Morning\}$) once the bell rings, and gives students between three and four minutes to complete the activity. Emily uses a timer at the front of the room to track the time. Emily normally provides students with some guidance before starting the timer. When time expires, Emily checks on the progress of her students. Occasionally, she gives them an extra minute or two if they need it. During most of the observations, however, students had completed the activity and were ready to move on.

After the students finish the $\{Do\ Now\}$, Emily discusses the $\{Do\ Now\}$ activity with the students, calling on students either randomly or by taking volunteers. The number of volunteers that Emily takes varies with the complexity of the exercise and the problems that students have with it, although most $\{Do\ Now\}$ activity reviews involved two to five students.

Once the $\{Do\ Now\}$ was discussed, Emily holds a brief $\{Review\}$ of the class objective and the schedule of events for the class. The discussion of lesson activities normally expanded into the larger assignments of which they were part. For example, a discussion of a writing task that would turn into part of a larger blog writing assignment would lead to a discussion of the blog writing assignment in general. During this period, students often asked clarifying questions about assignment content, due dates, and specific requirements. Occasionally, students would also interject their own interests into the conversation, which Emily welcomed but also continually brought back to the review of classroom activities.

When Emily finished reviewing the tasks for the day, she engaged in $\{Desk\ Organizing\}$, which was structured by Emily’s sense of timing. Emily would tell students what they had to have out on their desks, and sometimes even where on their desks it needed to be. She would also give students a set amount of time to do this, often 42 seconds. Forty-two seconds is the usual amount of time (according to Emily) between the start of a pop song and its first chorus. Emily often played music during this time, and expected students to be prepared at the start of the chorus.

After the students completed their organizing activity, Emily began the $\{Activity\}$. These activities would vary widely, from reading to writing to watching video or even moving around the room. But the $\{Activity\}$ was itself an accomplishment, a haecceity through which social order was perpetuated in the class. The chain of interaction—the teacher providing instructions, the students taking up those instructions both at the moment they are given and the moment they are left to take up those instructions—occurred as a manner of these individuated actors moving toward the end of class.

Near the conclusion of class, Emily would often provide students with an ~~Exit Ticket~~, or a writing activity that encouraged students to reflect on their activities from the day's lesson. Exit tickets were not offered every lesson, and sometimes a planned exit ticket was scrapped from the lesson plan if Emily ran out of time. The above description provides a general overview of how Emily's class operated in a given class period. While there were quite a few varieties of class action that emerged from the ~~Good morning~~, ~~Do Now~~ – ~~Review~~ – ~~Desk Organizing~~ – ~~Activity~~ – ~~Exit Ticket~~ unfolding of a class period, the interactional pattern was observable throughout all of the lessons that I attended throughout the academic year.

Emily's Classroom

Emily's classroom is located in the far back corner of the school, nestled between another English teacher's classroom and a hallway leading to an attached charter school. Outside of the classroom runs a sidewalk that winds across a small grove of trees and classrooms to the auditorium, computer lab, offices, and a massive common area that the students use for lunch. A set of windows in the back of Emily's classroom looks out over the trees, walkways, and other classrooms.



Figure 2.1. Emily's Library.

Students enter Emily's classroom in the back right corner of the room. To their left runs, beneath the windows, a combination of bookshelves and class materials.

Next to the door sit a garbage can and a set of shelves dedicated to school-related texts. Just past that, Emily has put a large cart of class materials. On top of the materials rests a large set of cubby holes that Emily uses to put spare worksheets, handouts, and other materials from the week's lessons. Students who are absent can draw their missing materials from here. On top of the cubbyholes are baskets for returned work and late work.

