Introducing Bringing the Outside In: Internationalizing the WAC/WID Classroom

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One of the great challenges in charting the development of internationalization within WAC and WID is the fact that multiple definitions of the term "internationalizing" or "internationalization" exist. In a general sense, "internationalizing" classes, curricula, or institutions often seems designed to make students better able to communicate and compete in a globalized world, but the multiple prior and co-existent definitions that are in circulation in current WAC/WID scholarship have somewhat muddied the waters of practical application. Recent contributions to the field from scholars such as Bazerman, Russell, Matsuda, and Zawacki and Cox, however, underscore the fact that internationalization is at the forefront of scholarship in the WAC/WID field. In this special issue of *Across the Disciplines (ATD)*, we hope to continue this work, examining the ways in which internationalization is defined within the field, and developing pedagogical and curricular applications further. The contributors here build on Cox and Zawacki's 2011 special issue of *ATD* on second language writing, their 2014 work on building inclusive practices within WAC for L2 learners, Russell's writing on the curricular history of WAC, and Matsuda's work on the international classroom, among others.

Defining "Internationalizing"

The most common interpretation of internationalizing curricula and programs, whether writing-focused or not, is rooted in the recent move to prepare institutions for education, teaching, learning, and research in a global community. Increasingly, companies are requiring mobility in their workforces, the capacity to create inter-cultural understanding, and the ability to communicate across and through cultural barriers that exist both within and without professional spheres. This intensified attention to internationalization has also been partially in response to increasing numbers of international students on American college campuses and, by extension, an increasingly international and inter-cultural environment for students, faculty, and administrators alike. In the introduction to their 2011 special issue of *ATD,* Zawacki and Cox discuss the impacts of increasing numbers of international L2 students on US campuses, and in their 2014 volume on *WAC and Second Language Writers* they also consider the "increased globalization of US institutions of higher education through partnerships with institutions abroad and the establishment of branch campuses outside of the US" (p. 34). This is a trend evident in classrooms across American universities both at home and abroad.

In a similar vein, study abroad programs have also experienced exponential growth over recent decades, and part of preparing students for a semester or a year abroad entails enhancing their abilities to handle communication in new and different environments. Schaub (2003) talks about "a new dialogue, unique in its unity and humanity" (p. 85) that has arisen in study abroad programs, and he underscores the new international perspective of this dialogue, stating "That dialogue was about America: what it meant to us and what it meant to others" (p. 85).

The Importance of International Competency

Regardless of how "internationalization" is defined, there is little doubt that the ability to communicate in a global world is increasingly expected and demanded by new graduates in order to be competitive in a challenging world environment. This environment, it should be noted, is one in which almost 40% of American companies have missed out on opportunities because of a lack of "internationally competent employees," (Daniel, Xie, & Kedia, 2014). International competency is prized by prospective employers *and* graduate programs, and there is thus significant pressure on institutions to develop courses to satisfy this need. This push has extended down to individual classrooms and syllabi on college campuses across the nation and particularly to the disciplines of composition and rhetoric. Schaub (2003) argues that "[a]s writing instructors… we should investigate ways to internationalize our courses and programs, such as expanding writing assignments to encompass international interests and themes and revising syllabi to reflect a more global perspective" (p. 86). Matsuda and Matsuda (2011) agree, contending that "writing courses, situated as they are in local institutions and rhetorical contexts, need to prepare writers for global writing situations" (p. 172), and that "written communication often entails communicating across linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries" (p. 173).

The Global Classroom

Matsuda and Matsuda also touch on another important aspect of this drive towards internationalization: the world is already in our classrooms. Miller-Cochran (2012) notes, for example, that "recent research in the field of second language writing has highlighted the growing amount of linguistic diversity in college composition classrooms" (p. 20). Khadka (2012), too, observes that "[d]emographically speaking, composition classrooms are composed of diverse domestic as well as international students" (p. 22). And though Matsuda and Silva (1999) and Matsuda (2006) recognize that inter-cultural classrooms present both opportunities and challenges, they also note that there can be significant benefits to a "cross-cultural" approach to writing instruction in a great many courses – such as management courses, for example, that pair non-native speakers with native speakers (Kehrer et al., 1990). As Cox and Zawacki (2014) have argued, "WAC is, indeed, courageous enough to be transformed by the multilingualism and multiculturalism of our students" (p. 34).

