

# Introduction

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The collection you are about to read tells a story of hope, its chapters echoing Doug Downs, who highlights in “What is First-Year Composition?” the vast possibilities that first-year composition (FYC) contains. He writes, “First-year composition can and should be *a space, a moment, and an experience*—in which students might reconsider writing apart from previous schooling and work, within the context of inquiry-based higher education” (50). Downs is hopeful for such possibilities despite a discouraging “public charter” that expects FYC to cure students of all grammatical wrongs (54). In charting the ways that composition studies has resisted FYC’s positioning as a “skills” workshop, Downs celebrates the best of what FYC can and does accomplish, particularly because we focus on who students are. He writes, “We are people who take students seriously and use instruction to keep students in school rather than writing them off” and argues that “[u]sing the course to expose alternative conceptions of writing that better account for students’ lived experiences is a terrifically productive use of the course” (58, 60). It is this focus on students that gives us hope for the future of FYC.

Not only are today’s successful FYC pedagogies not skills-based, they are not solely writing-based either, not in the way that “writing” is conceived of in the public eye. This is because, as Linda Adler-Kassner reminds us, writing is never “just writing.” She argues, “This lament, this story that students ‘can’t write,’ [heard from faculty in other disciplines] works from the premise that writing is ‘just writing.’ It’s a thing that writers bang out. It is constituted of words that are clear, that mean the same thing to everyone, that are easily accessible and need only to be plugged into forms” (317). We know that writing is much broader: it is the world-building of literacy acquisition (Bazerman 571-72), it is critical thinking (Pough 308-09), and it is about people, the very people in our classrooms (Johnson 527). Kristine Johnson argues that *The Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing*, perhaps the single most important document guiding current FYC pedagogical practice, is, indeed, about teaching people. She writes:

[T]he Framework asks writing teachers to address the person behind writing products and processes—to consider intellectual agency and the ethical aims of writing instruction in an increasingly technocratic educational landscape. Teaching habits of mind asks who writers should become and why they should

become that way, which in turn revives difficult, enduring questions associated with the rhetorical tradition and the liberal arts: can virtue be taught, must a good speaker also be a good man, should writing instruction presume to cultivate taste and civic virtue, and should writing instruction be political? (527)

Johnson's argument embodies Adler-Kassner's point: writing is never just writing. Today's FYC pedagogies, grounded in the *Framework* and the eight habits of mind it advocates practicing, actively resist a public charter of skills-based education and actively resist the lure of prior learning assessments that devalue the place of FYC in the academy. In the chapters collected here, readers will find evidence of this resistance: evidence of pedagogies that make clear the value of FYC to students' development as writers.

However, why is it necessary to resist? Against what pressures should (and must) teachers of FYC push?

As noted above, a "public charter" exists, a charter that presupposes that FYC exists to guide first-year students to the ability to write well—that is, "correctly," on the assumption that writing is a skill, monolithic and easily gained through skill and drill. And this public charter exerts great control over FYC pedagogies, resulting in what Sharon Crowley calls a submission to others' definitions of the profession: "Throughout our history we have acquiesced to definitions of our profession, and our disciplinary goals, given us by others . . . I wonder why we think that our professional interests are best served by continuing to speak discourses that are imposed upon us, hierarchical and exclusive as they are" (237). This public charter also plays out in policy. At one of our institutions, state mandates have required us to award credit for the institution's first required composition course when a student earns a score of 3 on the AP Language and Composition or AP Literature and Composition exam and credit for both of the institution's required composition courses when a student passes the CLEP College Composition exam. Despite state-wide resistance from writing faculty, such policies persist.

Such state mandates are only one pressure point for first-year composition today. The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), the world's largest professional organization for researching and teaching composition, hosts an annual conference, where writing teachers gather to discuss theory, pedagogy, and challenges facing the profession, among other things. At recent conferences, Chairs' Addresses have lamented additional challenges to the existence of FYC: government pressures to gauge student success through standardized tests (Glenn 421), the award of dual credit in high school (Carter 384; Valentino 371), pushes to award credit through prior learning assessment and to remove writing requirements in college (Anson 333-34; Carter 386), and encouragement to use predictive analytics uncritically in the name of student success (Adler-Kassner 326-28). Some FYC teachers may hear the annual CCCC Chair's

Address in person at the conference, but many more read excerpts from it on Twitter, watch a video of the address on YouTube, or read the address when it is published each year in the journal *College Composition and Communication*. The annual Chair's Address serves as a "state of the profession" update that guides FYC faculty to attend to the most critical aspects of our work.

