CHAPTER 7.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERACTIONAL INQUIRY, AND WRITING INSTRUCTION: A BLOG CALLED "ACCELERATED ENGLISH @ MCTC"

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In 2013, a small group of composition instructors at Minneapolis Community and Technical College began teaching a new studio course, one designed to streamline students' transition from developmental writing to the successful completion of a college-level writing course. We based the course—Accelerated Developmental English—on the Accelerated Learning Program at the Community College of Baltimore County. An integral aspect of Accelerated Developmental English is the use of the Studio model. In fact, the Studio model functions in two different settings for us. First, the Accelerated Developmental English (ADE) course is a Studio model designed for students to workshop their writing with one another and their studio group facilitator. Second, we created a blog—Accelerated English @ MCTC—that provided us a place for interactional inquiry, a basic tenet of the Studio model.

In *Teaching/Writing in Thirdspaces: The Studio Approach,* Grego and Thompson (2008) coined the term "interactional inquiry" to refer to the process of "using small group collaboration for rounds of listening, talk, and writing to generate ideas; acting upon [those ideas]; and reflecting about them—a continual to-and-fro between action and reflection" (p. 72). Our blog, in particular, focused on the action aspect of this methodology, which involved "trying out approaches, actions or changes discussed within the inquiry group in their daily lives at the site" (p. 50). Although the Studio model's origins were in the classroom and focused on writing students, Grego and Thompson wisely recognized the value of interactional inquiry for composition instructors. They suggested

that "Studio staff interactional inquiry helps us to formulate our own plans and proposals for local change" (2008, p. 159). This was evident throughout the exchanges on the blog, as writing instructors posed plans for the course, received feedback, and revised those plans. Grego and Thompson also suggested that "Studio communication . . . with teachers . . . helps us to resist the isolation from each other encouraged . . . by higher education institutional structures" (2008, p. 160). Teaching a 5:5 load while addressing the writing of over 100 students per semester made it difficult to find time to do anything other than attend to our students and their writing. Our use of a blog as a site for interactional inquiry mitigated some of that isolation by fostering professional development, collegiality, and support. In particular, the blog was useful in helping us create community, support one another, and affirm our reality, as well as celebrate success and plan for the future.[1] It is this blog and the faculty's interactional inquiry that serves as the focus for this chapter.

INSTITUTION AND INSTRUCTOR CONTEXT

Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) is a public, urban, two-year comprehensive college located in downtown Minneapolis.[2] According to the college's website, of 13,874 students enrolled in fall of 2013, 32.3% were Black, 8.5% were Hispanic, 5.5% were Asian or Pacific Islander, and 1.7% were American Indian. In addition, 54% were Pell grant recipients, and 27% were first-generation students. The average age of students was 28. It is not uncommon for many first-time students to be placed into courses at the developmental, pre-college level. For first-time students entering in the fall semesters of 2005, 2006, and 2007, 36% were placed in developmental writing (98% were placed in developmental mathematics, while 41% were placed in developmental reading courses). The percentage of students placed in *all three developmental courses* was 30% (Asmussen, 2012, p. 2). Like many community colleges nationwide, our department sought to streamline the experience for students who tested into developmental English, which led to the creation of the ADE course.

Faculty who initially taught ADE and participated on the blog had extensive experience teaching developmental writing, ranging from 13 to over 30 years at institutions throughout the county and, in some cases, outside of it. Kathleen Sheerin Devore, who initiated the accelerated curricular change with her guerilla acceleration (more on this later), taught composition for 27 years everywhere from south Boston to South Africa to south Minneapolis. With a Ph.D. in

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1   For another discussion of this idea, see Fraizer in this volume.
2   "Comprehensive" here means that the college provides both liberal arts and career/technical education curriculum.

Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy Studies from the University of Minnesota and a minor in Post-Colonial Studies, Kathleen taught developmental writing for 13 years. Jenifer Fennell earned a doctorate in English from the University of Minnesota and taught developmental writing for 13 years. Michael Kuhne taught for over 30 years in both secondary and higher education settings and taught developmental writing courses for 14 years. His Ph.D. (English) focused on composition studies and rhetoric. Jane Leach received her Ph.D. in English with an emphasis on American literature at the University of Minnesota in 1999, and she taught developmental writing at MCTC for 14 years. Liz McLemore received her master's in English with training in composition and rhetoric at the University of Oklahoma and taught composition, rhetoric, and cultural studies courses at the University of Minnesota before joining the English department at MCTC. She taught developmental writing off and on for over 20 years. Darren Wieland received an MFA in creative writing from Minnesota State University-Mankato and taught developmental writing for four years. A number of us have worked together on various initiatives throughout our time at the college, and the more veteran instructors worked closely with one another on an earlier developmental English curricular revision effort, which transitioned from exit examinations to portfolios. In addition, all developmental English instructors met three times a semester to discuss various curricular and evaluation issues. These past work experiences and the relationships we developed helped us work together more effectively in the curricular change to ADE.

ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENTAL
ENGLISH AND STUDIO MODEL

In spring 2013, we piloted six sections of ADE, inspired and informed by the Community College of Baltimore's County's (CCBC) Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). Key to our interpretation of the ALP model, ten developmental writing students are embedded in a three-credit college-level writing course with fifteen college-level writing students. That instruction is supplemented for the developmental writing students with a two-credit ADE course which uses the Studio model. The ADE course meets for a 50-minute session immediately after the 75-minute college-level writing course, and this pattern repeats itself twice a week. Students enrolled in the supplementary course submit a final portfolio that is evaluated by a committee of developmental writing instructors. When we designed the curriculum for the ADE course, our focus was on retention. Our nod to course content was little more than a reiteration of and support for the college-level writing course.

Like our colleagues at CCBC, we see the Studio model as a fundamental

concept for this course. At the same time, our pilot differs somewhat from the model created by Grego and Thompson. Echoing the idea of "bricolage" (or "what is at hand") raised by Matzke and Garrett in this volume, "shapeshifting" our curriculum meant that the lead faculty in the college level course also served in the role of studio leader. Our position as faculty in a two-year college means that we have no graduate students or teaching assistants "at hand" to step into that role. Nevertheless, we ask the same question asked by Grego and Thompson (1995) in "The Writing Studio Program: Reconfiguring Basic Writing/Freshman Composition": "What if we had no separate basic writing course?" (p. 77). In fact, ADE answered this question for us; there is no separate basic writing course. Developmental writing students are enrolled in the college-level writing course, and their experiences in the ADE course provide a time for additional writing, sharing, and reflection. This subtle shift away from a separate standalone developmental writing course and toward a supplemental studio course for college-level writing courses constructively blurs the boundaries between "developmental" and "college-level" writing. The version in place at MCTC is a college-level writing course with a studio model course attached to it.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INTERACTIONAL INQUIRY AND THE COURSE BLOG

As we expanded the number of ADE course offerings, questions about professional development, not unlike those raised by Santana, Rose, and LaBarge, surfaced. The faculty-driven, curricular shift to ADE, although supported thus far by the administration, nevertheless had no structured faculty development. There was no time devoted to ADE training, and there were no stipends and no release time.

Many of us had done individual work in preparation for the creation and ongoing development of the course. Kathleen presented on "Guerilla Basic Writing Acceleration" at the 2010 National Conference on Acceleration in Developmental Education and returned filled with visions of the national ALP model. Jane and Liz attended ALP director Peter Adams' one day visit and lecture at a local community college in May of 2012, and Liz and Darren attended the 2012 National Conference on Acceleration in Developmental Education. In February of 2014, Jane and Michael attended the Minnesota Developmental Education Faculty Institute at another local community college, where Peter Adams presented a morning session on ALP. At this time, we had the opportunity to continue our conversation with Adams and were gratified to hear him mention Grego and Thompson's Studio model and acknowledge the connections we write about

here. At the start of our pilot, we felt the strong advantage that all of our pilot faculty save one had either attended national conferences on acceleration or had had inspiring and productive conversations with Adams—which is echoed in the narrative of Ritola et al., who had the good fortune of an administrator who also was touched by the spirit of Adams' work. However, this was the extent of faculty training. We needed another mode of professional development to help sustain our efforts. Whereas Santana et al.'s, approach was to pair writing instructors to encourage dialog, we developed an approach that invited all studio model writing instructors to participate.