It is important to remember, however, that although the classroom itself may be inherently international in terms of student demographics, the instructor is still responsible for ensuring that it is infused with deep cultural awareness. Donahue (2009) emphasizes the importance of this responsibility, arguing that internationalizing the classroom can have an impact far beyond the ability to simply communicate across cultures:

> We need international work because we can no longer do without deep understanding as the world shifts and slips. We need the ability to negotiate that comes from deep intercultural awareness; the ability to shift in understanding of our global position; the research trends and strong methods other scholars have developed; the deep familiarity with other systems and contexts, developed in so much more that the occasional encounter, fulfilling but exotic; the suspicion about market forces at work in the more glib general discussions about the value in internationalizing higher education. (p. 236).

More recently, Khadka (2012) adds that internationalizing the classroom, means providing students with "a global composition outlook":

> …one that encompasses a series of actions and practices like pluralizing academic writing, accepting and acknowledging cultural, rhetorical and stylistic variations in all forms of

> expression/communication, including in our students' composition, and treating English variants or varieties (if not the native tongues of our students) fairly and equitably in formal as well as informal writing – can take us toward making our composition classrooms and pedagogies more democratic, pragmatic, and relevant to our students as well as to the complex world they are already a part of or will be upon their graduation. (p. 23)

Making our classrooms more relevant to our students by creating culturally inclusive courses that emphasize global competencies means that our classes – and perhaps especially our composition classes – will likely incorporate a sociopolitical focus. However, in a world which is currently undergoing significant cultural, political, and economic instabilities as nations and relationships between nations transform, we believe such a sociopolitical focus will become increasingly relevant and pervasive.

The Sociopolitical Classroom

Arguments for a sociopolitical approach to teaching are not new. In 1988, Vocke (1988) noted that "the world-centered approach emphasizes commonalities of peoples and cultures in an ever-increasingly interdependent world where citizens need greater understanding and acceptance of cultural practices" (p. 18), and in 1990, Kehrer et al. reiterated this perspective, arguing that "we must look beyond national borders towards global education" (p. 360). Goodwin (1995) also underlines the importance of international understanding in problem solving of the highest levels, noting "many of the problems that we face today within the United States are multinational in their origin and solution," and "if we are to attack these problems through research, and as citizens, we must understand other places and other peoples" (p.78).

Writing scholars, too, have long argued for the value of politicized composition classrooms. Matsuda and Matsuda (2011) note that U.S. writing specialists have long believed "that one of the important goals of rhetorical education is to prepare 'citizens' for participation in democracy" (p.189), and Shaub (2003) argues for a more international perspective, positing that it is essential to provide students "within the mission and parameters of a particular writing course, with reading, writing, and research assignments that foster in them a more global vision for their writing and their conception of writing" (p. 94). Matsuda and Matsuda (2011) agree with Shaub, arguing that we must now grow beyond a nationalist sense of "citizen" and prepare students to be "global citizens" instead. "Arguing for the integration of global perspectives [in the composition classroom] may seem like a tall order," they say, but given the international realities of today's world, "we can settle for no less" (p.189).

Internationalizing Texts

Donahue (2009) believes that one way to do this is to take the approach that many first year writing faculty do – introducing internationalization by reading texts about globalization, internationalization, and the local and global effects of these movements. She notes, however, that even though many rhetoric/composition textbooks claim to have an international perspective, a closer examination reveals that many of these "international" readings are approached in an Amero-centric fashion, projecting Western values and cultural mores onto other cultures. "[M]ost U.S. teachers and scholars" she says, "have not considered contexts outside of US borders: what the teaching of academic writing might look like elsewhere, its forms, its teachers" (p. 221). Matsuda and Matsuda (2011) also look to broaden textual perspectives within the increasingly internationalized classroom: "Our own rhetoric of instruction must also change so that the *you* of the textbook and of the classroom instruction represents the actual student population and their audiences rather than an outdated and inaccurate image of the idealized student population – that is, we need to move beyond the myth of linguistic homogeneity" (p. 188).