In Chris Anson's CCCC Chair's Address in 2013, a fictional art history professor comes to terms with the decline of higher education, realizing he can no longer ignore the many pressures facing his profession:

He had little idea that so many conditions inside and outside of higher education were asking for attention. Oh, it was always playing like a kind of annoying Muzak in the background—it's not as if he shut it out. But his campus preoccupations now seem so local . . . He feels strained and irritable. The Muzak has reached a full blare. And the loudest note, for him, is the zeal to speed up education—to get this odious college thing done, finished, over . . . As if learning should be a race for just enough credentials to join throngs of pedestrian, information-programmed bureaucrats, without the habits of mind to reflect on their material conditions and the political forces behind them, or to see beyond the horizon of a flat world. (333-34)

This fictional professor's realization encapsulates what so many of us in composition studies face today. We cannot ignore nation-wide erosion of the value of a well-paced two- or four-year college degree. We cannot ignore the reality that, as Joyce Locke Carter writes, "Our students are being taken away from us" (386) by efforts to award credit for FYC in so many ways other than taking a composition course in college.

Yet despite the "public charter" that devalues writing education and despite the fact that the portion of students taking FYC on a college campus continues to decline, we are filled with hope for our FYC classrooms. We hear in our students' reflective writing the desire to embrace the power that writing affords. We hear from teachers stories of how FYC courses have opened students' eyes—not only as writers but as critical thinkers. And we hear in the same CCCC Chairs' Addresses that sound so many warning calls about the current state of FYC a resounding reminder of who our students are and why it is to their benefit to be in our classrooms. When Marilyn Valentino describes the increasing numbers of "first-generation freshmen, who had no intention of going to college (or even finishing high school), [who] appear at our doors" (366), when Howard Tinberg calls for us to pay attention to all students' stories, "especially the novices, whose stories we need to hear" (339), and when Malea Powell describes the colonialist history of education and the imperative for composition studies to work against the ways our students' "bodies are marked and mobilized in dominant culture" and the ways "their language is represented in dominant culture" (401), we hear

the opportunity to do important work with student writers, to demonstrate to the students who are in our classrooms the value of becoming a rhetorically sensitive listener, reader, writer.

The evidence of resistance to FYC's public charter and argument for the value of FYC we offer results, in part, from a focus in each chapter on FYC students' stories—from reflections, student writing, and interviews—shared by FYC instructors and from depictions of FYC classes and pedagogies. And while the pictures of FYC classrooms that emerge do demonstrate the value of FYC, value that extends well beyond the public charter to which Downs alludes, at the same time they offer a window into FYC that allows for a reconceptualization of the course that highlights, as stated above, the best of what FYC can and does accomplish.

In the following section, we first refer to the use of voices (students', teacher-scholars', and co-editors') to present a story of FYC that demonstrates what the chapters taken as a whole tell us about the service that this course offers to students. We next elucidate this service through a discussion of theoretical underpinnings that provide support for and understanding of the service we identify. Finally, we share an overview of the collection, preceded by a brief explanation of how *Reflect Before Reading* prompts," discussion questions, writing prompts, reading lists, and multimedia components work together to support professional development.

## A Story of First-Year Composition

We include multiple voices in this collection—students', teacher-scholars', our own. Students' voices are shared, for we believe in their potential to serve as sources of knowledge about FYC. Also present are the voices of teacher-scholars who have authored chapters in this collection, as they explain their teacher-research, tell us about their FYC courses, and describe their students. Finally, our voices are implicit, as we have helped shape each chapter through our conversations with authors, as well as explicit in our introduction and chapter-connected discussion prompts and multimedia content in which we synthesize, explain, and connect to pertinent theoretical foundations.