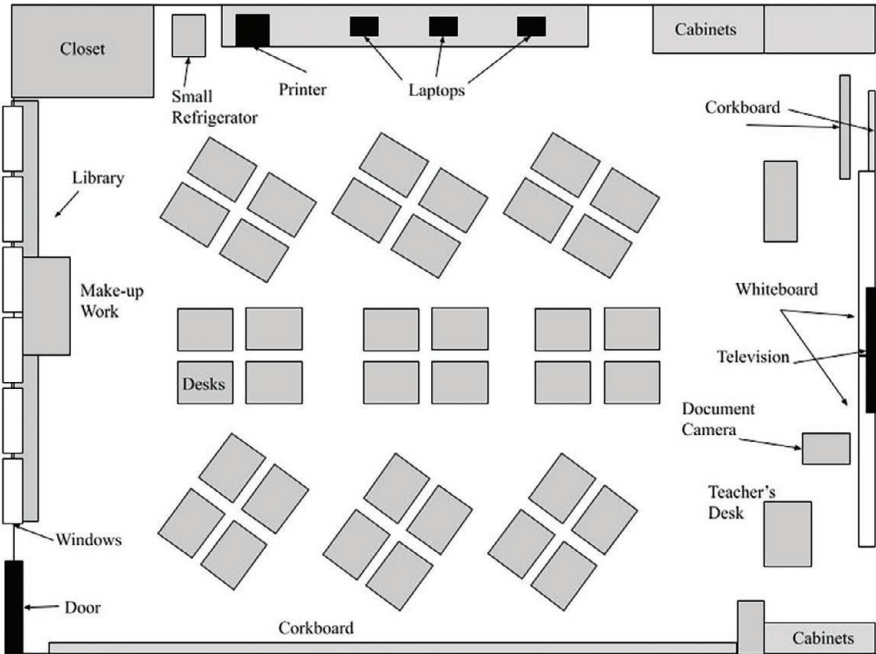


Figure 2.2. Emily's classroom layout.

Another set of shelves for school-related texts rests on the other side of the class materials. Next to that is Emily's personal library, which contains a set of young adult literature that students can sign out if they wish. Emily has a set of boxed books (presumably also course-related) next to her library. The corner that connects the back wall to the far left wall contains a small closet that I have never seen Emily use.

The far left wall is dedicated largely to technology. Emily has three Apple laptops in the classroom, two of which she acquired with a grant and one of which she brought from home. These laptops are locked in a closet every night, but are left out during the school day for students to use. The laptops are on long, low tables that occupy the middle space of the wall. Behind them rest more course textbooks that students rely on for certain units. To the left of the laptops rests a printer. This printer is for Emily's use but is also linked to other teacher computers in Emily's hallway, as teachers regularly enter the room to pick up printed material. Between the printer and the closet there is a spare desk, where I regularly sat during my observations.



Figure 2.3. Outside of Emily's classroom.

To the right of the laptops, running all the way to the corner between the left wall and the front wall of the room, is a set of closets that Emily keeps locked. These closets contain benchmark writing assessments, and, at night, the laptops. The closets also contain more of Emily's class supplies, such as glue sticks and colored pencils.

The front of the room is taken up almost entirely by Emily's white board. A small blank space between the closet and the whiteboard is taken up by a rolling bulletin board. The whiteboard runs from the bulletin board to Emily's desk, which takes up—along with another closet and a set of filing cabinets—the corner of the room between the front wall and the right wall. Early in the year, Emily's desk faced the left wall, which allowed her to come out from behind her desk more easily and work with students. Later in the year, however, Emily moved her desk to face away from the front wall, so that she could sit behind her desk and look out over the students in the classroom. Behind Emily's desks are several small bulletin boards with various personal and public items tacked on to them.

Above the whiteboard and bulletin boards are a large-screen LCD television, which Emily uses frequently through her AppleTV and her document camera. Emily also has several posters scattered along the upper edge of her walls, not just in the front of the room but on the left and right walls as well. These posters contain directions for classroom activity, definitions of important terms, examples of student work, and posters of literature, poetry, movies, etc.

The right wall of Emily's classroom, which runs back to the door, is largely covered with student work. The closet, filing cabinet, and desk of Emily's take space away from the corner of the wall, but the rest of the wall, at eye level, is dedicated to large bulletin boards containing student work. Emily changes these boards every few weeks, giving many different students the opportunity to have their work displayed. However, she rarely references the boards during her work in class.

Above these boards are more guidelines for students. She has several handwritten posters that describe the purposes of English, entry and exit routines, group work reminders, and reminders of "how to earn an A" for small writing assignments. This wall also contains the clock, which ran about a minute ahead

of the official school time (and thus the bell schedule) for most of the school year.

