# Chapter Three

## How Our Informants Teach Students to Write

> *How do you like this for a chutzpa answer—teaching students to think philosophically is teaching them to think? I want students to cut through the crap and get to the issue and then to understand whether or not the issue has been presented in a way that makes sense, that's trustworthy, that's convincing, that's arguable.*
>
> —DEBRA BERGOFFEN, PHILOSOPHY

Chutzpa or no, Bergoffen's response to our question about the conventions students need to know to be successful writers in the discipline was typical of many of our informants, who suggested that good writing is good writing and hence good thinking, no matter the discipline. Even those informants who saw standards for good writing varying with the discipline usually began their descriptions of the qualities of writing they wanted their students to learn by giving us a similar group of imprecise terms: "clear," "logical," "well-reasoned," "grammatically correct," and so forth, just as they had when they described their expectations for writing in the field. As we pointed out, it was only with more questioning that we were able to uncover the nuances and often major differences not only among fields but also from one writer to another.

This repetition of similar terms is, we feel, easily explained by reference to the principles of academic writing elaborated in Chapter One:

- Clear evidence in writing that the writer(s) have been persistent, open-minded, and disciplined in study

- The dominance of reason over emotion or sensual perception
- An imagined reader who is coolly rational, reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response

This paradigm was confirmed over and over in our informants' responses, some doing so more strenuously than others. That their first responses tended to follow from the academic paradigm, rather than bespeak rhetorical and epistemological difference, also confirms what David Russell has called the "myth of transparency" in academic rhetoric:

> Because apprentices in a discipline very gradually learn its written conventions as an active and integral part of their socialization in a community, the process of learning to write seems transparent. Scholars and researchers come to view the particular genres that the disciplinary community has evolved (and each member of it has internalized) not as rhetorical strategies, conventional—but gradually changing—means of persuasion; instead, the community's genres and conventions appear to be unproblematic renderings of the fruits of research. (*Writing* 16–17).

The problem for us as researchers, then, is that when our informants use similar terms to refer to their goals and expectations for student writing, we can't be sure that they share the same values or are actually talking about very different things. As we will show in this chapter, our data confirm that there is an academic way of conceptualizing writer, reader, and task, and that these follow the academic principles we've laid out. But, as we will also show, the common terminology that faculty use often hides basic differences in rhetoric, exigency, epistemology, style, form, and formatting—differences that are revealed when faculty elaborate on their assignments. When very real differences are cloaked in the language of similarity, it's understandable that students would find it hard to decode what teachers want and come to see their assignments and expectations as esoteric to the teacher's disciplines, if not just idiosyncratic.

Indeed, this confusion by students may result from teachers' own misperceptions of just how representative their expectations for students are. Every WAC/WID workshop leader has encountered faculty who are surprised when their assessment of a piece of student writing differs greatly from the assessment by a colleague. We recall in a recent workshop a faculty member from a technical discipline who wondered how faculty could benefit from a group analysis of sample student papers in their discipline—"after all, we all think alike"—only to discover in the workshop major differences. A common composition teacher's nightmare is embodied in Susan McLeod's story of the historian at her institution who berated her and "the entire discipline of English"

for not teaching "these people how to write." When the two teachers looked at the same student's work from each of their courses, they saw that the student had merely and wrongly assumed that the second teacher would expect the same voice and argumentation technique as the first, each teacher working squarely—as each perceived it—within the convention of the field (Tate et al). Within the ever more specialized compartments of the modern academy it's no wonder that such misperceptions of uniformity exist. Indeed, we might posit that, when teachers think about their own expectations, they most likely do not know to what extent their standards for "good writing" conform to

- The academic (pertaining to the broad principles described in Chapter One)
- The disciplinary (pertaining to the methods and conventions of the teacher's broad "field")
- The subdisciplinary (pertaining to the teacher's area of interest, with its own methods and conventions, within the broader discipline)
- The local or institutional (pertaining to the policies and practices of the local community or school)
- The idiosyncratic or personal (pertaining to the teacher's unique vision and combination of interests)

Russell and Yanez use Engestrom's (2001) version of "cultural historical activity theory" to explain and illustrate how this confusion leads to mutual misunderstanding by teachers and students, with the typical result being the teacher's misjudging of student ability and the student's "alienation." They illustrate this process through a case study of an Irish history course used to fulfill a general education requirement for students across fields. They see in the concept of general education, as it is practiced in most American colleges, confusion between nonspecialist goals for all students and goals for specialists. Since the teacher in the study intends the writing assignments to lead to students' improvement in generic academic rhetorical and thinking skills, yet assumes that his epistemology and rhetoric as a historian are synonymous with these, there is inevitable conflict between the nonspecialist students' understanding of the assignments and the teacher's expectations. Using activity theory's focus on goals and motives to understand the success or failure of "tool-mediated social activity systems," such as a student's attempts to fulfill a teacher's assignment through writing, the authors perceive that only further negotiation between student and teacher, in which their differing motives and understandings can be elucidated, can overcome the alienation of the students.

Based on our research with faculty and students, we want to extend Russell and Yanez's thesis. The confusion for both faculty and students stems

not only from differences in expectations based on unacknowledged disciplinary preferences but also from subdisciplinary and idiosyncratic preferences, both also unacknowledged and frequently unexamined by faculty. Our research suggests that any time a teacher evaluates student writing (or writing by colleagues) the expectations for that writing are an ambiguous mix of all these preferences. As we show in this chapter, faculty differ substantially in their awareness of these distinctions in their judgments. Understandably, then, as we discuss in the next chapter, students see the idiosyncratic as dominating the academic in teacher's expectations, and have the same difficulties that teachers do in understanding the various influences on expectations for writing. Further, when the students in our focus groups perceived that teachers were being idiosyncratic in their evaluative criteria, they may actually have been perceiving this mix of academic, disciplinary, subdisciplinary, local, and individual preferences.

To enact our inquiry into the similarities and differences of expectations from teacher to teacher, we spent a good portion of our interviews asking our informants about their uses of writing in teaching. We wanted to know their goals for student writers, what they assigned student writers to do, how they responded to what students produced, and how open they were to student attempts that fell outside of what they perceived to be disciplinary convention, attempts that might, for example, fit into the taxonomy of alternatives we described in Chapter One.

Further, we were curious about the degree of match between who these faculty were as writers and who they were as teachers of writing. We wondered whether and how their own writing practices, based on the ways they constructed the expectations of their discipline for themselves, would be translated in the assignments they give to students. If Roger Lancaster, for example, saw his own books as taking risks in anthropological subject matter and style, would his assignments permit his students to be equally daring? If Debra Bergoffen wrestled with the legitimacy and fullness of the "I" in her philosophical prose, would her assignments push students toward the same inquiry? If Chris Jones saw himself as both environmental research scientist and public policy advocate, would his assignments ask students to play both roles? How would Jeanne Sorrell's commitment to phenomenology play out in her undergraduate and graduate course designs? In other words, would our informants, in their assignments and course designs, encourage students to be as "alternative" in their treatment of the subject matter as they themselves have been? We gleaned the answers to these many questions primarily from our interviews with the informants and follow-up queries with several; we also analyzed course materials that they sent us or that we searched online. In addition, we analyzed the significance of criteria rubrics created by teams of faculty

in individual departments as part of a state-mandated assessment of the writing proficiency of university students (to which we alluded in Chapter One).

### *Three Perspectives*

We've organized this chapter into three large sections that illustrate differing perspectives by faculty. The first group of informants we'll discuss is those who are very aware that what they want students to do is discipline-based rather than generically academic. The second group is those who perceive that what they are asking for is a nonspecific academic essay, but, upon examining their goals and assignments, we see that their expectations are solidly rooted in their disciplinary traditions. The third group is those we consider to be the most alternative within a disciplinary framework (and thus very difficult to group) in that they want students to write prose in a surprising array of forms that bear an ambiguous relationship to disciplinary expectations. In a brief fourth section, we discuss the teaching of a multimedia specialist in an interdisciplinary college, specifically how her expectations for writing are inevitably alternative to any disciplinary framework given the convergence of so many influences in this emerging field. Although we are making distinctions among these groups, our analysis will show that even within the groups there is such a range of goals and assignments distinguishing one teacher from another that students will find it impossible to assume that what one teacher wants is what another teacher will want.

## "How to Think Like a Scientist": Teaching the Tools of the Discipline

> My purpose in general is to link the class with the world and to try and get them to see that the material that we're trying to put in front of them has some usefulness and some relevance in the world at large.
>
> —*Chris Jones, Environmental Science, on his goals in 100-level classes*

We begin this section with Jones because he recognizes the specific relevance of the forms of writing he requires of students and the limited relevance of the ways of thinking those forms embody to those outside the discipline. The faculty we describe here do not imagine that their assignments replicate the general goals of faculty in other subject areas, except in the vaguest way. For them, "good writing" in any assigned format differs in clear ways from "good writing" in others.

For Jones, his differing goals for students determine the quite different things he asks them to do and how he expects them to present their work.

Jones's primary rhetorical concern for undergraduate majors in biology and environmental science is that they learn the genre of the experimental lab report—according with his primary epistemological goal that they learn the methods of scientific observation and analysis. Jones's majors are expected to read journal articles and write full reports "as if" to be submitted to a journal. When we asked him if he would accept a report from an environmental science major that did not conform to conventional arrangement, he said, "I'd ask them to rewrite it in the proper format, as most of my colleagues would. I try not to be negative to people, but even our general education students should toe the line in that way."