Taken together, these voices tell a new story of FYC, one that supplants the older story, begun in the latter part of the eighteenth century, that positions FYC as a service course to meet the needs of students who didn't know how to write "correctly" and was based upon the belief that "good" writing means following the rules. Over the past fifty years, teacher-scholars and researchers, interested in learning how to teach composition more effectively, worked to generate understandings of writing and composition pedagogy, thus creating a new story of FYC, one that includes the recognition of writing as heuristic, context-dependent, and performative. Our collection adds another chapter to this story by including FYC students' voices and sharing a variety of pedagogies that depict what FYC looks like today. As editors, we have interpreted the story that emerges, our transaction

with this text leading to the recognition of a new service that FYC offers. Yet we recognize, as is the case with any story, that it can be interpreted differently, with different ideas about service emerging through our readers' transactions with the story the chapters as a whole present. We encourage these different understandings and interpretations in our chapter-connected print and multimedia content where readers are asked to respond to questions, reflect on and revisit their own beliefs about FYC through reflective writing, and consider authors' conversations about the connections among their ideas.

While the collection as a whole shares a picture of FYC today, it also functions as a critical ethnography; what we share not only includes discoveries about students' development as academic writers and about FYC but also opportunities to examine the "common sense" existence of FYC in colleges and universities, an existence resulting, at least in part, from a belief in the capability of first-year composition courses to "serve" students and the academy—FYC's "public charter." But, furthermore, it offers evidence for its continued presence despite what Carter asserts—that it is "not hard to imagine a world where FYC no longer takes place in college" (384)—and the "pressure points" alluded to above.

The subtext of our story suggests that reconceptualizing the "service" of FYC will encourage us to become advocates for its existence in higher education, drawing attention to the course as a means by which first-year students can gain entrée to the academy and a way to promote ways of thinking that will serve these students not only in the academy but beyond.

Next, we identify and explain the service provided by FYC that our chapters, taken together, demonstrate. We do this by first examining the notion of dialogic pedagogy; we then tease out from this concept key ideas related to identity construction, agency, and the notion of "wide-awakeness" to explain how this service is made available to students. Finally, we ask readers to re-see and reconceptualize their identities as teachers of FYC to inform the advocacy for FYC in which they engage.

## FYC and Dialogic Pedagogy

The pedagogies demonstrated by the chapters in our collection exhibit what Deborah Britzman calls "dialogic pedagogy" (54). For Britzman, dialogic pedagogy "demands and constructs complex social relationships" and "invites consideration of the social negotiation necessary for the production and interpretation of knowledge" (54).

The "complex social relations" that Britzman sees as integral to dialogic pedagogy are present in FYC environments and result from teachers' attitudes and beliefs, both of which are suggested by their interactions with students. Of particular relevance with regard to this characteristic of dialogic pedagogy is "caring," as defined by Nel Noddings. For Noddings, "caring" is "a way of being in a relation, not a specific set of behaviors" (17). This relation, if it is caring, is a "connec-

tion or encounter between two human beings—a carer and a recipient of care, or cared for” (15). The teacher must work to help students “develop the capacity to care” (19) so that relational caring can occur, something that requires teachers’ attention and persistence. As a result, teachers must be “vigilantly mindful”; they must listen and watch for details that suggest students’ “concerns, interests, and inclinations” (Danielewicz 166), something that the pedagogies showcased in our collection clearly attend to. Given FYC instructors’ concern for students’ subjectivities and accompanying voices, caring of the kind that Noddings believes is essential to effective teaching is present and is promoted and sustained by the activities in which FYC teachers and students engage—peer response groups, student-teacher conferences, and reflection, to name a few. Identifying features of sound composition pedagogy, these activities also allow for knowledge and interpretation to result from engagement in discursive acts.

## Dialogic Pedagogy and the Construction of Writerly Identities

The FYC class in which dialogic pedagogy is practiced is a space in which students are given occasions to construct identities as writers, the importance of which has been amply recognized in research and scholarship (see Bartholomae; Brooke; Ivanič; Yancey, *Reflection*). Here, though, we present additional thinking about identity relevant to the story that our collection shares.

In *The Gene: An Intimate History*, Siddhartha Mukherjee asserts the important role that genes have in “specifying our identities as individuals” while also noting that differences are “interposed against cultural and social constructions of the self” (355). While he is examining and elucidating gender differences here, his reminder of the role that genes play is an important one when considering identity formation and construction, as identity is a “unique and rippled landscape” (369), the construction of which is, in part, a result of “how we define, categorize, and understand [ourselves] in a cultural, social, and political sense” (351). Thus, although individuals’ identities are genetically determined to a great degree, there remains the process of identity construction and understanding of self that takes place in a cultural, social, and political context, a process that results in an identity that fuses with the genetically determined identity but remains open to continual reconstruction. Germane to this understanding of identity and identity formation is what Britzman states about identity—that it is not “out there, a stability to be reached” and that it should be perceived as “infused with possibilities” (29).