That mode was the blog where we engaged in interactional inquiry. Michael developed the blog using WordPress as the publishing platform. Each instructor would be able to question, chronicle, pose and solve problems, and reflect. We opened the blog only to MCTC ADE instructors and a few other colleagues who were interested in the course so that audience issues would be simplified. We wanted to be in conversation with one another, not an anonymous external audience. Through these conversations, we wrestled with many of the same issues that the Studio model addresses: student access, student anger and resentment at the idea of "remediation," student persistence, the need for college acculturation, the need for focused writing time—on computers—and the need for safe spaces to write. What emerged from the blog was a different iteration of interactional inquiry, one that expanded beyond the studio facilitator-to-student dynamic within the classroom and embraced interactional inquiry between ADE faculty. This approach, in many respects, aligns with Fraizer's assertion (this volume) that interactional inquiry has meant "faculty members talking to each other about student issues and sharing strategies for addressing those issues." Our blog became not only the site for this discussion but also a repository for the ideas and approaches raised in those discussions.

The first blog entry appeared on 14 January 2013. Not surprisingly, it was a sample syllabus. Through June 2014, there were 44 posts by six different instructors. In addition, there were 67 comments made in response to the postings. This may seem like a small sampling, but remember that this was a private blog with few participants. The greatest activity occurred between January 2013 and November 2013 (38 posts and 61 comments). This activity corresponded to the first two semesters that the ADE Studio course was offered.

A number of recurring themes appeared throughout the blog, and we tagged each posting with descriptive titles. Although the small number of postings overall precludes any indication of how our concerns changed over time, a quick review of the tag cloud (Figure 7.1) indicates what some of those recurring themes were.

Tags
academic progress
academic writing conventions
acceleration ALP
ALP facutly handbook assessment
assignments
attendance barriers
conferencing course changes
course description curriculum
D2L data developmental writing students
disabilities disability Discussion
ENGL1110 in ENGA0900 sessions
enrollment first week goals
grades handbook history of acceleration
homework
In-class Activities
in-class work pattern
instructor motivation
instructors' expectations
interactional
inquiry
Jessica Shyrack Leigh Cressman
mid-term motivation
moving to 1111 new faculty training
Paul Tough pedagogy
peer review persistence
placement placement scores
portfolio proposal
READ 0100 readings
reflection letter
resilience retention
retention strategies revision
scaling up small group work
STATWAY Student Behavior
student motivation
studio model things that work
traditional 900 week six
Why Children Succeed wiki
writing studio

Figure 7.1. Tag cloud from blog.

The physically largest words correspond to the most frequent issues addressed (and named) in the postings. Since retention was a main goal behind creating the course, "attendance" rose to the top of recurring issues, with a total of 14 postings (over one-third of all postings) addressing the issue. "Portfolio" was the second most frequent tag. The eight postings on portfolios (25% of all postings) addressed the student outcome that students created by the end of the semester. "Interactional inquiry" tied with "portfolio" yielded eight postings. We concede that, once we knew we would be writing this article, interactional inquiry became more of a focus than it might have been without the looming responsibility of writing this chapter. As we began to analyze our use of this space

for development, for questions, for concerns and for support, we began to see it as a mode of interactional inquiry for us, the studio facilitators.

BLOGGING COURSE HISTORY

One of the ways in which the blog helped us was by providing a space where we could establish the course's history for instructors who would teach the course for the first time. Chronicling the course's history provided all instructors with a common narrative. It also served to energize people: We developed a collective story, purposes, and goals. Developing this narrative, together, on the blog, worked as interactional inquiry, and that process created and nurtured community. In a key post, Kathleen described the course's evolution, and even here, one can see the germs of both the Studio model in general and interactional inquiry in particular:

> I explained that my approach to Accelerated [Developmental] English grows out of my history of creating a "guerilla acceleration" model in my own [Developmental English] sections about 5 years ago. Some other [Developmental English] instructors and I would whisper in hallways about how maybe a third of our [Developmental English] students could complete the portfolio work weeks before the term ended, and so some of us had encouraged those students to work faster and allowed them to end the class sooner than their peers. As we were not strictly sure this was institutionally approved, we whispered about this practice in the hallways!