Unlike the biology and environmental science majors, Jones's general education students learn the methods of the laboratory and the format of the report only to the extent that they can fill in blanks and answer multiple-choice questions. His primary goal in the freshman-level course for nonmajors is expressed in the quote that begins the chapter; one assignment he gives to help students achieve this goal is a poster presentation that requires them to select, summarize, and critique several recent newspaper articles that bear on a topic that they have studied in the course. His objectives behind the assignment include (1) showing students what it means to think like a scientist by comparing textbooks and labs with popular representations of scientific discoveries; (2) increasing students' motivation to study science by showing its relevance to their everyday lives and (3) making them more critical of the "world according to newspapers" and other popular media.

Note that while the poster presentation is a familiar form used by scientists to convey information about research at conferences, Jones has adapted it for a very different exigency—hence, the questions he asks, the sources to be used, and the format of the poster are specific to the writer, the audience, and the purpose, each different from those of the poster of the scientific researcher. We see how misleading it could be to an outsider to Jones's teaching to be told that his gen ed students are creating "poster presentations." Again, the familiar term masks the complexity of genre in this situation.

Corroborating Jones's emphasis on teaching scientific method to majors, Robert Smith says, "We teach people how to write in standard scientific reporting formulas. We also teach people how to think in that way because we're very much a database discipline." The core course for psychology majors (a "writing intensive" course in the GMU program) teaches students the structure and exigencies of the APA reporting form, regardless of the branch of the discipline in which they will later specialize. Yet, he acknowledges, "How they use that training is going to vary a lot. About 30 percent of our undergraduate majors go on for some form of graduate study, the rest of them do not. Nevertheless, the data-based mode of thought and

the ability to communicate factual information clearly is our overriding goal."

When we asked him about rhetorical options in the psychology curriculum, he immediately noted the use of journals in some undergraduate and graduate courses, including his own use of a several-entries-per-week journal assignment in his mentoring of Ph.D. students teaching their first undergraduate courses. Consistent with his emphasis on "data-base thinking" was his rationale for the journal, as an "efficient way for me to know what's going on in their heads when they're not in the class." Rather than dichotomizing the journal as "personal" and the APA report as "impersonal," he saw the journal as "a different way of collecting information about what's going on in these students' classes," more efficient, hence more informative, in this context than would be the standard report.

Neither Jones nor Smith enacts a one-size-fits-all pedagogy in his applications of writing in classes at different levels. Yes, both are explicitly guided by the scientific paradigm most conventionally embodied in the experimental report, and this form they are committed to teaching to their majors. Nevertheless, they adapt, often significantly, the standard format of the scientific report to the purposes of the given course (the "exigencies" of the genre) and to the nature and needs of the learners. We can't emphasize enough the possible disjunction between *format* and *genre* that outside observers, such as composition teachers and their students, should be aware of when they hear assignments identified by teachers across disciplines. In the hands of a Chris Jones or a Bob Smith, the "poster presentation" and the "journal" are tools that are refined for particular exigencies and that must be understood within those contexts.

Perhaps none of our informants so starkly represents the precise linking of assignment, form, and teaching method to rhetorical exigency and course objectives as does physicist Trefil, whose own writing career, as we described in the previous chapter, has enacted a dramatic divergence between academic science and scientific journalism. Trefil's writing career has to a significant extent paralleled his teaching emphases. Since coming to George Mason in the late 1980s after having built reputations as both theoretical physicist and popular science writer, his teaching has had twin foci: on the one hand, he teaches undergraduate general education and honors science courses; on the other, he has taught science journalism courses for English and communication majors. When he speaks about each type of teaching and the writing he assigns students in each venue, he firmly states the distinctions between the environments and the nontransferability of the rhetorics. To Trefil, "good writing" in one context is not good writing in another.

The most important teaching contexts for Trefil are (1) the general education courses he teaches (Great Ideas in Science), (2) first-year courses for

physics majors, and (3) the course in science writing he gives to majors in English and communication. The Great Ideas course crosses a range of disciplines and presents Trefil's "scientific worldview." Not a lab course, it's Trefil's opportunity to make the world of science meaningful to all students, much as his book *Science Matters* has. Although it is a lecture class for upwards of 80 students, he uses writing "to get them thinking about science outside of the classroom, either by watching television, or reading the newspaper, or going on the Web, or however they get their news, to see the scientific component." In his most recent iteration of an assignment, he asks students about five times a semester to choose several different, recent articles in popular media that touch on a scientific topic of interest, summarize them, and then state their own critical reaction to the coverage, all in 2–3 pages (with the articles attached). As a variation on the learning journal, these summaries and reactions are primarily exercises that reinforce course objectives, not "papers" in a scientific sense.

By contrast, his assignments in first-year courses for physics majors teach skills working scientists will need. However, unlike Jones's emphasis on the correct format and rhetoric of the scientific article, Trefil has prioritized writing for oral presentation—and the oral skills themselves. He assigns each student to research an important experiment in the history of physics, then summarize it in a written report, then present the results orally to the entire class. "It forces them to do the talking about experiments rather than have me lecture on them, and it gives them practice in finding the information. The writing and speaking they will need to do persistently as scientists."

For these new science majors, Trefil's concern for scientific method corroborates that of Smith and Jones. But Trefil has his own take on how writing can teach this epistemology. He is critical of what he calls "cookbook" labs with preconceived right answers; these, he says, encourage students to "work backwards from the answers to their data. So not only are they not learning science, they learn antilearning—it has nothing to do with the real world. When I design labs, I never have labs done in a room. For example, I'll have them go out and measure the position of the sun at nine o'clock every day, all through the semester, plot the results, then speculate in writing—hypothesize—why the points fall as they do."

In sharper contrast still is the writing that makes up Trefil's course Science Writing, which he offers occasionally through the English department. The juniors and seniors who take this course are preparing for careers in nonfiction writing and journalism; he intends this course "to get students to where they can write about a complicated subject on which they have limited background; craft an article that a wide range of readers would want to read *all the way through*, that will capture the main ideas, and that will not get

derailed into side issues." He does not believe that these students need to be scientists in order to write engagingly and accurately about scientific matters; his students have written well enough to convince him of that. But they do need to be serious writers: in his course they write to weekly article deadlines and they build to a 3000-word article by semester's end. His feedback is intense, too, and stresses technique: "My comments are fully detailed—I can get down to the choice of a particular word. I spend a whole week on opening sentences; it doesn't make any difference if everything is beautifully written if somebody stops reading after the first sentence."

"Engagement" is also a critical criterion to Clark from English and African American Studies; however, he differs from Trefil in his emphasis on engaging with the field itself. Clark "assumes" that the literary and historical texts his students read are engaging—and that the students will be engaged in the study. "I'm sort of a dinosaur. I assume the subject is engaging. I want them to read and write carefully and critically." Similar to the way in which Jones and Smith prioritize undergraduate science majors' learning of the format and rationale of the experimental research report, Clark strives to commit his English and African American Studies majors to close reading of texts and to critical analyses that employ the range of "interpretive stances" he teaches them. True to his background in literary studies and to the expectations for scholarship he learned and has practiced, as we described them in Chapter Two, Clark focuses his students' energies on the analysis of text, to the point that he often limits the number of secondary sources that they might use. "I'm almost harshly critical—I want students to see that they have to look much more critically and carefully at some minute facet of the text."

Much like Trefil when he teaches the English and communication majors in his Science Writing course, Clark pays intense attention to the words and sentences of his upper-division students. Whereas Trefil's purpose is to make his proto-journalists and popular essayists readable to a nonacademic audience, Clark's is focused on the academic readership. He related his own epiphany as a college student to the need for such care for correctness in standard English, as he recalled a teacher in an advanced writing course who had shown the same attentiveness to student academic prose that he shows in his own detailed comments. Hence, it is not surprising that Clark does not encourage students to experiment in their essays with nonstandard dialects. "Sometimes students are hostile, but I say I'm grading in this way and it will behoove you to listen to me. I feel I have to toe the line. Too often people in the university don't."

To this point in the chapter, each informant whose teaching we have portrayed evinced a definite sense of the most conventional form and exigency of

writing in her or his discipline. While Jones, Smith, and Trefil vary at times, often significantly, from convention in specific assignments for specific groups of students, all three share a standard picture of the scientific article. Clark is similarly unwavering in regard to critical analysis in literary study. For these faculty, the standard is that of fellow professionals in their fields, and they expect graduate students, and in some cases undergraduates, to learn it and write it.

By contrast, as we pointed out in Chapter Two, there is no scholarly tradition of writing in dance. The writing of dance professionals and dance educators is primarily a "translation" for nondancer readers: performance audiences, funding sources, college administrators, and so forth. Miller described in that chapter various translations she must make in her own prose as dancer, teacher, and administrator. When she assigns writing to her undergraduate students, her emphases parallel the priorities in her own prose. In dance, as we've noted, there is no standard that dictates convention that teachers either strive for or work against in their assignments. Nevertheless, we include Miller in this section of the chapter because she, like the others, knows that good writing in her field is not the same as good writing elsewhere and tailors her writing curriculum to the rhetorical contexts her students will encounter when they leave college.

Even if her undergraduates are not yet having to write proposals, reports, and reviews, she finds it critical that they develop the ability to see their performances as audiences would, rather than as a sequence of technical moves. She is particularly concerned that they develop an overall idea of the performance and communicate this idea through appropriate metaphors. She pushes students to avoid the typical extremes: on the one hand, mere exclamation ("beautiful" and "graceful" she forbids her students to use) and on the other, mere technical jargon ("two jetés and a pique turn"). "Again, it's translating: you have to talk about ideas, images, metaphors. It's like reading authors in whose work you can smell where you are. It's more than just saying 'gray tights and a gray leotard' and 'I thought it was a cool dance.' Better to say, for example, 'they looked like naked bodies covered in ash.'"