FYC is, of course, a space in which discourse infuses all endeavors; thus, identity construction and discourse are interwoven, the recognition of which provides important implications for course design and teaching and evidence for the new story of FYC that we seek to highlight.

Readers are likely familiar with James Paul Gee's theory of Discourses. Discourse, for Gee, is a kind of "identity kit" ("What" 51) and so is closely linked to the construction of identities. While discourse is both written and spoken language, it is also, as he notes, the ways by which people combine language use with ways of "thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing." It involves, too, the use of symbols, tools, and objects in contextually appropriate ways, a process that also leads to enacting different identities (Gee, *An Introduction* 13). Gee sees individuals as active and engaged participants in discourse who bring particular partialities to any discursive act; simultaneously, though, this engagement in discourse also promotes the development of identity.

In FYC classes, students are invited to become writers—to take on a writerly identity—through engaging in discourse (speaking, writing, acting, using symbols and objects). The space in which this occurs is a kind of transitional space where their previous ways of thinking about writing and about themselves as writers represent another discourse that bumps up against new discourse and discursive acts, resulting in the use of "borderland discourse," discourse in which disparate personal subjectivities are put in contact toward a point of integration. The integration then leads to changes (cognitive, emotional, corporeal) resulting in identity growth, changes, and increased metacognitive awareness (Alsup 205). Janet Alsup's examination of borderland discourse is related to the development of teacher identity; however, her thinking can be applied to the development of a writerly identity. Alsup calls borderland discourse "an expression of an intellectual-emotional leap," and she suggests metaphor creation and visual thinking as ways to engage in borderland discourse (10). In the FYC class, engaging in borderland discourse can include metaphor creation and visual thinking related to writing as well as reflection, discussion, and producing different types and genres of writing. This process, then, permits students to bring their partialities regarding writing and themselves as writers to their work, acknowledging and accommodating these while at the same time connecting them to a nascent writerly identity.

Perceiving the development of writerly identities in FYC courses as a result of, in part, engagement in borderland discourse permits us to understand the value of students' engagement in discursive acts and the importance of fostering students' understanding of and belief in themselves as writers so that they can experience FYC as "a space, a moment, and an experience" and to "reconsider writing apart from previous schooling and work" (Downs 50). This understanding and belief will come from opportunities to engage in discourse that accommodates old and new ways of thinking, thus assisting with the acceptance of a new reality for writing and of oneself as writer while at the same time accommodating students' lived experiences.

However, what value does the construction of writerly identities through discursive acts have for student writers? We now turn to the notion of agency to further explore and elucidate the service FYC courses offer to students, service



implied by the story our chapters, taken together, tell about FYC today. We begin with sharing some thinking about agency, what it is, its value, and how it relates to identity. Then we examine the FYC classroom to demonstrate how agency is promoted in this environment.

## What is Agency?

Michael Oakeshott identifies agency as “the starting place of doing,” a starting place that is a “state of reflective consciousness . . . the agent’s own understanding of his situation, what it means to him” (37). An agent is someone who has an understanding of himself in terms of his wants and his powers and an understanding of the components of the world he inhabits. And an agent’s action serves as a demonstration of this understanding (32).

Before acting, an agent deliberates, a process that Oakeshott calls “reflection” (42) so that any action that is chosen results from an intelligent response. Agents’ actions may be indicative of practice—“a set of considerations, manners, uses, observances, customs, standards, canons, maxims, principles, rules, and offices specifying useful procedures or denoting obligations or duties which relate to human actions and utterances” (55). Practices can be followed but can also be “neglected or violated” (55). There is freedom in agency, then, given that the agent is in an “understandable” situation, with the “doing” an “intelligent engagement” (37).

Jane Danielewicz references Oakeshott’s definition of agency, explaining that agency is a quality that allows people to believe they are capable of action (163). They must feel empowered to act but also possess efficacy. For Danielewicz, agency is not dependent upon being granted power or position. What is key is that individuals understand that they can change a situation by some action of their own. Agency is always possible; people are agents when they experience themselves as such—when they see themselves as agents, having “the power of freedom or will to act, to make decisions, to exert pressure, to participate . . . or to be strategically silent” (Danielewicz 163). Thus, identity and agency intersect.