We hungered for conversation amongst ourselves so that we might learn from each other. These conversations were usually rushed and frequently occurred in our department's workroom or as we briskly walked with each other to teach our classes. Although these talks were sandwiched into odd moments, they were important because they planted the seeds for future curricular changes. Kathleen's description of these whispered conversations showed us already engaging in a surreptitious form of interactional inquiry as we "formulate[d] our own plans and proposals for local change" (Grego and Thompson, 2008, p. 159). Kathleen then wrote:

> It felt important to share this history to show how very new
> this approach was at the college, as [faculty new to the course]
> wondered what the department's stand was on use of texts
> and assignments in the [ADE] section—I told [them] we are
> too new and marginal to have a "stand," but I could tell what

led me to my choices and invite [them] to talk with others about theirs!

Kathleen's post was, in one way, interactional inquiry because she shared the history and her own enthusiasm with others. However, she went one step further and encouraged the post's readers to "talk with others." This was key. Kathleen's post embodies what Grego and Thompson (1995) described as a "continual to and fro between action and reflection," and Kathleen actually encouraged others to do the same (p. 72). When Kathleen suggested that she "could tell what led me to my choices," she actively reflected on her actions; she also provided a blueprint for others to participate in their own action and reflection.

Kathleen concluded the post with phrasing that captured the flurry of conversation and writing that we experienced through teaching the ADE course collaboratively:

> This discussion actually energized me—as do the blog posts— because both give me the opportunity to theorize and articulate my practice, and hear others theorize and articulate theirs as well. This is especially exciting with innovative curriculum as there is no precedent—we are creating this as we go: exciting! Michael stopped me in the workroom during our pilot semester and said he hadn't felt this much energy around curricular development since we shifted to portfolio assessment ten years earlier. (Blog post, October 4, 2013)

Kathleen's post spoke to the instructors' need for interaction, just as Ritola et al. chronicle the dearth of opportunities for faculty for "fruitful" discussions in the creation of their studio model. The most important part of this passage was that the discussion "energized" her (and, by extension, many of the other instructors). The blog became our airport plug-in station, the site where we went to get energy to power our future efforts.

CREATING COMMUNITIES: SUPPORTING ONE ANOTHER

One of the main issues to which the instructors frequently returned was the effective use of classroom time. This was both liberating and disconcerting. We could use the time with our ADE students as we saw fit; however, we did not have much of a sense of where to begin. We, though seasoned full time, tenured Basic Writing faculty, were in something of the same position as the "new part time instructors and teaching assistants" that Matzke and Garrett (this volume) describe: we were "not sure what to do with the extra time." Early blog entries

and comments necessarily focused on what students would be doing in the class. These exchanges not only helped us understand what to do during the studio support hour, they also allowed us to engage in the kind of questions and comparisons about discourse and form that take place in student-centered Studios.

For example, Darren posted with enthusiasm about his first weeks of teaching the course: "Through the past two weeks I've managed to maintain full or near-capacity with the ADE students." Darren went on to share with the other instructors how he and his students had been working together during studio time. He compared an activity done in the ADE class with the same activity in his traditional developmental writing course: "The first week we went over the 'Why Do I Miss Class?' activity, and the lessons seem to have stuck with them." Later on, Darren wrote about his design process for peer review:

> Both the [college-level writing] students and the ADE students seemed very eager to debate how to structure peer review, and we came up with a great, concise list of by-laws for workshop. I've done this activity in my other classes with mixed results, so I am quite pleased as to how this group is jelling. Discussions are robust and thought-provoking, with nearly every student contributing, and even the one shy student is now starting to come out of his shell and speak up in class. (blog post, February 1, 2013)

He ended with a post-script: "If this sounds like a love-fest, it kinda is" (blog post, February 1, 2013). Using the comment feature of the blog, Jane replied, "Darren: I would love to see the list of 'by-laws for workshop.' What a great idea. And yes to the love-fest!" (blog post, February 3, 2013). Darren responded that he would post the "by-laws" later in the semester. In these exchanges, Darren and Jane were able to take situations specific to one course and generalize actions in ways that could be applied to other courses, all while supporting each other's efforts.