## "Good Writing Is Good Writing": Perceiving the Universal in the Disciplinary

> Economics is a way of thinking. It's deductive and rigorous. My goal in undergraduate writing is to have them see that you can apply an economic way of thought to just about anything.
>
> —*Walter Williams, Economics*

> If undergraduates can write clearly, logically and reasonably, I'm happy. I'd rather awaken in them a sense of how to essay an experience logically in a little five-page paper than to have them execute an ethnographic study.
>
> —*Roger Lancaster, Anthropology*

> I'm not trying to make undergraduates into political scientists. I want them to be clear and logical writers. But, to tell you the truth, I'm not sure what the difference is. I think good political science writing is good scholarly writing in terms of clarity, organization, and use of evidence.
>
> —*Priscilla Regan, Political Science*

The informants we've placed in this second group—Williams, Regan, Lancaster, and Bergoffen—all observed that their rhetorical expectations for undergraduate writers are synonymous with general principles of good academic writing. Unlike the informants in the first group, who articulated these principles in the context of discipline-based exigencies, those in the second group talked in much more general terms about the forms they assign, such as the "essay" or simply "papers" to help students write analytically and persuasively. As we will show in this section, however, their expectations for what it means to "essay" a topic logically as well as what constitutes appropriate evidence and a readable style are actually quite different, revealing how firmly rooted these informants are in their own disciplinary traditions even as they profess otherwise. To be successful writers for these teachers, students need to be attuned not only to the explicit instructions they may be given but also to the disciplinary nuances implicit in the assignments.

Possibly more than any of our other informants, Williams's assignments and expectations for student writing seem to reflect his own writing outside of the academy. As we mentioned earlier, Williams has never forgotten his mentor's advice that, if a writer truly knows his subject, he can explain it to anyone, and he regularly enacts that advice in his syndicated columns, which apply economic principles to social problems. Not surprisingly, then, his assignments for both undergraduates and graduate students entail writing brief essay responses to everyday questions, like the following based on a biblical passage: "'A man shall not worry about what pertains to a woman and a woman shall not worry about what pertains to a man.' What's the economic interpretation of that passage? I don't have the answers to this question, but the thing that I look for is how they reason through to an answer." When we probed for more details, Williams talked about features of usage and syntax rather than forms, formats, or other rhetorical elements, i.e., contexts, audiences, purposes, that writers might face. He was particularly adamant about the need for students to learn to "economize with words" and, no matter their language backgrounds, to write in

standard edited English. Further, he has no patience with discussions of alternative dialects—for example, Ebonics—regardless of their political intent. As an African American himself, he believes it "cruel to talk about alternatives. There is a culture here and we're born into it. To accept some of the nonsense, and I see it as nonsense, I think that's crushing."

Williams seemed surprised when we asked him what advice he gives to students to help them fulfill his expectations for clear, economical writing and analysis. "I don't really give them instructions," he explained. "I'll ask a question and then, when a student answers, I say 'I think I understand the answer, but I don't like your answer.' Then I tell them how a typical question should be answered. So I somewhat model the answer for them, but this is all oral." Even though Williams sees his expectations as generic to good writing, his modeling process presumably points students to specific rhetorical strategies, even exact wordings, they should use in their papers. Interestingly, Williams's modeling process, as we discuss more fully in the next chapter, points to one of the ways students in our focus groups said they learn to write for different teachers; that is, by listening to lecture styles and to teacher's answers to student questions they can figure out what the teacher might want, especially when the assignment instructions are vague or nonexistent.

Like Williams, Regan said that the skills students learn to employ when they write in political science are the same as those they need to write well in college in general. "I'll always emphasize the need to be clear and logical and organized regardless of what the purpose of the writing is or the form that it takes," she explained. Typical forms in political science, she said, are "compare/contrast" and "opinion" papers. While this general description may sound very much like the modes-based assignments used by many composition teachers, the purposes for writing and the rhetorical tasks she assigns, along with the readers she asks students to envision, have everything to do with a political science epistemology and the disciplinary exigencies that shape them: such exigencies, for example, as the need to explain political events to constituencies, to understand and address competing interests, and to inform or persuade individuals to take specific actions.

Regan's language in describing one of her "opinion paper" assignments is telling in this regard. She routinely asks both undergraduate and graduate students to write a memo to a member of Congress—as a "device" for teaching them how "to give an opinion and argue for that opinion." She asks them "to picture the member of Congress they're arguing to so that they have a sense of the importance of the argument." Writing for "an applied audience," she said, helps students write at a more sophisticated level. While Regan sees the memo format as a useful device for teaching argument, it might be more accurate to say that the applied audience is the device that helps students to

write for a political science teacher. Sophistication, for Regan, may entail students' understanding that they must react to people and to specific situations, not only to ideas, theories, and/or other texts. Their arguments, then, have practical consequences. They must learn to draw on the kinds of evidence that will be persuasive in other political contexts besides that of the class. Types of evidence may include, depending upon the issue, data from surveys and polls, authoritative testimony, legal precedents and cases, and so on, as well as secondary research and analysis of primary data.

Similarly, Regan's comparison-contrast assignments, one of which she gave to us, speak to the disciplinary exigency to understand the competing interests that motivate individuals to take political action. Students in her upper-division government course, then, are asked to analyze a current political debate in terms of theoretical controversies they've been studying in the class. They are expected to include "some quotations" from the text and explain their significance. Finally, they must provide their own analysis of the issue and "make sense of the conflicting views." Their paper must be "well organized and logically developed." When we read between the lines of this assignment, we can see Regan's expectation that students, by their close reading of the assigned texts, will understand what constitutes a logical argument and appropriate quoting in political science. Further, if political decisions and the theories that attempt to explain them are made based on the interests of individuals who make up the polis, then the exigencies for writing and the writing itself are necessarily quite different from that in, say, psychology, philosophy, or literature.

They are not so different, however, from economics. Like Williams, Regan believes that in college and in their careers after college, students need the ability "to distill information, form an opinion, and present it in a way that's concise, brief, and to the point." In their emphasis on concise style, both Regan and Williams reveal the similar natures of their disciplinary concerns; that is, both are concerned with the self-interests of individuals acting within political and economic systems. Both envision nonacademic audiences who must be informed and/or persuaded to act within those systems. And, for both, that entails prose that is "precise, logical, and clear," meaning prose that will speak effectively to these audiences. The emphasis on conciseness in both disciplines might be compared to the standard emphasis on conciseness in business writing that, likewise, imagines a nonacademic reader and is action-oriented.

For anthropologist Lancaster, such a prose style is anathema. Student writing, according to his "pretty basic and conservative" standards, "should be clear, it should be logical, and it should be readable." While Lancaster is using almost exactly the same terms that Williams and Regan are using, he means something very different by them. Readable prose, for Lancaster, is prose fashioned after the classic literary texts of anthropology, like those by Mead,

Turnbull, and Pritchard, who appealed both to academic and nonacademic readers who enjoy—and expect—belletristic writing. "I hate that scientific paradigm that prose is supposed to be transparent," he said. "I think most Americans tend to think of writing as something that gets you to the point rather than something you live with." He described an anthropology major he once worked with who had been trained to translate scientific texts into short digests. "You'd look at her writing and it was all bullet style writing, close small sentences, active verbs. I couldn't help saying 'This is not how you write. Don't bring that to this class. You cannot get traction on ideas that way.' She got better, and, if I'd had another semester, I could have done more."

"More," for Lancaster, starts at the sentence level:

> A good sentence should be alive. It may be Ernest Hemingway style, lean and sparse, or George Orwell style, very rational, logical, with no excess anywhere, or Jean Paul Sartre, roundabout and elusive with a fine structure. Like Brechtian *geste*, there's an order in which you write the sentence so that when you reach the end it comes as a surprise, or it comes to you that there's a sense of completion, or a sense that the sentence is incomplete and leaves you wanting more. Sentences have to behave differently.

While others in anthropology may not "obsess over style" the way he does, he notes that the books people assign in their courses, particularly in introductory courses, tend to be those that are "well styled" and written "the good way."

It's this good way that Lancaster wants his students to learn; however, as he sees it, the standard ethnographic report is not the best form for teaching "basic good writing." Nor, he said, is it standard practice to assign ethnographic reports to undergraduates, at least until their senior year. In his classes, he teaches students to write what he called "standard academic essays"—essays "composed out of other essays"—in which they refine their ideas and arguments and, most emphatically, their prose through a process of careful revision. Sometimes, Lancaster said, he lets his undergraduates—both majors and nonmajors—do ethnographic research for their essays because, when students use ethnographic techniques, they learn "to form reasonably informed opinions supported by primary data from participant-observation research." Further, Lancaster said, students can "very quickly develop an array of critical thinking skills about how they interact with other people, how they draw conclusions about everyday life, and how they mobilize evidence to work up an argument. In other words, they're not just constructing an argument out of a book, they're trying to work up an argument out of the stuff of everyday life, and this is not a bad little thing to include in the bag of tricks that you teach undergraduates." Though he may characterize his bag of tricks as basic good writing, Lancaster, like Regan and Williams, is working from a

disciplinary paradigm, from his preference for the literary style of classic anthropological texts to his view that valid evidence comes either from other empirical studies or from systematic observations of everyday life.