Inside of these walls sit, in addition to Emily's desk and two smaller desks that she uses to collect student work and organize her handouts prior to a lesson, thirty-seven desks. These desks are arranged in nine groups of four. The nine groups are also aligned in three rows of three. The desks of the middle row point straight ahead, while the desks on either side of the middle row are angled slightly to allow students to see the center of the board while looking straight ahead.

Progression of the School Year in Emily's Classroom

Emily's class moved through several units throughout the course of the school year. Each of these units was deliberately marked off by Emily in several ways. Primarily, this marking was accomplished through the use of the English section of students' school binders. Goodland Middle School asked all students to purchase a large, three-ring binder for the start of the school year. Students organized these binders by class, with each class getting a separate section. Emily's students, then, arrived in class with a section reserved for Language Arts in a three-ring binder. Emily took advantage of this opportunity by organizing her handouts (and leading the students' organization of the handouts) around this binder section.

Unit Title: <u>What makes an upstander?</u>	
Table of Contents	
1.	Stand! (song)
2.	Upstanders / Bystanders +
3.	What is a Socratic seminar?
4.	"Little Things are Big"
5.	Socratic seminar Notes
6.	Blog C-notes (Quiz Fri)
7.	Persuasive C-notes
8.	Blogging rules
9.	
10.	

Figure 2.4. A sample table of contents sheet.

First, students were provided, at the start of each unit, with a new Table of Contents sheet and some introductory materials. Emily used this, as well as the process of collecting older Table of Contents packets, as a signal that the class

was moving into a new set of activities with a new theme. As the class continued activities in the unit, they were given additional material to add to their Table of Contents. Once the unit came to a close—either with a benchmark exam or some other culminating activity—Emily had her students read through their sheets, highlight the key points, and write a short reflection on their learning on the back of the Table of Contents sheet. The students then removed all of their sheets from the English section of their binders, stapled them together, and handed them in for a grade. This reflective act not only signaled the end of a unit, but the start of a new one, as students came to understand that this activity led them directly into the introduction for their next unit.

Emily's units varied widely in their length and amount of recorded sheets. Some units, in fact, required two separate packets with Table of Contents sheets in order to keep all of the writing organized. These Table of Contents sheets, as well as their organization, provides a clear pattern of the unit organization of Emily's classes throughout the school year. Each unit title represents a theme that tied all of the work that students completed in Emily's class together during that unit. Emily felt that the organization of units according to themes helped students make sense of the activities that they were completing, and gave the many, disparate activities that students completed some sort of direction throughout the course of a given unit.

Some assignments, of course, were persistent throughout the school year without reference to the unit themes. Independent writing notebook activities, for example, always followed the same framework regardless of classroom activity. The "Do Now" activity was also structured in very similar ways throughout the year, rarely connecting to a unit theme. When a unit theme connection was brought in to a "Do Now" activity, it was a coincidental moment: Emily did not try to bring the theme of the "Do Now" activity into the unit activities.

The above description of the units and the Tables of Contents used to organize them outlines the way in which classroom writing activity was organized throughout the school year. This classroom writing activity, of course, was also tied to student activity as they attempted to participate meaningfully in the unfolding structure of class.

Turning toward an Actor-Oriented Perspective

The social ordering power of the practices of ~~{Good morning}~~, ~~{Do Now}~~, ~~{Review}~~, ~~{Desk Organizing}~~, ~~{Activity}~~, and ~~{Exit Ticket}~~ have, together, constructed a rough orientation of an actor's perspective on the everyday production of Emily's classroom for a next first time. This is as the ethnomethodological breakdown is intended: the mechanisms through which social order is produced and maintained are articulated so that others may understand how to make sense of that articulation.

It is important to remember that the six practices identified in Emily's classrooms are not concepts for understanding what Emily's students did—rather, they *are* the activities that these actors co-constructed together, time and again, throughout the entire academic year. These practices *created* Emily's classroom, made it sensible for students and for Emily, even as this sensibility-construction allowed those in the room to likewise make sense of themselves. Each next-first-time instantiation of these practices was an accomplishment of the students in that classroom, an accomplishment that was the classroom itself.