In another series of postings and comments during the fall 2013 semester, instructors began to share the changes they began to see with the ADE students. These postings and responses made public to us what could have easily remained private. Michael wrote that he had exhorted his students "to be my stars" in the college-level writing class. He explained

> I told this to my [ADE] students during the first couple of weeks of class. I thought that they would be my stars in some very specific ways. One, because I use D2L (Desire to Learn) discussions and my [college-level writing] sections don't meet

> in computer classrooms, I knew that if they used their [ADE support] time wisely that they would be the first students to post. I knew, too, that they would know the readings that we did in class more intimately than the other students because we would have more time to unpack them. I suspected that they would have fewer challenges navigating the course wiki, again because we were in computer classrooms for [ADE]. (Blog post, September 25, 2013)

One month later, Jane built upon this idea in greater detail. Jane described a particular assignment and how students volunteered to have their drafts shared with the large group. She then continued,

> What transpired in the workshop seemed to occur (in my eyes, at first, before I sat down to reflect here) as a matter of chance: Out of the 8 students who volunteered to be workshopped for this essay, six are [ADE] students. No [ADE] students volunteered for the first whole class workshop on our first essay. And here's the thing: All their drafts of essay two were completed, on time, full drafts (this is an early date for completion; those who are not workshopped get an extra week to compose the first draft). And not only did the first workshops show the ability of the [ADE] students to fulfill the academic requirements, the discussion of their papers that ensued during the oral part of the workshop was energizing, and was driven by the comments of the [ADE] students who spoke up, a lot, about their peers' work. (Blog post, October 25, 2013)

Jane highlighted a transformation that occurred among many of her ADE students, students who might otherwise be reticent to share their writing in large group settings. More importantly, Jane articulated these observations only after she had had time to reflect, to recognize, and to chronicle—activities for which the blog proved an invaluable interactional inquiry tool.

In the comment feature, Kathleen responded:

> Your comments about how the [ADE] students become leaders in the [college-level writing] class mirror my experience, and have me thinking about how community and confidence function in classrooms. Because we have more time with them, and they with each other, the 10 [ADE] folks become kind of a team in the [college-level writing] class modeling

> strong student involvement and engagement that surpass-
> es some of the students [who are placed into college-level
> writing]. I feel the [ADE students] see this in class and gain
> even more confidence as they see their own skills surpass those
> of some who tested "above" them. This is of course not true
> of all [ADE] students—but I'd argue it is most of them. For
> me this is another reason to expand the program as it raises
> the level of engagement and therefore raises levels of critical
> thinking and writing in the [college-level writing] class as
> well. It's like the ADE classes provide a small, well-supported
> model of what the whole class can be; then, those students
> bring that engagement into the larger class and show the oth-
> ers what the class could be. (Blog entry, October 28, 2013)

Michael, Jane, and Kathleen collectively acknowledged an outcome that none of them might have been able to predict prior to teaching the course or on their own: that the developmental writing students would, with additional support and practice, become effective classroom leaders in the college-level writing course. This kind of interactional inquiry, where the three instructors "[tried] out approaches, actions or change," served a number of purposes (Grego and Thompson, 2008, p. 50). First, it made more public what can be an intensely private activity between instructors and their students. Second, it affirmed observations that allowed for specific experiences to become more generalized to a larger group. Finally, it built a network of powerful support among those participating in the exchange. This shift permeated much of what transpired afterward in the ADE sessions. Our shift in perspective and behavior was critical to the instructor's role in ADE classes, and the interactional inquiry of the blog entries helped us to name a different way of seeing, acknowledging, and acting upon a new understanding of the students in the room.