Bergoffen, too, clearly works from a disciplinary paradigm even though, in her view, when she teaches students to think philosophically, she is teaching them "to think." For Bergoffen, this entails helping them to reflect critically on philosophical arguments and to write "straightforward papers: here's the thesis, here's the development, here's the conclusion." Straightforward papers, as her reflection paper assignment reveals, can be written in creative forms. Sometimes, she said, she sets up an "imaginative situation: Socrates is in the Eternity McDonald's and he meets John Stuart Mill and Locke, and they find themselves at the same table because it's crowded and they start arguing about human nature. What would they have said? What is this conversation about?" She encourages students to write in dialogue form and delights in the way some of them set up introductory stories about how the philosophers got to McDonald's, what the McDonald's looks like, and so on. If students "don't enjoy that kind of creativity," they can write in an "essay" form. Whatever the form, the expectation is that students will engage in a dialectic as they work through the philosophical arguments; that is, they must "take a position, state their opinion, and make clear that their evaluation is not going to be about opinions but about arguments." The reflection assignments, she said, are generally set up as "compare/contrast questions," similar, it seems, to those Regan asks, although the exigency, the form, and the imagined audiences are quite different.

The general term "reflection paper" is interesting to think about in a philosophical context where the questions that drive the discipline have to do with how one lives a rational and reflective life. In this paper, Bergoffen is not interested in how students "feel" about these questions nor is she asking them to reflect on their own lives; in fact, she gets "distressed" when she discovers, as she so often does, that students who might have done a good job of "analyzing, dissecting, and critiquing the readings" tend to "fall apart" when she asks them to give their own opinion. "I get this statement that they don't back up, that just tells me how they feel, and it's like a total disconnect." When she asks students, "'What do you think?'" she expects "the same kind of attentiveness"—the careful analytical critique—that they have applied to their readings. Instead, students seem to see the question as "an invitation to be lazy." It's "discouraging," she said, to think that they may walk out of the classroom and, when they're "having conversations among themselves or reading the newspapers, just go right back into these sloppy ways of thinking." While Bergoffen has used standard academic terminology such as "argument" and "essay" to describe her assignments and sees them as a general corrective to students' lazy thinking, she too is privileging a disciplinary approach, one that

assumes close reading, a dialectical structure, and a reasoned ethos. Moreover, even the act of close reading itself differs considerably from close reading in, say, history or literary studies, where the meanings of primary sources or imaginative texts are interpreted within those disciplinary frameworks, as our discussions of Copelman and Clark illustrated.

To help students be better prepared for the reflection paper and to be sure that they are keeping up with the reading, Bergoffen also assigns journals. Again, however, her use of the journal is quite discipline specific, very different from the purposes behind Bob Smith's use of the "journal" in psychology, for example, as described earlier. For her, journals offer students a more informal place to engage in a dialectic, as they connect the texts they've been reading, raise questions, and reflect on answers. "I'm trying to have them ask questions in these two pages," she explained. "They can't just drop a question, they have to show how a text provokes the question, so I'm tying them to the text." When she first began using journals, she tried having students free write, but found that approach unworkable. Next she gave students short prompts for their weekly two-page entries. She intended their responses to inform the reflection papers—"My theory was they'd have all these little pieces ready to cut and paste into the bigger paper"—but found that students "didn't translate" the assignment in the same way. Instead they saw the journal as a discrete form with little connection to their papers, so it always seemed that they were "starting their papers from scratch." Now, Bergoffen explained with enthusiasm, she seems to have hit on the right formula. Instead of weekly journal entries, each student has to do only six, which can be spread out across the semester as the student wishes. In addition, each student must choose one reading on which to lead a class discussion. So, she said, "I'm looking at these logs as a classroom discussion tool and I'm not expecting anything else."

What Bergoffen was not translating to students initially, as we see it, is her construction of the journal as a place to practice a philosophical ethos and way of arguing that could then be formalized in their papers. It's understandable, then, that her first approach—free writing—would fail since most students will have a dramatically different conception of what it means to free write, just as they will of the journal as an "informal" writing space. Now that her expectations have changed, she is much more "excited" about the work that the journals seem to be accomplishing. Bergoffen continues to see the journal as a place for risk taking, but again her definition of "risk," as we saw when we asked her to clarify, is bound up with disciplinary concerns. For her, taking a risk means making a provocative argument, such as the one a student made when he wrote, "Job didn't change, God did." Just as she no longer expects that students can easily cut and paste a journal entry into their formal

papers, she also does not expect them to take the same kinds of risks in their reflection papers that she wants to see in the journal. This would be "a little too scary" for them, she noted, given that a larger percentage of their grade is at stake.

A risk Bergoffen did ask students in one of her upper-division courses to take, however, involved writing personally about aspects of their identity related to their philosophical engagement in a particular topic. Bergoffen had told us earlier that one of the biggest—and scariest—risks she had taken in her own work was writing about herself in an essay published in a collection on how philosophers' lives have informed their philosophical outlooks. She wrote about her academic path into philosophy, her identity as a woman and a Jew, and her feminism. When her students expressed discomfort about disclosing personal information in the assigment she'd given them, she put her own essay on reserve in the library for them to read and explained how uncomfortable she too felt sharing personal details with readers, perhaps even more so when those readers are students she sees face to face in class. While one might argue that this kind of personal writing represents an alternative to the impersonal discourses of philosophy, we see it, as does Bergoffen, as a response to the turn in philosophy to feminist and postmodern arguments that acknowledge the identity of the thinker as central to what is thought.

Similarly, we can see the experimental tradition in anthropology reflected in an alternative assignment Lancaster sometimes gives to his upper-division students. In sharp contrast to his insistence on lower-division students mastering "the standard essay form" and his impatience with the "impressionistic bullshit they often get away with writing in some of their other courses," Lancaster told us he sometimes tries to "liberate" his anthropology students from the "disciplinary police" by telling them to "do anything they want other than a standard essay" as long as they convey the course material and demonstrate a "serious engagement" with the ideas. "Some students have written epic poems; some have written plays. One group of students staged a Punch and Judy show on Bakhtin, which is very appropriate. Another group wrote a soap opera and acted it out. I don't allow belly dancing. I don't allow bizarre rituals. And nothing dangerous. But pretty much anything else," he said, adding that it's the newness of the experience that seems to "click in" and enables students to have "a much deeper engagement with the texts" than when they write in standard forms. He suspects this is the case because they are "drawing on other forms of learning than just sitting down and producing a linear paper." He grades these alternative assignments on "the content and not the aesthetics or performance value," he explained. "Even if they've done a video, or a play, or a montage of photos with text, they're still writing. It's just a different kind of writing." Further, he has a

"strong impression" that "the content is actually better, richer, and shows more seriousness of thought" than the content in their more linear papers. In many ways, Lancaster's description of this assignment reminds us of his description of the "montage" approach he used in *Life Is Hard*, which he initially believed to be quite daring and subsequently came to see as "standard ethnography." Further, his emphasis on student engagement, like Copelman's, represents an attitude he feels is essential for students learning the discipline. The unorthodox assignments that each gives are ways to achieve that goal. Thus a student product need not follow a standard format in the field to achieve the discipline's goals.

## Neither This Nor That: Alternative Exigencies, Alternative Forms

As Chapter Two shows, a number of our informants regularly write or have experimented with writing in ways they consider to be alternative within their disciplines, including, for example, Trefil and Williams, who currently write predominately for popular media, and Bergoffen and Lancaster, who have "risked" writing in postmodern voices and styles. Both Bergoffen and Lancaster also recognized, however, that their disciplines were at least somewhat open to texts that engaged with alternative discussions already occurring in the discipline. In turn, while both described, as we showed in the preceding section, their generally traditional expectations for student writing, each also occasionally experimented with giving assignments that mirrored their own theoretical preoccupations. The informants who are our main focus in this section, however, are those who are most firmly committed, in their own academic work and in the assignments they give to students, to exigencies, audiences, and forms that, as they see it, are truly alternative in their disciplines. These two informants spoke with conviction about their reasons for using unconventional assignments.

> And the students read these stories out loud in class, which can be really emotional. I've learned to bring a box of [tissues] to class.
>
> —*Jeanne Sorrell, Nursing*

What is perhaps most alternative about the assignments that both Jeanne Sorrell and Victoria Rader give is their expectation that students will experience a deep, emotional engagement with the topic and that they will, in turn, convey this feeling to readers as a way to motivate some kind of social change. Sorrell, for example, recognizes that the unequal relationship between doctors and nurses has meant that nurses are often afraid to trust

their own intuitions about a patient's condition, sometimes with unfortunate consequences. Sorrell is also very concerned about the current shortage of nursing professionals. For her, then, it is almost more important to give assignments that address these concerns than to have students write yet one more abstract or experimental report although they do these assignments as well. Rader, who has always integrated her social activism with her academic work, requires her students to do "action projects," for which they identify some cause they want to work on. "What is it you care about?" she asks students. "What would you like to be more fair? How can you join with someone else to make a change?" While Sorrell's and Rader's assignments are alternative in different ways, as we will show, both ask students to write personally about people and events that have influenced who they are and/or what they believe. They do this writing as a way to get in touch with larger social goals, i.e., larger than the academy, that the course and assignments promote.