One drawback to the practices identified above is that they give the mistaken impression, at times, of a concreteness that is not actually there. In other words, these practices are not as taken-for-granted as their invisibility in the eyes of the actors would lead one to believe. Their constructed nature, social as it is, leaves room for uncertainty in the co-constitutive work of individual group members. In other words, in the scenic production of social order, much may be left undecided. An actor may engage in ~~€writing activity€~~—that is, an ~~€Activity€~~ oriented toward writing—in one particular class period and, while engaging in practices that co-constitute that activity, be faced with uncertainty in the unfolding of that co-constitution due to the specificities of the scenic accomplishment of the work.

A rather straightforward example might be a student who co-constitutes the early stages of a ~~€writing activity€~~ by turning to her backpack to take out the required forms. In her work to take out those forms, she misses Emily's instructions and has to steal glances at her classmate's forms to see which one they have oriented to. This instance of uncertainty is neither long-lasting nor difficult to overcome through attention to different scenic features of the situation. But uncertainty and its role in the ongoing production of social order can be much more complex—and, as we will see below, can be a site of developmental moments for the writers being studied. Garfinkel's *Toward a Sociological Theory of Information* provides some useful framing about uncertainty and how we cope with it. Below, I trace out Garfinkel's conception of information and repurpose it for the demands of the study of literate action development, which I can then use to think through the complexity of Emily's classroom and the development captured within it.

A Sociological Perspective on Information and the Concept of What-Comes-Next

Toward a Sociological Theory of Information, as Rawls points out in her extensive editorial introduction, “represents a significant piece of work . . . that has been essentially lost to scholarship since it was first written” (2008, p. 7). The focus of his work is, as the title indicates, an attempted sociological theory of information. At the heart of this theory is the idea that information—and the people who take up and make sense of that information—is always incomplete.

The work that individuals do to make sense of the world around them, to make themselves sensible to others, is always done with and through incomplete understandings. This basic insight is key to understanding the very different approach that Garfinkel takes toward understanding information and how it is shared (or, in perhaps more specific language, co-constructed) with others. This idea of incompleteness is what makes Garfinkel's text such a useful addition to understanding uncertainty.

Garfinkel's understanding of how information is created and shared, revealed in an early text, is at odds with many of his contemporaries, and indeed it is at odds with many theoretical framings of information today. Rawls describes Garfinkel's theory as belonging "to the classic period in the development of information theory—1935–1955—but as a heretofore unrecognized alternative voice" (2008, p. 12). Framing information sharing as happening amidst incomplete knowledge turns the attention of the researcher from the flow of information and to the work that individuals do to attempt to maintain the flow of information. If our knowledge is always partial, how can we go about identifying and making sense of information?

Garfinkel's answer is to examine information exchange as something that is *constituted*, rather than done. Information is not shared but rather created by social actors at work. In the unfolding co-construction of social order, something becomes recognized (constituted) as information that can then be acted upon. This understanding of information as co-constituted carries an intersubjective framing: that is, what *I* call information in a given moment will also be information to *you* because we are co-constructing the situation together and locating information in it as we do that work. Below, I develop an understanding of this concept that is individuated in nature, which will allow us to see not just how information emerges for people in a given situation, but how what may be indexed as information for some will not be for others.

Central to Garfinkel's notion of information is the *anomaly*. Garfinkel argues that, without some anomalous aspect that the constitutive order of everyday life has to deal with, there can be no information. In other words, for information to be conveyed, there must be something that sense needs to be made of. The unexpected, the uncertain, is the ground from which information emerges. As actors constitutively create a situation to deal with the unexpected and uncertain, they generate practices that make the unexpected expected, the insensible sensible. The anomalous is co-constituted into something known, something that can be worked through in subsequent co-constitutions of social action.