STUDENTS' LIVES AND AFFIRMING REALITY

Faculty members also wrote frequent posts to explore issues associated with student persistence. Our campus, like many community colleges, is the first step to post-secondary education for many students of color, as well as low-income and first-generation students. Students who test into developmental writing at MCTC require extra academic support, but without support for life circumstances affected by poverty, housing, childcare, and similar issues, such academic support is often insufficient. Kathleen named the issue in one posting: "What are the struggles or biggest issues [for ADE students]? The work, home, family,

health issues that plague underclass Americans" (blog post, October 4, 2013). These are not the types of issues that could easily be set aside. If we were to help students succeed, we had to find ways to acknowledge and address these issues.

In this light, one of the biggest challenges to ADE instructors, especially those new to the ADE classroom, was how to address student attrition. When the very reason for the course's existence is to expedite ten (or fewer) students' academic progress through both developmental writing and college-level writing in one semester, it was remarkable how fixated we became about the numbers, both for those in the room and those missing. With no support provided by the college, the blog became our professional development site for exploring causes and developing strategies to aid in retention. Issues such as homelessness, mental health, the health of loved ones, and child care arose time and time again. Almost obsessively, we checked with one another about whether or not our students were attending and why. The following excerpts create a montage that spoke to this obsession:

> Kathleen: Here in week 12 my [Developmental English] numbers are not what they were. 6-7 fairly consistently come and have work turned in and of those I have 2 Cs, 3 Bs, 2 As. An A student got a job and moved her kids out of a shelter 2 weeks ago and I haven't been able to reach her since, ... (Blog entry, October 20, 2013)

> Jenifer: One is likely to drop; she moved here to Minneapolis to live with her father, her only relative in the region, and he's suddenly dying of cancer.. . . The other lost her childcare; she, too, wanted to keep going. (Blog entry, April 10, 2013)

> Michael: I started with nine, but one dropped before the end of the first week (so that doesn't count, right?).. . . I have one student who is a very good writer but who possesses [a] paralyzing anxiety disorder—she has missed over 50% of the class meetings. I have another student who is a single mother of three children under the age of seven. Two of her children have been sick consistently since the start of the semester, so she has missed over 50% of the class meetings. (Blog entry, February 22, 2013)

> Jane: [B]ecause I had the extra hour, a few weeks past, to read what this [ADE] student wrote [in an essay in which] the student disclosed urgent feelings of depression, I was able to take him aside during that support hour, query him for a few minutes regarding interventions, and get him both

> to an MCTC counselor and in touch with his father. What I'm saying here is without that time to look at the [ADE] writing, I may not have seen this essay for at least a few more days (which is when I could get to the [college-level] essays). (October 25, 2013)

> Jane: I have one ADE student who has missed a number of sessions of both the 1110 and the support hour who has been dealing with an infant daughter who has been hospitalized. (September 18, 2013)

In this exchange, we used interactional inquiry as a way to reaffirm reality. In these five postings, we see the real-life issues—child care, health, homelessness—that students confront every day. Through interactional inquiry, individual instructors tested his or her own sense of reality. Through interactional inquiry, we saw not only our students' individual barriers but also, in aggregate, that these barriers were systemic. Additional postings corroborated this understanding. The instructors used the blog in this case not so much for problem-posing and -solving (though there is some of that happening in these postings). Instead, the blog served as a reality check for all of us. When things happened in the classroom that seemed extraordinary or exceedingly difficult, writing about them to a sympathetic audience reaffirmed the students and our humanity. It also reminded us that our students' lives exist within systems and structures that often do not serve them well; in fact, some of those very systems work against their success.

SUCCESS AND NEW QUESTIONS

At the end of spring 2014 semester—the third semester of offering ADE—our college's Institutional Research reported back the solidly successful numbers. We found that we had more reasons to celebrate our success with ADE, beyond the shared, in-class moments already described in the previous posts. The completion rate of those students who submitted the ADE portfolio for evaluation was 71%, compared to 61% in the college's traditional developmental writing course. Those who completed passed at 93%, which is comparable to the traditional development writing course pass rate of 91%. The ADE students also did quite well in the college-level writing course, with 59% of them earning a grade of C or higher (Cressman, 2014). The support hour and its use of the Studio model for the students worked: More students were completing the developmental writing course while also achieving success in the college-level writing course. This was welcome news for the department as we began to think about the future of developmental writing at MCTC.