We'll begin with a discussion of two of Sorrell's alternative assignments, which seem to share with Lancaster's and Bergoffen's assignments an overall goal of deepening students' engagement with the discipline. However, Sorrell's assignment goals extend, perhaps inevitably given the preprofessional status of nursing, beyond the academy to the field itself, where one of the most pressing concerns is the critical shortage of qualified nurses. Contributing to this shortage is the sense that nursing work is undervalued and underpaid. To address the first of these concerns, Sorrell has asked students in her upper-division Nurses as Writers course to write stories for children about what it's like to be a nurse. "I believe this kind of alternative writing," she said, "is more needed now than scholarly articles written for ourselves." The inspiration for the project came from her memory of becoming attracted to nursing as a preteen when she read the *Candy Stripers* and *Cherry Ames, RN* series. Sorrell thought young people—both boys and girls—might be similarly drawn in by "fictional accounts of some of the exciting and satisfying things that occur daily in areas such as neonatal nursing, oncology, E.R., for example." So she asked her students to write stories using "themselves as characters but also using characters not as often featured in nursing publications, like males and minority nurses." This project culminated in *The Magic Stethoscope*, a small soft-cover book authored by her students under the pseudonym R. N. Hope.

If the underlying motive for the children's book is to recruit nurses to the profession, the exigency for another of Sorrell's assignments—"paradigm cases"—is to help students get in touch with the realities of nursing work and, since most are already practicing or interning, to gain confidence in their abilities and intuitions. For this assignment, students write two stories, one about themselves and one about a patient. This is where the tissues come out,

according to Sorrell, as students read their stories aloud in a kind of "read-around," a standard activity of the Northern Virginia Writing Project, in which she participated. She also contributes a story to the read-around. "The reading aloud seems to serve a purpose, as the student's voice really comes through," she notes.

> And it is always a very powerful experience for the students and for me. Maybe it's the intensity of reading them; maybe we store stories differently in our memory. We usually don't analyze the story. I try to make it stand alone, and we go from one student to the next. But sometimes the story really hits home, and it seems best to stop and talk about it. In a way, the spontaneous discussion is a kind of phenomenological analysis, though we don't do a formal analysis.

The stories students tell, she said, reveal students' joys, their fears, their sometimes reluctance to contradict doctors, their sense of having made errors in judgment by not acting on their intuitions. "We need to write about our mistakes," Sorrell insists, "because that's what forwards our practice."

Sorrell uses the paradigm case assignment in her Advanced Clinical Nursing courses, and it is also a staple of the upper-division Nurses as Writers course and a required piece in students' capstone portfolios. In addition, faculty sometimes use the assignment in other undergraduate courses. However, Sorrell told us, some of the undergraduate faculty are uncomfortable with "the unstructured nature of the story" and so will substitute a more traditional case study. Some students too, Sorrell said, express discomfort with the assignment, thinking that it is not "the kind of sophisticated work that they expected to do in college." Some "will write the story with all of the details typical of lab study values, like they've learned to do in experimental reports." When this happens, she suggests they write to "a nonnursing professional to see how to alter that voice and eliminate details they don't need."

The emotional power of the stories and the discomfort that some faculty and students feel points to the inherently nonacademic nature of the assignment. In Chapter One, we said that, in academic writing, reasoned analysis always takes precedent over emotion or sensation. Yet here is an instance where emotion through story is allowed to exist without analysis or with what Sorrell characterized as a kind of spontaneous phenomenological analysis. Nevertheless, Sorrell obviously feels that an exercise of this kind plays an important role in the curriculum. While these assignments are clearly the ones Sorrell feels most passionate about, and which she described to us in detail, we don't want to give the impression that her students are not also doing more traditional academic work. As her syllabus for the Nurses as Writers course reveals, the culminating portfolio includes abstracts and

executive summaries, a "persuasive paper," and a critique of a professional article, as well as other short, reflective writings, and a resume.

While Sorrell believes that her alternative assignments are central and necessary to the nursing profession—and hence the discipline—if structural changes are to occur, Rader notes that "the overwhelming number of students in my classes are not sociology majors nor are they are going to be sociologists, so I'm training them to think about the world and to develop a social consciousness." As part of this process, students must necessarily learn and practice some of the principles of sociology, including, for example, careful observation, analysis, and reflection. Yet, unlike the discipline of nursing, which, as we discussed in Chapter Two, has opened up to accommodate a phenomenological methodology, Rader does not see the discipline of sociology accommodating social activism among its methodological concerns. Her description of the "action project" she assigns in both upper-division and introductory courses illustrates the weight she places on what might be called alternative methods—an insistence on practicing activism with "the goal" being "not just to get the action but to practice the process." The "analysis-reflection-action" process is a cycle, she said, that "actually comes from radical Catholic activism" and includes "analyzing the problem you want to commit yourself to, reflecting on the ethical, political, moral, and personal dimensions, and then acting on that analysis and reflection. Then you analyze your action and take the next action."

To prepare her students for the action project, Rader often gives them chapters from her book in progress. As noted in Chapter Two, her book discloses some very personal details about her life, such as stories about her alcoholic family and fights with her brother and father. The chapters seemed to make some students uncomfortable, she said, as she could tell not by what they said but by how "their eyes looked down when I asked for feedback." Still, she said, it's important to talk about these things because "it is part of who I am. Lots of families experience difficulties and disconnection, so I wanted to be honest." She wanted feedback from students because she thinks of them as a "major audience" for her book. (She acknowledged that part of their discomfort may have come from being asked to critique a professor's work.) Perhaps more important than getting their feedback, however, was her desire to model a reflective process for them.

To reinforce why we think of Rader's teaching as alternative, we want to compare her use of personal story to Bergoffen's. As we mentioned earlier, Bergoffen also shared her autobiographical writing with students, a published essay about her educational path into philosophy. In the essay, Bergoffen maintains an analytical distance, it seems to us, relying on a reader's familiarity with "woman" and "Jew" as categories of identity that influenced her educational and

scholarly choices (that of a girl growing up in the 1950s who has to come to terms with having different academic interests from other girls, a woman philosopher who embraces Simone de Beauvoir as someone who helps her formulate a feminist response to the Holocaust). In contrast, Rader seems to step outside of an academic persona to reveal the nitty-gritty, often painful, details of her dysfunctional family even as she also relates these experiences to alcoholism in families, racism in schools, social class, and so on. Her intention in giving readers this personal glimpse into her family life is not only to show how these experiences led her to become a social activist, but also to argue for the necessity of confronting and examining our personal pasts in order to understand why we feel the way we do about a particular social injustice. She asks her students to follow a similar process in her action project assignment.

### *Disciplines, Alternatives, and Perceptions of Risk*

In its insistence on the particulars of a writer's lived experiences, Rader's action project is similar to Sorrell's paradigm case assignment. Both assignments, whether accompanied by analysis or not, unabashedly allow students to revel in their felt experience as a means for getting in touch with that reality. In this way, both assignments reveal, we think, a belief in the power of the personal to testify, to give witness to, experiences that cry out for social change. To understand the risks that writers—both faculty and students—might feel they are taking when they write in such personal ways, we think it is useful to look again at the exigencies motivating personal disclosures and how these relate to disciplinary epistemologies. It's not unusual in sociology, for example, to study and write about dysfunction and social deviance. And, while Rader described her action project as something apart from "sociology," the assignment requires students to use many of the analytical skills used by sociologists. Further, she told us that even her more traditional assignments "have a reflexive component built in" and students are encouraged to use first person: "So I might ask something like, 'Do you think people can make a difference? What's your understanding of that? What's your experience with that?'"

So what are the perceived risks for Rader and her students, we wonder, compared to the risks Bergoffen perceives she is taking—and asking her students to take—when they write about how they have come to feel connected to a philosophical position. Perhaps for a philosopher any personal disclosure might feel risky in a discipline that prizes objective, rational inquiry. When we ask students to write personally, then, we need to think about our reasons for doing so, the kinds of revelations we're expecting, the ways students might be asked to use the personal in their disciplinary endeavors, and the degree of risk they might feel related to their own disciplinary inclinations.

We also think it's important to consider the criteria by which these kinds of assignments will be evaluated. When they described their alternative assignments to us, Lancaster, Sorrell, and Rader all observed that it can be hard to put a grade on this kind of work. "Students can get mad," Rader said, "like 'My story is my story, how can you evaluate it?'" Sorrell said she also struggles with how to put a grade on the paradigm cases and generally gives them all high marks for fulfilling the assignment. Lancaster does not mark students on the artistic merit, originality, or creativity of their alternative presentations; rather, he judges them on whether they have adequately conveyed an understanding of the course content. While these teachers may have come to terms with the pitfalls inherent in evaluating assignments that fall outside of disciplinary expectations, students are quite likely to be suspicious of such assignments and their teachers' motives in giving and grading them, as we will discuss in the next chapter on students' perceptions of writing and writing assignments in their majors.

## New Media, Hypermedia, Multimedia

We've put Lesley Smith, new media specialist, into a separate section because we see her assignments as part and parcel of a field that is itself a little-understood alternative within the academy. Further, she is tenure-line faculty in a relatively young interdisciplinary, integrative college. Given the convergence in "new media" of so many disciplinary perspectives accompanied by the dynamic development of technology, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to predict the framework for assignments and expectations for writing in this emerging field.

Students in Smith's classes can expect an ever-new mix of assignments that blend academic standards with rhetorical versatility and a flair for the avant-garde. With her historian's devotion to accuracy and thorough research and her poet's devotion to precision in language, she expects all student writing to "make every word count" and she expects "enough high-quality research so that they're not reinventing the real." Similarly, her years as a TV producer have given her deep respect for "professional standards" in the workplace as well as in academia; thus, she expects student work "that would convince me that if I were someone employing this person, or commissioning them to do this particular project, they were able to do what they said they were going to do."