Most authors conclude that a cross-cultural approach to content is fundamental, but equally important may be broadening the notion of "text" to include more than just print media – film, audio recordings, webtexts, performances – all of which can be "read" and analyzed in ways that highlight and value cultural differences. In an early study of a cross-cultural approach to composition that incorporated international readers and foreign films, Kehrer et al. (1990) argued for the benefit of multimodal texts, saying that "The purpose of the cross-cultural courses is not only to instruct the students in the basics but also, through word and film, to immerse them in the shared bonds of the human condition which know no barriers. As students become more culturally aware, they also develop composition and critical thinking skills" (p. 361).

Approaches from Literature

Some disciplines have been quietly internationalized for many years. The transnational flow of ideas has long been occurring in English departments, for example, and this has significant benefits for internationalizing the WAC/WID classroom. Literatures in English are already a significant part of the English curriculum and as such, these departments have been teaching a global perspective for decades. Although Dasenbrock (1987) believes that: "our textbooks, our curricular structures, our professional organization, our libraries, our research tools, and even our sense of appropriate areas of specialization, as revealed in our job advertisements – all share a resounding silence about the breakdown of the hegemony of English literature in the twentieth century" (p. 56), he does not dispute the value that literatures in World Englishes have brought, and indeed, Khadka (2012) still regards this as one of the greatest strengths of English. Like Dasenbrock, Fleischman (1994) also thinks that literature as a discipline must be more open, and he puts forward a stirring argument:

> Just as American literature today must relax the English language norm to included international figures like I. S. Singer, Czesław Miłosz, and Joseph Brodsky – who write mainly in their native languages while drawing on their experience of American life – so English literature must find a place for Salman Rushdie, Timothy Mo, and Kazuo Ishiguro, born in Bombay, Hong Kong, and Nagasaki respectively, but Londoners all (even in hiding). English, both as a literature and as a scholarly field, has been irrevocably shaped by the massive good and evil of modern history – in which decolonization is only one among the crucial episodes" (p. 159-160).

This internationalization of Englishes underscores the fact that "English is no longer just the language of the English and the Americans" (Dasenbrock, 54) but rather "a world language and a world literary language; English departments can therefore introduce students to the world" (p. 58). Although Schaub (2003) argues that "We need to move from discussing American models in terms of our local situation to discussing local models in non-U.S. contexts" (p. 91), there is no doubt that English itself remains the most cosmopolitan of languages. Khadka (2012) agrees, saying "English is now the vehicle of different forms of globalization – economic, cultural, political, and technological, and it has been an instrument of cross-cultural, cross-linguistic and cross-national communication" (25), and he goes on to note that: "the English language helps make the transnational and global flow of peoples, products and ideas possible" (p. 25).

Approaches from Technical Writing

In addition to the internationalizing nature of World Englishes as literature, technical writing has also been at the forefront of internationalizing the writing curriculum for many years, and according to Matsuda and Matsuda (2011), "technical communication is one of the first and most successful areas in its efforts to integrate international issues into scholarship and in instruction" (p. 173). Much can also be

learned about internationalization from a technical communication approach to text design; in a recent textbook, Anderson (2013) instructs students: "When writing at work, you may often address readers from other nations and cultural backgrounds. Many organizations have clients, customers, and suppliers in other parts of the world […] Even when communicating with co-workers at your own location, you may address a multicultural audience – persons of diverse national and ethnic origins" (p. 5).

As well as noting the international aspect of technical communication, Anderson also points out that inter-cultural communication can happen at home, even between colleagues in the same office, as they may have different cultural heritages, and as Canagarajah (2006) notes, "If they are not working with multilingual people in their offices or studying with them in schools, Anglo Americans are exposed to WE in other ways" (p. 612) through production, marketing, and business. Markel, in the 2016 edition of *Technical Communication*, notes, "Sometimes people in the United States incorrectly assume that their own cultural values are shared by everyone" (p. 35), adding later in the same volume, "Cultural differences are many and subtle. Learn as much as possible about your readers and about their culture and outlook…" (p. 329).