Yet, there are still questions, concerns, and doubts. In the spring 2014 semester, we convened our first-ever face-to-face meeting of ADE faculty, where we discussed these future concerns and what it would mean to "go to scale" with ADE, particularly in light of our successful assessment numbers. In a follow-up blog entry, Jane listed the ADE faculty's discussion points regarding those doubts:

1. About problems with placement: Can we just blow up the whole model? Get rid of Accuplacer? Demand that writing samples be used to assess student placement in developmental? And what to do about Reading? [Developmental students are assessed into developmental writing courses through their Accuplacer Reading score.]

2. Current faculty issues: What does it mean to teach ADE for a semester or two, change your approach to the developmental curriculum, and then go back to teaching that traditional course? What does it mean for the ADE instructor who is currently teaching **both**? How does teaching in ADE change our traditional developmental teaching? **Does** it change? Can we go back to it in the same way? What is different about the two courses?

3. On future ADE faculty: More folks want to teach ADE—how do we maintain a fair system and assure effective ADE teaching?

4. On future assessment: What questions do we now need to ask for assessment? We need research on persistence and start times, on completion rates in [the second semester college English research writing course], on computer literacy skills coming in, etc. (Blog entry, March 2, 2014)

In many ways, this list was the direct product of the interactional inquiry made possible through the course blog. We did not get to this point of raising questions without first articulating them in the blog. The blog became our site for collaborative knowledge making. Along the way, the blog created a magnetic form of consensus, one that new and prospective faculty members found attractive.

CONCLUSION

As the previous section shows, this group of faculty members has continued to question the course's curriculum, the college's context for the course, and our pedagogy, even with the success of the course. In many ways, the blog, and the interactional inquiry process that we embraced, provided a space which allowed the classroom and the Studio course to become sites for reflection and action research, sites increasingly rare in community college settings.

That said, it was interesting to the primary authors that the use of the blog diminished considerably after the initial flush of activity during the first two semesters the course was offered. On one level, this decreased activity made sense. When the group was teaching a new course for the first time, it was logical that the urge to communicate would be at its greatest. During that time we used the blog in an ontological sense: We were looking for ways of being together in the process of starting this new course. It felt good to have this shared space where we could read and respond to one another's postings.

On another level, however, we have become less sanguine about the decreased activity, especially as the college and the English department expand the offerings of the course. This means that new instructors will be teaching the course, supposedly with some of the same concerns, doubts, and needs as the original instructors. In the future, too, there will be new challenges that all ADE instructors must confront. As we write, the department has made revisions to professional development for developmental writing: One of the three meetings is devoted entirely to ADE. Over time, we imagine even more of the professional development time being committed to ADE, as the number of offerings increase. Indeed, ADE is becoming an "institutional fixture."

Along those lines, Grego and Thompson posited, "Whenever a course becomes an institutional fixture, as [developmental] writing courses have, we run the risk of allowing institutional labels to render invisible the richness and complexity of the backgrounds that all students bring into the academy" (1995, p. 76). Other program parts—pedagogy, daily lessons, instructors' anxiety, to name but a few—run just as much risk as becoming as invisible as students' backgrounds. Our developmental writing course represented 25% of all of the sections offered within the department, and yet discussions about its context, curriculum, and pedagogy were often "render[ed] invisible"—until, that is, we co-created a blog where we wrote about these issues. In the same article, Grego and Thompson (1995) suggested that the Studio approach provided a "process of slipping outside the traditional slough of familiarity [that] can enlighten and enliven the theories and practices which inform our writing programs, and can move us to integrate research on and learning about writing within those programs." In this regard, the Studio model has certainly helped us "enlighten and enliven" our "theories and practices" (p. 77).

Interactional inquiry provided a process for us as we started teaching the course, and the blog became the vehicle for the interactional inquiry. In truth, the course and the blog brought the instructors together to discuss matters that too frequently are left unwritten or unspoken in our work environment. And these types of exchanges deeply enriched the work lives of the participants.

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