With identity construction and agency closely aligned, it is worthwhile to reconsider FYC in light of this and to note how the environment of FYC has the potential to be conducive to the construction of writerly identities and the development of a capacity for agency through writing and engagement in other discursive acts. We now turn to the FYC classroom and the pedagogies therein to demonstrate how this space, through “a discourse of becoming” (Britzman 42) can foster agency.

## Cultivating Agency in FYC

As agency is the “starting place of doing” and the will to act, it follows that students need to believe in their abilities to act and to believe that their actions have meaning and effects (Danielewicz 167). Encouraging these beliefs for students in



FYC classes can result when students are given time, ownership, and response, the three fundamental components of effective practice. In providing these essentials for student writers, instructors are abrogating their own roles as dispensers of knowledge to become the guide on the side, guiding students as they construct knowledge and meaning in a community of learners and writers. The learning environment that results when best practice is in place promotes the process by which students become not only writers but also readers, critical thinkers, and responders—a process that occurs in a meaningful context, thus allowing for students to perceive themselves as writers—and writers who possess agency.

What occurs, and what promotes the development of agency, is a process by which students are representing and re-representing themselves in forms made available to them. This recursive representation in which they engage is identity-making through trying out different representations of the self. In FYC, students learn how to represent themselves as writers through engaging in authentic writerly behavior (writing, sharing their writing, responding to the writing of others, reading) as well as by representing their thoughts, ideas, beliefs, etc. in their writing, and thereby representing themselves.

These self-representations in FYC are not discrete processes; rather, they are integrated into the social interactions that occur in FYC. Recursive representations are constant, not something people do only intermittently. However, some contexts do encourage the process more than others—allowing room for more possibilities (Danielewicz 168). And, certainly, the FYC class is one of these contexts. If students see themselves as writers and thus take on identities as writers, agency follows: the will to act because of a belief and understanding that their actions as writers have meaning and effect, something that the FYC environment fosters.

Also necessary, though, as stated above, is a belief in efficacy—students' belief in their capabilities as writers; thus, the development of confidence is requisite, something that is also promoted in the FYC environment where students are treated like writers and given autonomy through choice, ownership, and response. Finally, engagement in FYC activities also allows opportunities for revision of representations through repeated acts of representation. Through engagement in discourse, students continually represent and re-represent themselves and, in doing so, construct and reconstruct identities while developing capacity for agency as writers. Interestingly, this recursive representation is mirrored by the act of writing itself—a recursive action that permits the continual opportunity to revise and thus to represent and re-represent oneself in writing.

Furthermore, through the relational caring described above, the capacity for agency is nurtured, as such a relationship necessitates teachers and students knowing one another—something that can be accomplished, to an appropriate degree and in appropriate ways, through the discursive acts in which students and teachers engage in FYC. While engagement in discourse allows for the construction of identity, it also affects the identity that is constructed and thus

students' understanding of self as writer—and what they can do with the craft that they are honing. This, then, becomes the “starting place of doing” for them as writers.

Having examined identity construction and agency within a framework of dialogic pedagogy, we now examine and explain a final feature of this pedagogy to elucidate another service that FYC offers—not only to students but also to teachers of FYC.

## Dialogic Pedagogy and Wide-Awakeness

Instructors who engage in dialogic pedagogy in their FYC courses encourage within their students what Maxine Greene refers to as “wide-awakeness”—the capacity of being completely attentive to life and its requirements, a kind of level of awareness or mindfulness (218). In the FYC class, teachers promote students' wide-awakeness by helping them develop the capacity to consider what they are doing and to take responsibility, often accomplished by allowing for choice and ownership of projects and by asking students to reflect on their choices and on the writing they produce. In doing so, students are also being made aware of alternatives (choosing another genre by which to construct and share understandings, for example) and of “possibilities in situations that they confront” (223). Agency and wide-awakeness are thus inextricably linked.

But teachers themselves who are committed to dialogic pedagogy must also practice wide-awakeness. As we note at the beginning of our introduction, teachers of FYC have often “acquiesced to definitions of our profession” (Crowley 237), and Downs asserts that we must “work the tension between what we're expected to teach and what we *ought* to teach” (59). While feelings of powerlessness can understandably result from repeated acquiescence and by the work demanded when we try to resolve the tension that Downs identifies, Greene reminds us that there is an antidote for feelings of disempowerment—individuals must engage in a conscious effort to consider conditions and to question “forces that appear to dominate. . . . Only then can they develop the sense of agency required for living a moral life” (219).