At the same time, she gives students tasks that they are not likely to see in other courses, and the range of genres in even one course can be daunting, to say the least. In her most recent version of Writing for Multimedia, for example, students wrote (1) a news story "as if" for the university student

paper or a major daily, (2) an audio script meant for National Public Radio or the network news, (3) a "sparkling" 6–7 minute video script, (4) a script for an informational multimedia production, (5) a narrative script, nonfiction or fiction, and (6) a collaborative proposal, treatment, and script for a production in one of the media studied earlier—this project is meant to be done in concert with a media production course in which some are enrolled. Smith says she wants all this writing to be "clear, dynamic, and precise"; the instructions for every assignment caution students to think creatively and clearly about audience and purpose and to tailor the work accordingly.

While Writing for Multimedia shows students writing a wide variety of scripts in different forms for different audiences, the team-taught courses Information in the Digital Age and The Social World require students to create multimedia web-based projects even as they maintain the precision of language that she expects in all her courses. Her learning goals for Information in the Digital Age demonstrate the breadth of new media skills the students must learn in order to fulfill their writing assignments; they include learning to write hypertext, demonstrating an understanding of basic design principles, incorporating graphics, posting coursework for peer review, and publishing high-quality digital products. Smith sees the products created in this course as giving each student a place to create a "digital identity." "Who do you want people to perceive you to be?" she asks in the course overview. One assignment in this course requires students to research how "digital information is transforming the way we conduct our social, cultural, business, educational, political and economic affairs" and to publish a "multilevel website, which includes appropriate design and graphics and the ethical citation of sources."

This concern for the links between technology and culture is shown even more emphatically in The Social World, an integrative course that caps the freshman year experience for students in the interdisciplinary New Century College. In this course, the final project is a collaborative website that analyzes "how our location in a particular country at a particular time influences our writing of history and our ability to interpret and understand the histories and contemporary experiences in other regions of the world." Not only does Smith expect from these first-year students a multifaceted cultural critique, but she expects a multimedia presentation that tests the technical acumen they have been developing during this first year in NCC. Each group creates a "formal website that demonstrates intellectual rigor, narrative fluency, navigational coherence, and grammatical correctness. The site should also demonstrate attention to visual rhetoric: consider your layout, choice of colors, and use of graphics and photographs carefully. . . ."

Certainly Smith's "alternativeness," unlike Sorrell's or Rader's, does not consist of a departure from the academic stress on research-based analysis,

nor does it emphasize expression of emotion or sensation. The hypothetical "subject" of the capstone project in The Social World is a "self" only in the context-laden analysis by the reasoning student. When, in Information in the Digital Age, Smith asks students, "Who do you want people to perceive you to be?" she's not asking for emotion or even introspection, but for a carefully calculated digital identity, as image-conscious, if not so cynical, as anything on Madison Avenue or in Hollywood. In that regard, her perspective among our informants is perhaps closest to that of Miller or Regan, but even more multi-faceted and intense: though in an academic environment, she is ever aware of the rhetorical demands of the world outside, of the student's future tasks of influencing employers, potential clients, the "public" at large. (This recurring focus on audiences outside the academy was corroborated by the students from New Century College whom we interviewed, as we describe in the next chapter.)

Like our informants in the first section of this chapter, Smith does not imagine any innate transferability of what students learn in these writing-intense courses to the environments in which they'll write later. Nevertheless, what sets her apart from all our other informants is her commitment to "teach transferability" to her students. She has learned from teaching, she says, that students assume no transferability from one course to another, or from the academy to the workplace or citizenship—that students need to be convinced that what they learn in one context will be useful in another, and teachers have to show them how:

> I realized that I took transferability for granted because I went from doing a highly academic Ph.D. in a very academic environment, to working for the British government, to working in television. I had to work out why my degree made me equipped to do these things. Then I went into an M.F.A. in creative writing and, from there, to teaching with technology. I'm very lucky that I can always pull out these experiences for students. I can say to students that I'm not just talking theory when I talk about transferability, I'm showing them, "This is what's going to happen to you."

Indeed, Smith's assignments demand that students become both academics and business professionals. They need to explore a range of nuanced analytic/synthetic questions and cite sources accurately. They need also to present their work with visual panache and a crafted "digital identity." By framing the visual qualities of their Web designs and navigation schemes as "you," she is pushing the students toward an examination of self that forces students to be risk-takers. They must leave the relatively familiar confines of literacy—in which many of them do not feel all that comfortable—in order to probe and then express their "identity" in visual and logical electronic structures that are

unfamiliar, maybe wholly new to them. Risk is everywhere in the enterprise. In stark contrast to Bob Smith, Jones, and Trefil, whose students work more or less in proximity to the conventions of the scientific article, Lesley Smith's students, like Smith herself, are using the ever more flexible tools of electronic technology to craft "interfaces"—much more complex than anything implied by a writer's "format"—that are simultaneously an "identity" and a rhetorical transaction. There may or may not be contradiction in the requirements to conform to "grammatical correctness"—the logic of academic print—and also to "create" a "coherent, user-friendly navigation scheme"—the logic of hypertext—but clearly the student is being pulled in different, if not opposite, directions. Such is life in the academy's new digital age, as led by scholars like Lesley Smith, and it is certainly alternative to what's gone before.

## Faculty Expectations in Department Assessment Rubrics

In addition to what we have learned about faculty's expectations for student writers and writing in their disciplines, we have gathered a rich set of data from the writing assessment workshops we have been conducting with faculty in departments for several years. In this section, we'll discuss how these data—the workshop process and the rubrics faculty developed—augment what we have learned from our faculty informants. At the same time, we are also aware that these data provide a much more limited picture of expectations for writing in the disciplines than do our interviews, since all the papers being assessed in each workshop were written in response to one assignment given in a writing-intensive course in that major. In the workshops and the rubrics they produced we don't get the range of exigencies that our informants covered when they spoke about first-year students, undergraduate majors, graduate students, and so forth. Nevertheless, the data are valuable because the discussion of sample papers and the rubrics that emerged from that discussion highlight each department's sense of the genres students in their major need to learn in an upper-division writing-intensive course. The assignment they selected, for assessment purposes, represents one of those genres.

The initial impetus for our assessment initiative was a state mandate to assess students' writing competence. Because faculty often have very different ideas about what makes writing good based on their own disciplinary expectations, as we have been arguing here, we were committed to a process that put responsibility for this assessment into the hands of departments. Our first step was to invite the departmental liaisons who would be in charge of the writing assessment effort in their departments to a "training the trainers" workshop. In that workshop, we modeled a process that showed how criteria

for assessment could be derived from careful consideration of a range of student sample papers. For workshop purposes, we chose papers written in response to a "Review of the Literature" assignment in an advanced composition course. The next step required the departmental liaisons to run their own workshops, using sample papers from their upper-division, writing-intensive courses. In these workshops, participating faculty produced rubrics that could be used for assessing writing competence in the major. As might be expected, the evaluations of papers in the "training the trainers" workshop showed more starkly the differences in personal and disciplinary preferences than did the similar exercise in the departmental workshops.

The first "training the trainers" workshop we conducted consisted of faculty liaisons from the humanities, the social and natural sciences, and business. As we described briefly in our first chapter, we had anticipated that faculty would prioritize adherence to conventions of form and style when they evaluated and ranked the sample literature review papers, though we knew they might differ somewhat based on disciplinary traditions. We were surprised, then, at seeing major disagreements about what constituted a "good" paper; that is, many faculty ranked what we had considered to be the most poorly written paper in the sample higher than what we considered the most competent one, saying that they valued its fresh voice and perceived risk-taking, while the more proficiently written paper was deemed to "say nothing new."

Although we didn't see such stark differences of opinion in the departmental workshops, at which one or the other of us assisted, the scoring process always yielded a rich and nuanced discussion of what constitutes "good" writing in the major. Most of this talk is not captured in the scoring rubrics that were subsequently developed to assess and report on student writing competence. Invisible behind each rubric, with its succinct list of briefly explained criteria, is a chalkboard full of qualities that faculty articulated as characteristics of good writing based on the sample papers they read. Also invisible are the lengthy discussions that occur as faculty—in the same department—strive to come to consensus about what each of the criteria might mean in practice.

Discussions in the Public and International Affairs workshop about the criterion "clear thesis" offer a good case in point. After reading the sample papers and developing a rubric, the fifteen or so faculty present discovered that about half of them told their students to state their argument in a thesis early in the essay; the other half strongly objected, saying that writers should not give away their "conclusion" before they had presented reasoned evidence in support of their argument. Who, they asked, expected which kind of thesis? And what were students supposed to do, they asked, when they went from one person's class, where they were taught one way, to the class of another, who

said that it was terribly bad form to do it that way. In the end, they realized that the best thing they could do for students was to share with them these differences of opinion. On the rubric, under the criterion "Structure of Argument," they include, along with other specifying details, this parenthetical statement: "(Note: Some would like a thesis paragraph to lay out a framework for the argument to follow; others noted that the 'conclusion' should not come in the first paragraph.)"

Because so many of the rubrics we helped to develop in departmental workshops included criteria related to thesis statements (or the appropriate place for an hypothesis), Terry was curious when dance faculty in the workshop she was helping to lead made no mention of a thesis statement. When she questioned them about whether that was something they wanted to include when they looked at papers "reacting to" a performance, they explained that they were very tired of students making opening generalizations about the meaning of the overall performance when, instead, they should be considering each dance on its own terms and, if appropriate, explaining how it fits into the larger performance. A thesis statement in this case, they argued, only seemed to encourage students in their bad habit of making unwarranted and unwanted generalizations.