Garfinkel develops his notion of information through the work of organizations—that is, he tries to understand how information gets recognized, taken up, and acted on by the co-constitutive ordering of social action by members of organizations in chains of local engagement. Anomalies develop in these co-constitutive interactions, and their resolution (that is, information) emerges from members' methods as they attempt to make sense of the anomaly. This anomaly

can be pulled into the social order through constitutive practices, or it can fracture the social order, leaving actors with the work (and its accompanying moral indignation) of repairing it. Garfinkel's past work on breaching experiments (Garfinkel, 1967) provide evidence of this. Briefly, Garfinkel would ask his students to behave in ways that were counter to the social order as it was usually produced—continually asking follow-up questions, acting as a boarder in one's own home, etc.—and then to report on the results of these disruptions. These “experiments” highlighted the consequences of inserting an unable-to-be-resolved anomaly into the ongoing work of social order in particular times and places. The unwitting participants in these experiences (such a study would surely struggle to receive IRB approval today) were unable to resolve the anomalies, and in the end announced their indignation with comments such as “drop dead!” or some other such dismissive content.

Garfinkel's work on information sets the stage for taking yet another step toward an actor-oriented perspective on literate action. Information is introduced into the constitutive ordering of social action when anomalies arise among the work of members of groups to establish social situations. But in order to make sense of this introduction of information, we need a broader conceptualization of how constitutive order is established in the first place. We can understand, from an actor-oriented perspective, the practices through which social order comes to be established in the classroom, and the concept of information provides us with a lens to consider how newness is realized and acted through in that social action. By fleshing out further how we could conceptualize the ways in which information is introduced to social situations, we can move forward with conceptualizing an actor-oriented perspective of literate action.

This conceptualization begins with Garfinkel's (1963) notion of *trust*, and the ways in which that trust comes to be realized (and betrayed) in the ongoing work of actors. Garfinkel suggests that part of what makes the fragile work of social action *seem* enduring, available for use, and able to be taken for granted is the work that members do to *create* that seeming. Garfinkel (1963, 1967) makes the case that disruptions to this seeming-ness is a moral issue, with other actors involved in the production of social order reacting strongly and negatively to such disruptions. In his breaching experiments, Garfinkel showed how simple acts like asking for additional clarification, or revealing a tape-recorded conversation, can result in dramatic changes to the ongoing production of social order and strong emotions from those dramatic changes.

Trust, then, is an implicit requirement for producing social order: I act in a way that I believe you can understand, and I *also* believe that you will act on that understanding in ways that I can find sensible. The trust that we extend allows for us to have an idea, together, of what comes next in the work of producing social order. But though the practices we engage in may seem “durable” (Erickson, 2004, p. 140) as routines for producing social order, in fact each passing moment involves an array of what Erickson (2004) would call *tactical* work—adaptations

of familiar routines to the production of the present (and unfolding) moment. As actors work together to constitute social action, they are working through the ongoing uncertainty of what the next moment will bring.

This uncertainty can best be characterized as *anxiety* in the first two of its dictionary definitions—an uneasiness about how the next moment will unfold, and a tense desire to shape that unfolding. I refer to this anxiety of the next moment conceptually as *What-Comes-Next*. Each passing moment in our lives is a moment of working through *What-Comes-Next*. The next moment, whether it be in an interaction, during writing, exercising, eating, or whatever, cannot be entirely expected. The practices that we engage in can *reduce* the uncertainty of *What-Comes-Next*, and many aspects of our lives may be co-constituted to do just that: we have morning routines, for instance, that pull us out of bed and to the car, office, and these routines, these practices, become deeply habitual in a very material sense. The location of the coffemaker and the toothbrush, the earlier-in-the-week purchase of breakfast food, the remote starter for our car, etc., all co-ordinate, call out for action that pulls the actor through a specific set of practices that lead to arriving at work in a timely manner.

At other times, however, the production of social order becomes too different for our routines to bear: the anxiety of *What-Comes-Next*, in other words, becomes raised to a degree that our ongoing practices cannot account for. A first date, for instance, may be filled with pregnant pauses, repaired communication, and a tentative working-out of relatively straightforward activities such as walking through a doorway in a coordinated manner (Do I hold the door? Do I let her go first? She's gesturing that I go first—what do I do in response to that?). The next-first-time nature of our practices in these situations emphasize the *firstness* of the practice over the *nextness*, as opposed to the morning routine described above. In these moments of heightened uncertainty, our practices have the potential to change—sometimes in enduring ways, sometimes not. In certain situations such as the two cases above, the differences between heightened and reduced anxiety of *What-Comes-Next* is relatively obvious.