The very agency and wide-awakeness that dialogic pedagogy promotes in students also encourages wide-awakeness in FYC teachers, and thus agency, as it allows them to “break with the mechanical life, to overcome their own submergence in the habitual . . .” (Greene 221). Wide-awakeness keeps teachers of FYC keenly aware of the questions that all teachers face: “What shall we teach them? How can we guide them?” (221). To answer these questions, Greene asserts that teachers must be aware of their own values and commitments to do their jobs; they must gather their resources and, through what John Dewey calls “choice of action,” work on the “formation of self” (221).

Greene reminds us that reality can be perceived as a given, impervious to change, and that we have learned to understand it in standard ways (219). FYC

teachers may be inclined to perceive their role and FYC in familiar ways, taking for granted its existence and how it can and should be taught. However, wide-awakeness calls for ongoing reflection on and understanding of FYC—its role in the academy and its potential to assist students as they transition to college students who are fully members of the academy. This collection is designed, in part, to foster wide-awakeness as we ask readers to see and re-see FYC as it exists today and to consider what this course offers to students—its real service and, therefore, a reason for its existence. And we believe that the wide-awakeness that will result (or be strengthened) will inform and make more effective the advocacy in which we must engage.

Before we share an overview of the chapters included in our collection, we explain the use of professional development components throughout the collection and how these components serve as introductions as well as invitations to think more carefully and deeply about FYC, our practice, and our roles as FYC instructors.

## Professional Development Components

In addition to offering readers a means for reconceptualizing FYC and their roles as FYC instructors to inform their work as advocates for the course, we invite engagement in professional development. These invitations take the form of *Reflect Before Reading* prompts, discussion questions, writing prompts, suggested reading, and multimedia components. *Reflect Before Reading* prompts ask readers to reflect on and articulate ideas related to the pedagogies presented in each chapter, thereby affording opportunity for reexamination of their FYC teaching identities. After the chapter has been read, we ask readers to respond to questions that encourage additional engagement with the chapter; we invite them to complete a reflective writing activity, and we include “For Further Reading,” a list of suggested readings that offers additional ideas that augment and relate to the chapter. Multimedia components, accessible to readers through links within the book itself and as stand-alone resources on the book’s website, include podcasts and videos that provide readers with supplemental content to enhance the theme of each part of the book and the information shared in selected chapters.

By giving readers the chance to transact with our chapters in this way, we believe that, as with our first-year students who develop writerly identities by engaging in discursive acts, our readers will develop deeper and more enriched understandings of their identities as teachers of FYC, understandings that will allow for greater agency and an accompanying willingness to reject how others define our profession. The reflective questions and writing activities that we offer to our readers may also facilitate engagement in borderland discourse and so a means for readers to integrate disparate personal subjectivities on the way toward an “intellectual-emotional leap” (Alsup 10) that will promote wide-awakeness and identity growth.

## An Overview of the Collection

The chapters that follow are divided into three parts, focused on complicating current notions of FYC pedagogy, fostering students' development of writing identities, and teaching FYC with a focus on student agency. In Part 1, "Problematising Today's Notions of First-Year Composition," we hear from three authors who question current FYC practices related to teaching students how academic writing works, supporting LGBTQIA students, and incorporating technology into the classroom. Though each author in this part troubles current FYC practices, each also describes how we can remedy problematic practices in our FYC classrooms.

First, in "Double Standards and Sunshine: Exploring Expectations for Professional and Student Writing in FYC," Doug Downs asks us to acknowledge the double standards rife among the ways academics actually write and the ways we ask FYC students to engage in academic writing practices. Among other double standards, Downs examines the disconnect between professionals' collaborative writing practices and our insistence that students work alone, and the tendency for an academic working in a particular subject area to be familiar with its literature and reuse citations while expecting students to research and read through new subject areas each time they begin a project. Downs draws on his and Elizabeth Wardle's *Writing about Writing* pedagogy to describe a *Writing about Faculty Writing* focus in FYC that allows students to learn how academic professionals actually write.

Next, Howa Furrow asks readers to become aware of and question the ways we inadvertently create unsafe spaces in FYC for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) individuals. In "Teacher as Ally: Supporting LGBTQ Student Writers in the Composition Classroom," Furrow addresses an important and sensitive topic in discussing how students navigate FYC and the academy as LGBTQIA individuals. She shares student perspectives on negotiating unsafe spaces on campus, including those that may arise through writing prompts and class discussion in FYC. Furrow describes steps teachers can take to create safe spaces "by disrupting the silence . . . [and] intentionally making ourselves the allies of our LGBTQ students."