In addition to discussions about structure and organization, faculty frequently mentioned appropriate prose style as a criterion. And, as with the thesis discussions, unshared assumptions sometimes surfaced. For example, in a workshop with nursing faculty, led by Terry, to assess portfolios from the capstone course, the 19 faculty present disagreed over what constituted "good" prose style in the field of nursing. Readers were sharply divided about whether one student's portfolio was, at one extreme, "excellent" or, at the other, "unsatisfactory," based on whether the complex sentence style employed by the writer (incorrectly labeled by some as "run-on's") was appropriate in a discipline where precise, clear communication to doctors, patients, administrators, and the public was the chief goal. The discussion turned to the value of an "interesting" style, depending upon the purpose of the writing and the intended audience. The resulting assessment rubric, which is also now circulated to the capstone course teachers and students as both a feedback and evaluation rubric, takes care to note that appropriate style may vary depending upon the rhetorical situation.

### *Departmental Rubrics*

While the departmental assessment process has yielded useful data for our analysis of expectations, the rubrics produced by this process are useful in a different way. The assessment initiative has thus far produced rubrics of criteria

from 15 (at this writing) undergraduate degree programs. More will be forthcoming as the university-wide assessment proceeds, but what we have thus far ranges across the arts and humanities, the social sciences, the experimental sciences, technological fields, and professions. We have found that the rubrics demonstrate clearly the replication of the "generic academic" terminology that our faculty informants tended to use, with the nuances that contrast the disciplines much less evident, though visible in most cases upon closer reading. All rubrics are available on the GMU WAC website at http://wac.gmu.edu/program/assessing/phase4.html#part3.

To compare the rubrics, we carried out four procedures. First, we looked for the terms that were repeated from rubric to rubric and observed the frequency of explicit use of a term across all. Second, we also looked for use of similar terms (e.g., "diction" and "usage") that implied the same concept and observed frequency based on these observations. Third, we noted what seemed to be criteria exclusive to one or just a few fields. Fourth, we attended to the emphases or priorities in the lists of criteria, as suggested by the order of items and the amount of coverage given to a specific concept. These methods enabled us to observe not only the presence or absence of a criterion in a rubric, but also how faculty in that discipline might prioritize or define a concept differently from another.

To exemplify how this comparison worked, one of the more detailed rubrics, that for the Department of Public and International Affairs (PIA), contained 23 terms that were replicated in at least several other rubrics, ordered as follows:

> argument, clear, engagement, original, balanced, thesis, supporting evidence, logical, sources, development, well-organized, flow, appropriate voice, audience, purpose, transitions, consistent documentation style, quotations, active voice, grammar, spelling, punctuation, format

These were arranged in five categories, in this order: "content of argument," "form of argument," "structure of argument," "documentation and citation," and "style and mechanics."

Comparing this rubric with another—for example, psychology's—shows a notable reiteration of terms—15 of the 23—but how these are elaborated shows important distinctions between the fields. For example, where the PIA rubric requires consistency in the documentation style chosen by the student ("one style of documentation used adequately and correctly"), psychology specifies "APA style and format." Psychology is the only unit in the sample of rubrics to specify one style, and, indeed, the designation of APA (American Psychological Association) style signals the emphasis in this rubric on all things APA. Thus, where "content" in the PIA rubric includes such criteria as

"engagement with topic" and "original ideas"—terms reiterated in several other rubrics—psychology's "content" section prioritizes "justification of hypotheses," "reasoned/logical presentation of research," and criteria specific to the APA report sections "literature review" and "methods." Where PIA writes of "audience" in a situated way—"appropriate voice/tone for audience and purpose"—psychology says categorically, "Paper is written for the appropriate audience; namely, individuals who read research articles." Both rubrics share the academic priority of evidence used to support an arguable position, but the rubrics vary significantly in ethos and flexibility.

Certainly, the rubrics vary in the amount of detail; nevertheless, even the least detailed rubric (School of Management), which is notably sparer than any other, overlaps remarkably with the rest. Its mere seven key terms are "audiences," "purposes," "evidence to support," "argument," "organize," "grammar," and "mechanics"—terms and ordering repeated in most of and sometimes all the other rubrics.

The most common terms among the rubrics are "evidence," "organized," and "grammar" (90+ percent in each case). "Audience," "thesis," "consistent documentation style," "sources," "appropriate voice," "punctuation," and "clear" are each mentioned by at least 70 percent of the rubrics. "Argument" is explicitly used by more than half, but the ubiquity of "evidence" implies that each program expects writing that makes and supports some sort of claim. The dance rubric, for example, asks for "opinions/ideas that are well supported using specific examples from the dance."

The repetition of important terms and concepts certainly supports the common academic criteria we defined in Chapter One, and it corroborates our contention based on the interviews and assignment descriptions that students are likely to hear many of the same terms from course to course, discipline to discipline. But the student will need to keep in mind that the recurrence of terminology and of such broad concepts as "evidence," "grammar," and "appropriate voice" mask distinctions that begin to come out in some of the rubrics—and that would be far more evident if faculty, like those in our assessment workshops, were to look at samples of what passes for "good student writing" in another field. These rubrics were developed by faculty working *only* with colleagues and *only* assessing sample essays of kinds they were used to seeing from their undergraduate majors. The terms may be to a significant extent "generic" to academia, but the meaning and application of the terms in any of the departmental norming sessions was common only to those colleagues. In other words, the terms represent "insider" talk, and so each term, such as "evidence," covers a wide range of inferred connotations for that group of readers. Thus, what might appear to be "transparent" criteria are in fact to a great degree impenetrable to those outside the discourse.

A blatant example of the impenetrable comes from the minimalist School of Management (SOM) rubric, which, in addition to the few criteria noted above, contains the category "discipline-specific criteria." The SOM faculty evaluating the sample essays recognize that there will be local criteria pertaining to assignments and subdisciplines within management, and they have chosen to leave these criteria undefined. A student reading this rubric will know quickly that there are more expectations than meet the eye—and the rubric does nothing to relieve the anxiety that the student will feel as a result. The SOM rubric, as it stands, thus appears to give students a touchstone by using familiar academic language, then takes away that touchstone through the cryptic "discipline-specific criteria." Other rubrics, like the PIA example already described, show faculty struggling to make the subtle differences in individual teachers' expectations clearer to students and colleagues, but all the rubrics share to a greater or lesser degree the paradox of difference masked by the illusion of similar terminology.

## Conclusion: The Standard vs. the Alternative

At the beginning of the chapter we asked two main questions, which we paraphrase as follows:

1. To what extent does the remarkable similarity of terms that faculty use to define "good writing" in their fields show shared values? Is it more accurate to say that the similarity hides differences in meaning and application that trap the unwary neophyte and that mislead the composition teacher trying to prepare students for writing in disciplines?
2. To what extent do faculty teach as they write? Specifically, we wondered whether and how the writing practices of our informants, as well as the ways they constructed the expectations of their discipline for themselves, would be corroborated by the assignments and instruction they give to students.

The answer to both questions under (1) is a paradoxical yes. The overwhelming commonness of an array of terms such as "evidence," "organized," and "grammar," as shown in our informants' responses and in the departmental assessment rubrics, demonstrates a community of values. As vague and abstract as such terms may be, we heard and read very little that would contradict the three general principles of academic writing outlined in Chapter One. Indeed, the number of common terms in the rubrics seems to suggest an even more detailed sharing of beliefs.

At the same time, as we heard our informants and witnessed faculties arguing criteria, and as we read assignments and rubrics, we were more and

more impressed by the variety of meanings and significances of these common terms. Not only did we uncover major differences in how faculty from different disciplines understood the common terms, but also we saw time and again faculty redefining "evidence," "audience," "purpose," "style," and other terms for first-year students, undergraduate majors, graduate students, and other constituencies. In no way does our evidence suggest any transparency of the terminology of "good writing," even though some of our informant data would suggest a belief in transparency.

In regard to Question 2, we were pleased to see in most cases consistency between informants' values as writers and the values that they preached to students and enacted in assignments. For example, looking at the teaching of the four faculty mentioned at the start of the chapter, we have seen how this consistency is shown. Anthropologist Lancaster, who values teaching undergraduate majors the methods of the ethnographic essay, also prizes the inventiveness with form and style that he values in his own writing by encouraging undergraduate majors' formal experiments (e.g., the Punch and Judy show about Bakhtin). His own care for the literary variety of his sentences is carried through in his comments on student essays. Environmental scientist Jones, both researcher and public policy advocate, emphasizes in his guidance of both graduate students and undergraduate majors adherence to methodological rigor and to conventional scientific rhetoric. Nevertheless, the doctoral program he teaches in requires students to regard both the scholarly and public policy audiences, while his "poster" assignment for first-year undergraduates calls for careful comparison of the ways scientific topics are discussed in science texts and the popular media. Philosopher Bergoffen honors the dialectic of philosophical argument in her own prose and that of her students. Still, her own ventures to write personally for the philosophical audience about her life and the uneasy path of her coming into the profession are reflected in her asking philosophy majors to write about their own lives in relation to their choice of a discipline. Nursing professor Sorrell embodies her belief in the phenomenological approach to the discipline by assigning classes to tell their most profound stories, "paradigm cases," that depart from the quantitative convention of the field to validate emotion and intuition.