This facility with cultural difference is elemental to WAC and WID; within the discipline of Composition Studies, according to Monroe (2002) and Schaub (2003), internationalization has often meant examining and learning from teaching practices in other nations, particularly in the realm of undergraduate writing, writing across the disciplines, and first year writing/composition. Many institutions abroad, whether English-speaking or not, employ the writing techniques normally seen in composition classes in discipline-specific content courses rather than as a separate class taken as a first year student. Russell (1991) notes, "General composition courses are almost unheard of in other nations, so efforts tend to focus in the disciplines" (p. 330) and Russell et al. (2009) write that the primary difference between the UK and the US is "that the US has a ubiquitous, required general writing course in higher education, first year composition" (p. 396); WAC/WID, in contrast to first year composition, has been internationalized since its inception.

The fact that Englishes are spoken all over the world does, however, remain one of the greatest strengths of the composition field; it facilitates the practice of internationalizing our classrooms. Englishes are a world language, if not *the* world language, and this positions WAC and WID efforts as the vanguard of campus internationalization efforts, but also at the forefront of the changing language landscape. As Canagarajah (2006) argues, "In the context of the Internet, and digital media, we see the mixing of not only different varieties of English but also of totally different languages. To be literate on the Internet, for example, requires competence in multiple registers, discourse, and languages, in addition to different modalities of communication and different symbol systems" (p. 612); this is the new global landscape for our students.

Looking Forward

This special issue of *ATD* seeks to continue the promotion of international and intercultural understanding in the WAC/WID classroom for students and instructors from every background and to further broaden our understanding of these new global literacies and competencies. The editors have brought together four pieces, each examining different and at times complementary aspects of the internationalization process in writing classrooms from across the disciplines, covering topics as diverse as internationalizing writing programs (Feuerhern and Blumner), internationalizing STEM (Sharma), ideal teaching practices for international learners in the writing classroom (Romero and Shivers-McNair), and non-native speakers' author stances (Fife).

Emily Feuerhern and Jacob Blumner's experiences and reflections on internationalizing the writing program at the University of Michigan – Flint, are explored in "Growing Pains and Course Correction: Internationalizing a Writing Program." In this case study, the authors discuss the challenges of adapting

writing instruction to the growing number of international students on campus, and address the impact of individuals and policies on the creation of "insiders" and "outsiders."

In "Internationalizing Writing in the STEM Disciplines," Ghanashyam Sharma considers the importance of World Englishes and their influence on writing in the STEM disciplines, arguing that writing instruction in these areas should be informed by the transnational and cross-cultural nature of collaboration in these technical subjects. Through her study exploring student beliefs about a monolingual version of World English, Sharma investigates how this myth interferes with complex writing within STEM. Sharma offers a series of strategies to enhance teaching practices within WAC/WID's internationalization of writing practices in science, technology, engineering, and math.

Yasmine Romero and Ann Shivers-McNair, in "Encountering Internationalization in the Writing Classroom: Guiding Praxis Principles," discuss ideal pedagogical practices for international learners in the multilingual writing classroom. The authors consider how students from different disciplines and linguistic and cultural backgrounds conceptualize internationalization. Using their classroom data, Romero and Shivers-NcNair outline resistant teaching and learning approaches designed to enable students to challenge normative assumptions about language and identity.

Jane Fife, in "Can I Say 'I' in My Paper?: Teaching Metadiscourse to Develop International Writers' Authority and Disciplinary Expertise," delves deeply into the cultural differences that complicate non-native speakers' attempts to write research in English, particularly addressing non-native speakers' authorial stances in WAC/WID, and the use of pronouns in non-native students' writing. Through her classroom practice using a comparative genre analysis assignment to compare and contrast author stance, she illustrates how students can successfully increase their own rhetorical awareness of author perspective in their own work.

This collection of articles outlines field-tested principles and practices; it contributes to our understanding of what works to internationalize diverse types of WAC/WID classrooms.

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