Part 1 ends with Ann N. Amicucci's chapter, titled "Three Student Voices on Technology in First-Year Composition." In this chapter, we hear students' takes on how technology use is constructed and often restricted in FYC and other first-year courses. These students share how teachers' idiosyncratic choices about technology use constrain their learning. They also share several positive experiences with technology use in FYC, including use of digital technologies to listen to and analyze music, locate electronic resources for research, and maintain contact with classmates. It is the last of these that students say they want more of: opportunities to connect with each other and their teachers through social media outside of class. This chapter demonstrates how students' ideas can be taken into

consideration when we make decisions about the use of technology in our FYC courses while also encouraging us to rethink the restrictions we place upon our students' use of technology in class.

To accompany Chapter 3, an author-editor video is available, in which Ann Amicucci discusses the challenges inherent in promoting student agency in classroom technology use and practical ways to overcome these challenges.

As an accompaniment to Part 1, Podcast 1 features authors Ann Amicucci and Doug Downs in a discussion of the current state of FYC and ways of disrupting the status quo. They also talk about how their pedagogies work to promote students' agency as writers and how their own identities as teachers of FYC have evolved as a result of their scholarship.

In Part 2, we move to questions of student identity. In this part of the book, titled "Fostering Students' Development of Writing Identities," four chapters explore who students are as writers in our FYC classrooms, and all four use reflective writing practices to promote students' self-identification as writers and with writing practices.

First, Helen Collins Sitler, in "Becoming a Person Who Writes," examines the ways students acquire agency as writers in a Basic Writing course. Sitler describes a pedagogy grounded in trust of students' authority to shape their futures as writers. She discusses how her students craft writerly identities that mesh with their tendencies to write only when assigned to and to doubt their abilities as writers. Yet she tells us that for these students, "Inexperience with writing is the issue, not capability." She follows two students as they gain experience and confidence in Basic Writing, then describes the paths these two take in their continued identity formation as writers beyond FYC, one majoring in criminal justice and the other in human resources management. Sitler's pedagogy is one that opens up "that larger world of writing" for students by enabling them to see themselves as actual writers.

This chapter features an author video. Helen Collins Sitler presents additional classroom practices, beyond those shared in Chapter 4, for promoting students' writing identities. In particular, she shares insights into the value of providing students with interested and authentic readers who can share response and feedback to inform revision, explaining how to do this within the environment of an FYC course.

Second, in "Encouraging Potential in Liminal Space: Student Writer Reflection," Martha Wilson Schaffer explores students' self-assessment of their writing and these students' potential as writers beyond the FYC course. Schaffer examines students' potentiality—their "ongoing capacity for creative work" (Haswell and Haswell 20). She describes students' negotiations of FYC as a liminal space between what they have accomplished prior to college as writers and what they will go on to encounter as writers in the academy. Schaffer writes, "Whether they saw themselves as writers seemed to depend upon their negotiations between external expectations of the FYC Program . . . and their internal perceptions of

what they were capable of doing.” Schaffer’s students describe their past and future selves as writers, with this self-assessment serving as a method for facilitating their growth as writers beyond the FYC classroom.

Next in Part 2, Jo-Anne Kerr presents an FYC pedagogy that leads students to develop writerly dispositions. In “Teaching for Transfer in the First-Year Composition Course: Fostering the Development of Dispositions,” Kerr explores how FYC offers students opportunities to develop transferrable writing practices and a mindset of themselves as agentive writers. Her approach to FYC enculturates students into academic discourse by leading them to dismantle and demystify its “rules” and expectations. Kerr’s students reflect on their beliefs about writing and the writing rules they have been taught, then define themselves as writers in relation to an academic discourse community.

An author-editor video is available for this chapter. Jo-Anne Kerr speaks about the importance of and rationale for uncovering FYC students’ beliefs and understandings about writing and themselves as writers and how to go about doing this in a way that validates these beliefs and understandings while also providing opportunity for students to reexamine and revise them.