We also saw in the informants' data, amid the many, many items that confirm the conventions of academic and discipline-based rhetoric, a validation of alternative discourses. These we would like to place in the taxonomy of alternatives presented in Chapter One.

- *Alternative formats*, as exemplified in Lancaster's *Life Is Hard*, with its use of journalism, field notes, interviews, letters, autobiographical

detail, etc.; these may also include unconventional formats and typography; shifting margins; overlapping text and text boxes; creative use of sentence and paragraph structure

If we were to look only at the rubrics generated by the assessment committees in each department, we would be convinced both of the apparent similarity of the criteria espoused by these groups of academics and of the firm endorsement of the typical format of scholarly work in each field. But as we talked with our informants and analyzed assignments, we saw examples of departures from the typical, most often in response to the ways teachers tailored expectations to the different learning goals for different groups of students. Certainly, Lesley Smith's multimedia assignments in several of her courses represent this strand of the alternative vividly (more on "alternative media" follows); but Sorrell's paradigm cases and children's book, *The Magic Stethoscope*, and Trefil's greatly shifting formal applications of scientific rhetoric from course to course show openness to diverse, purposeful rearrangements and representations.

- *Alternative ways of conceptualizing and arranging academic arguments*

In Chapter One, we summarized work of contrastive rhetoricians (e.g., Helen Fox) on cultural differences in methods of argument, conceptualization of evidence, and arrangement of information. We wondered how responsive our informants would be to such differences that students might display in their academic papers. For the most part, as comments throughout the current chapter reveal, our informants, who are used to working in a university with great cultural and linguistic diversity of students, would encourage students to revise their work to conform to their expectations. They would not reject it outright—the specter of failure that scholars such as Fox consider all too common in American academe. Nevertheless, bespeaking their care in explaining the reasons for their expectations, none were inclined to accept such difference in discourse as is.

It may seem paradoxical that teachers who, in most cases, are so inventive in assignment design, so willing to tailor expectations to the level of the course, would be relatively unwilling to accept students' own variations from those expectations. But the paradox can be explained in a couple of ways. First, their very care in planning and tailoring shows that they have already considered a range of differing student responses that fall within their objectives for the discrete course. Their concern for having those careful objectives met results in their expectation that students will revise their work to meet them. Thus, Jeanne Sorrell will not accept in a "paradigm case" a student's falling back on reporting "lab values" in what she means to be a deeply felt

personal story. Second, the assignments themselves often already anticipate and implicitly accept a wide range of idiosyncratic student responses. Hence, the range of stories Sorrell has learned to expect may be great. Likewise, when Jim Trefil or Chris Jones assigns first-year students to choose current issues in science, select items from popular media that address them, and analyze for themselves the connections and disjunctions between those versions and what they've learned in class, the teachers expect a wide range of subjects and views. Similarly, when Vickie Rader asks students to write about the life experiences that provide motivation for the causes they espouse, she expects multiple approaches and perspectives.

- *Alternative syntaxes (language and dialect differences)*, which we have characterized as varying in their acceptance by academic readers

Because of the linguistic diversity of our students (25–30 percent are nonnative speakers of English), faculty are accustomed to seeing nonstandard English constructions in student prose. Nevertheless, the departmental rubrics all mention grammatical and mechanical correctness, as well as "appropriate" usage and voice, among expectations. By and large, our faculty informants treat nonstandard constructions as they do the alternative conceptions and arrangements discussed just above—as prompting revision and editing. As shown in this chapter, several of the informants regard themselves as "sticklers" in this regard (e.g., Miller, Clark, and Williams, with his particular emphasis on "the King's English"). Trefil, when interviewed, revealed relaxed expectations for the syntax of nonnative speakers in the first-year courses, where he was concerned not with syntax but with students' engaging with science issues. Conversely, in his courses in popular science writing for English and journalism majors, he closely marked syntax and usage. Perhaps because of their working in a linguistically diverse environment, and therefore their seeing many nonstandard constructions in essays, none of our informants made a simplistic connection between the ability to use standard academic English and to do competent academic thinking. Nevertheless, all saw it as an essential of publishable work for the discipline, hence necessary for students to learn.

- *Alternative methodologies*, which, as we discuss in a later chapter, entail experimenting with methods and ways of thinking outside a particular disciplinary tradition

The alternative formats described at points throughout this chapter most often reflect alternative ways of thinking that faculty want students to probe toward learning aspects of their disciplines. That is, the "alternative methodologies" we've seen in our informants' practices are not "outside" the

discipline, but rather enact their deeply felt senses of how their disciplines are, or should be, evolving. So, for example, Jeanne Sorrell's commitment to the phenomenological approach to nursing is enacted in her emotion-focused "paradigm cases" by students; Walter Williams's merging of the scholarly and public audiences in his goals for students, as in his own writing, enact his conviction that economic ideas should always be widely intelligible, not esoteric; Debra Bergoffen's privileging of the "I" in some of her students' assignments parallels her desire for the merging, at least to some extent, of the impersonal standard of philosophic reasoning and the honoring of the subject in feminist thought. The alternative, looked at this way, enables our informants, and by extension their students, to perform intellectual work that cannot be accomplished in ways conventional to the field.

Similarly, alternative methodologies help our informants achieve objectives for certain courses and groups of students. Frequently, as we've shown, our informants define undergraduate objectives differently from those for graduate students, and objectives for general education students differently from those for majors. "Engagement" is an explicit or implicit motive for many in the general education and/or undergraduate major contexts. As political scientist Priscilla Regan said, "I don't want to make my students into little political scientists"; i.e., she doesn't want undergraduates to imitate the exigencies of professional scholars, even as she wants them to learn the more basic exigency of reasoned persuasion of various constituencies. She therefore "engages" their imaginations by having them write editorials and letters to members of Congress. Similarly, mathematician Daniele Struppa does not expect undergraduates to perform the standard scholarly literature reviews, but he does want to engage their desires to hypothesize mathematically and to argue propositions. Jones and Trefil attempt to excite their first-year students about ideas in science and scientific method by having them explore the representation—and misrepresentation—of science in popular media. Lancaster largely avoids standard ethnographies in teaching anthropology to undergraduates; rather, he encourages through the diverse projects described earlier their thinking about how they interact with other people and how they draw conclusions about everyday life.

Ironically, as we show among many other findings in the next chapter, the undergraduate students we interviewed and surveyed from across majors showed much less desire to experiment with format and method in their disciplinary classes than to conform to their professors' expectations. Thus, the "alternative discourses" in student work in the various disciplines we observed were much more often born of professors' desires to broaden students' thinking than sparked by students themselves. We explore details, causes, and consequences in the next chapter.

- *Alternative media* (email, hypertext, digitized text and images, video), which we recognize have the potential to change utterly the way "academic writing" gets written and read

Had we chosen to focus on new media in this research, we could no doubt have found at our university (one of the "most wired" in annual surveys of that phenomenon) many examples of the alternative influence of these tools on how "writing" is carried out by students and faculty. Indeed, we did not dissuade our faculty informants from talking about email, multimedia, hypertext, the Internet, etc., in their examination of their own writing and that of students. That we did not hear frequent mention of these media tells us not that our informants by and large lack media savvy; rather, we infer that, like we ourselves and most other faculty, they have incorporated digital media—e.g., email, word processing, file transfer, Web browsing, etc.—in ways that don't radically change their concepts of academic scholarship and writing. In describing changes in their disciplines and their own partnership in change, they did not, as a rule, cite technology as reason for change. In specific regard to written rhetoric, all our informants, except Lesley Smith, regarded writing as literate, not significantly pictorial or aural, and discursive, not hypertextual. They may use websites in their scholarship or as sources for students, but, except for Smith, don't require students to construct emphatically visual, hypertextual documents.

Nevertheless, Smith, as we've already said, does represent the technological vanguard, and in so doing offers a disconcerting alternative to traditional ideas of "discipline" and "discourse." Her assignments, as described earlier, call on students to develop visual as well as verbal sophistication; they must build a versatile rhetorical sensibility, as they build sites to reach the teacher, fellow students, and, at least hypothetically, diverse publics. "Navigational design" is a requirement only in her assignment instructions. However, as online scholarship proliferates in all fields, so that multimedia become an ever more prominent part of how research is presented, we expect that future studies of disciplinary rhetoric, including student writing and departmental rubrics, will feature "navigational design," "integration of images," "appropriateness and quality of sound," plus a wide range of other multimedia expectations for student and professional discourse. But that time is not here yet.

What is certain, based on our data, is that faculty who prepare students to write in college can't just say, "Here's what you're going to be expected to do in writing in your major," and present simple formulas—not to mention such blanket misinformation as "avoid the first person." There is too much variation dependent on the level of the course and the exigencies seen by the professor to warrant such generalizations. Consensus documents such as the

rubrics we analyzed mask some of these differences, but even they, in the vagueness of their similar language, suggest an openness to options that their overall tone does not. Moreover, the frequency with which even the rubrics expect student "originality"—an expectation confirmed in the assessment workshops we observed—shows that academic writing, across all disciplinary contexts, is definitely not an exercise in filling in intellectual blanks. Finally, given the readiness of our informants to work with undergraduates to revise prose to meet conventions and expectations, it may be "safer" for faculty to encourage student risk-taking with ideas than to emphasize adherence to formatting rules.

In the concluding chapter, we present strategies and techniques for teaching that come out of our research. In the next chapter, we offer counterpoint to our faculty voices by hearing from students.