Adding *What-Comes-Next* and information to our list of concepts is a productive next step for framing our search for literate action development in Emily's classroom. By attending to practice, and seeing each instance of practicing as a way of managing *What-Comes-Next*, we can envision how novelty works its way into the ongoing production of social order. By attending to information, as a concept, we have some language for making sense of what happens when *What-Comes-Next* is so anomalous, uncertain, and unexpected that the practices we typically deploy to make sense of ourselves, others, and the objects around us struggle to meet the demands of the moment. What we do not yet have is a way to move into understanding when a difference in a given instantiation of a practice *endures* as a transformation of a practice. In the next section, I pull these three concepts together further and operationalize them for tracing development in Chapters Three and Four.

Tracing Development through What-Comes-Next

The practices of Emily's classroom can be thought of as the tools for reducing the uncertainty of *What-Comes-Next* for the members in Emily's classroom. However, it would be incorrect to assume that these practices reduce uncertainty evenly across the student body. The actors in the classroom may have jointly co-constructed a practice to reduce uncertainty, but uncertainty may linger more for some actors than others. In other words, members' methods for reducing uncertainty in any given moment may differ. Tracing heightened uncertainty—identifying when information has to be wrestled with by individual students—is the starting point from which development can be traced.

With Alice's example in Chapter 1, I posited that a change in patterns of literate action could make a candidate for literate action development. A number of questions remain with this approach, but the concepts of practice, *What-Comes-Next* and information help us further round out this tentative concept of development and, by extension, further explore the consequences of such a label in the coming chapters.

What-Comes-Next, as a concept, brings attention not just to the work of members of a given social situation—in this case, a classroom—but additionally to the work of individuated actors within that set of members. Since all members are working, together, toward reducing the anxiety of *What-Comes-Next* in their moment-to-moment production of social action, the opportunity of attending to *What-Comes-Next* is everywhere, available with each passing moment of a social situation.

But the connection between *What-Comes-Next* and development has not yet been made clear. In Chapter 1, Alice's actions in her reflective writing activity and the work leading up to it seemed to be, based on a reading of development as participation in social action through writing that was established earlier in the chapter, a candidate for a developmental moment. Alice was clearly working through the uncertainty of *What-Comes-Next* in her writing, and making joint sense of the tasks being asked of her by Emily as the classes developed through the "river teeth" unit. *What-Comes-Next*, then, enables an actor-oriented framing of Alice's work, but does not, on its own, yield what is needed to be known about development. For that, we need to turn to information, and particularly, its relationship to *What-Comes-Next*.

If we are to think about development as emerging from the serial production of social order, then it follows that the serial production of social order is also, by extension, the ongoing reduction of anxiety in terms of *What-Comes-Next*. The ongoing work to establish the uncertainty of *What-Comes-Next* as known, rather than unknown, is the space within which literate action may develop. A central condition for this is elevated uncertainty: when a writer is unsure of what to do in the next moment, when the practice that sustains a fragile social situation breaks down, an opportunity arises to transform a practice in order to repair the situa-

tion and, in Brandt's (1990) words, keep writing going. It is at these moments that researchers must look in order to see development emerging. Moving forward, I will draw on Garfinkel's language and refer to such elevated uncertainty for an individuated actor—the point at which *What-Comes-Next* is so different that the practices a given actor normally engages in to make sense of ourselves and others struggle to contend with it—as *information*. Information, for our purposes in this text, refers to the anomalous aspects of an unfolding situation *for an individuated actor* that need to be rendered usable in the continued work of producing social order.

As noted above, however, any given change to the ways in which an actor resolves *What-Comes-Next* is not necessarily development, even with elevated levels of uncertainty. Say, for instance, that one of the keys on my keyboard begins malfunctioning as I engage in a writing task—a letter sometimes emerges on the Word document, but sometimes not. This elevates, to some degree, the uncertainty of my work as I go about finishing my writing task. I *may* get through writing a sentence that does not require the letter to be used, or used to a great enough degree that the malfunction becomes problematic—perhaps easier if the letter is “Q” rather than if it is a vowel. I might also stop my writing and attempt to fix the problem in some way. I could also just barrel ahead, striking the problematic key as often as necessary, and with as much force as necessary, to get the letter to appear.