In the final chapter in this part of the book, “Linguistic Socialization: More Than ‘regular talk,’ ‘paraphrase and stuff,’” Brian D. Carpenter talks with students after their completion of a Basic Writing course. He discusses students’ position in Basic Writing—already fraught due to the stigma of being placed in a lower-level course—and demonstrates how teaching from a position of academic socialization can positively affect writers’ progress. The writers Carpenter interviews are also multilingual, a feature that complicates their college experiences. He discusses examples of these students’ work in class and their reflections in a subsequent semester on how the concept of cohesion they practiced in Basic Writing plays out in writing and communicative situations beyond the course.

In an author video available for this chapter, Brian Carpenter delves more deeply into linguistic socialization and the concept of cohesion, explaining how attending to linguistic socialization promotes students’ identities as writers, especially those students labeled as “basic” writers.

Podcast 2 features Part 2 chapter authors Jo-Anne Kerr and Helen Sitler in a discussion of how their FYC pedagogies promote students’ development of and reflection upon their writing identities. They also share specific assignments and teaching strategies that they have used in their FYC courses that help students rethink their writerly identities.

In Part 3 of this book, “Promoting Student Agency in FYC,” we invite readers to consider two pedagogical approaches and one student perspective, all of which describe how students gain agency through FYC courses built on the principles of dialogic pedagogy. While the whole collection emphasizes FYC pedagogies that foster student choice, chapters in Part 3 place a particular emphasis on describing how we as FYC teachers can position students as agents within their writing education.

Part 3 begins with “Design Into: Reflection as a Tool for Growth,” in which Angela Clark-Oates, Michelle Stuckey, Melissa Williamson, and Duane Roen examine student agency within the context of an online FYC course and electronic portfolios. The authors examine the way an FYC ePortfolio and its accompanying reflection give students the opportunity to practice metacognition, a habit of mind touted as contributing not only to students’ success in writing but also to their successful participation in academic, professional, civic, and personal discourse. The authors demonstrate how their process of designing reflection into a curriculum (see Yancey, “The Social”) promotes students’ ability to make choices as writers, understand the efficacy of those choices, and carry these writing abilities beyond the FYC course.

Next, we hear from Kara Taczak, Liane Robertson, and Kathleen Blake Yancey in “A Framework for Transfer: Students’ Development of a ‘Theory of Writing.’” The authors describe a theory of writing project within their Teaching for Transfer curriculum that gives students agency to become writers able to adapt to multiple writing situations. Taczak, Robertson, and Yancey present reflections from three students on their developing theories, one of whom writes, “I am a very analytical writer. . . . When writing I always like to establish a good knowledge base by using my own ideas, but also looking at other ideas and sources that can contribute to my writing.” We hear from this and other students in the chapter who describe taking ownership of their writing processes and the choices within them. The theory of writing assignment allows students to identify the writing concepts they employ and the ways they will carry these concepts into new writing situations.

Podcast 3 features Kara Taczak and Kathleen Blake Yancey in a discussion of their Teaching for Transfer curriculum. They explain how two assignments, the theory of writing assignment and mapping, help students understand and be able to meet different expectations for writing in different contexts. They also share how the curriculum can be adapted to meet the needs of students at different college and university institutions.

The collection concludes with a chapter written by one of our students. In “A Transition,” Ashley M. Ritter, one of the students whose perspectives are presented in Kerr’s chapter, joins us to share her story of unlearning certain writing constraints in the transition from high school English class writing to FYC, then carrying her disposition as a writer into her studies in psychology. We hear from Ritter a description of multiple turning points in her writing education as she navigates the high-school-to-college transition and, later, the transition from undergraduate to graduate study and to a career. Readers will find in Ritter’s story a first-person account of gaining agency in FYC and the ways this agency as a writer carried beyond the course. We conclude the collection with Ritter’s chapter because it embodies the value this collection places on listening to students’ stories and attending to what they tell us about writing and our teaching of writing.



Across the collection's ten chapters and its multimedia components, readers will find many examples of successful FYC pedagogies and many descriptions of the benefits of pedagogies that promote student agency and students' development of writerly identities at the same time. Yet we cannot take these successful pedagogies as an indication that FYC can remain a static space or a given feature in the higher education landscape. Rather, we must, as FYC teachers, continue to engage critically with questions of the new service that FYC provides to students and, in turn, engage in the work of promoting the value of FYC to our students and to our many other stakeholders. We call for readers to cultivate wide-awakeness in considering FYC pedagogies and our students' needs so we can remain aware of how to best serve students in their development as writers in the FYC classroom.

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