Each of these options has me engaging in work to reduce an elevated uncertainty—a malfunctioning key on a keyboard. But none of this work is likely to result in developmental change in the production of literate action: at the very least, when I fix my keyboard or get another one, I will simply cease having an issue with it, and revert to the writing patterns I engaged in before. A change, then, is not in and of itself an instance of development. This change must *endure* across future recurrences of a practice—in other words, the practice must be altered, and that alteration must stand the test of future instances of a practice.

If we turn our attention back to the example of Alice in the previous chapter, we can perhaps make a case that this candidate instance of development has endurance, although not in the particulars of the case that I articulated alone. In reviewing my observations of Alice throughout the academic year, I noted that her work on her “river teeth” writing involved a configuration of references to earlier writing in her packet that she had not done in previous units. The text that she produces at the end of her packet comes to be heavily mediated by her drawings earlier in the unit. This re-orchestrated act of coordination, though occurring near the end of the year, happened across more than one “river teeth” writing episode, suggesting a kind of endurance across practices. While it would be more persuasive that this moment endured should Alice have had several opportunities over time to demonstrate such textual coordination, the work that she does with these documents may be sufficient to make a case that this candidate for literate action development is indeed an instance of it. Alice is participating in

social action through a familiar practice, and doing so in a new way that persists across future instances of that practice-in-use.

Alice's example suggests that attending to the work of literate action through a lens that aligns practices, information, and *What-Comes-Next* may be a useful way of identifying an actor-oriented perspective on ways in which such practices change in lasting ways. Furthermore, the very nature of these concepts—that is, their endurance across the many stages of the lifespan—suggests a stable lens for examining writing not only at any point in the lifespan, but through multiple points in the lifespan. These concepts, in other words, may form a lens that can be a productive launching point for studies across ages, kinds of writing, and social situations.

Alice's example, however, has been insufficiently examined even within this framework. So far, what we know is that practices, information, and *What-Comes-Next* can serve as a lens to understanding changes in writing and identifying strong candidates for developmental moments in the lives of literate actors. In order to identify the limits and possibilities of this lens, I bring it to bear on other moments in the lives of students in Emily's classroom. Since Emily's classroom is a perspicuous setting for studying literate action development, there are many moments similar to Alice's that occurred to students throughout the academic year. In the next two chapters, I identify four moments of literate action that can serve as candidates for literate action development. Drawing on my knowledge of the ways in which these students continued to write throughout the academic year after these moments, I can confidently make the claim that their actions serve as developmental moments in their writing lives. These moments can show us more than just developmental moments of individual students, however: by looking across these sites, we can identify some additional characteristics that can fully flesh out the complexity of what it means to engage in a moment of literate action development.

In Chapter 3, I look at two students in Emily's fifth-period classroom: Marianne and Nick. Marianne shuffles—and, to some extent, has shuffled for her—the resources at her disposal when she engages in preparing to write a blog entry about Helen Keller. Nick re-orchestrates his interactional order with his colleagues as he attempts to finish his work during a worksheet activity in Emily's class. In both of these instances, these students engage in a new approach to participating in the ongoing social order of Emily's classroom, and these new approaches endure across future moments of literate action, future instantiations of particular practices. Through Marianne and Nick, we can see the ways in which objects around writing—in particular, books and individuals—can shape the practice of writing differently when they are ordered differently.

In Chapter 4, I look at two students in Emily's fourth-period classroom: Holly and Don. Each of these students also re-orchestrate their interactional order with the talk, tools, and texts around them, but do so in a more private space than either Marianne or Nick. The relative isolation of their literate action has increased

relative to Marianne and Nick, and they offer an interesting site for identifying further characteristics of literate action development. Holly pulls together a revised blog entry on her grandfather, in part, through the knowledge she developed during a sentence-combining activity that Emily developed throughout the school year. Don orchestrates his work as a classroom points-manager and his writing tasks in order to develop new approaches to the desk-organizing and writing activity practices that the classroom develops together.