Journal of Basic Writing

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FALL 2005
VOLUME 24 NUMBER 2

Journal of Basic Writing

VOLUME 24 **NUMBER 2** **FALL 2005**

The *Journal of Basic Writing* publishes articles of theory, research, and teaching practices related to basic writing. Articles are refereed by members of the Editorial Board (see overleaf) and the Editors.

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The *Journal of Basic Writing* is published twice a year, in the spring and fall, with support from the City University of New York, Office of Academic Affairs. We welcome unsolicited manuscripts and ask authors to consult the detailed "Call for Articles" in this issue. Subscriptions for individuals are $15.00 for one year and $28.00 for two years; subscriptions for institutions are $20.00 for one year and $38.00 for two years. Foreign postage is $10.00 extra per year. For subscription inquiries or updates, contact:

Journal of Basic Writing
Boyd Printing Company, Inc.
Attn. Cathie Ryan
49 Sheridan Ave.
Albany, NY 12210
(800) 877-2693
(518) 436-9686
www.boydprinting.com

Published by the City University of New York since 1975

Cover and logo design by Kimon Frank
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ISSN 0147-1635

JOURNAL OF BASIC WRITING

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CALL FOR ARTICLES

We welcome manuscripts of 15-25 pages, double spaced, on topics related to basic and ESL writing, broadly interpreted. Submissions should follow current MLA guidelines. Manuscripts are refereed anonymously. To assure impartial review, include name(s), affiliation(s), mailing and e-mail addresses, and a short biographical note for publication on the cover page *only*. The second page should include the title but no author identification, an abstract of about 150 words, and a list of 4-5 key words. Endnotes should be kept to a minimum. It is the author's responsibility to obtain permission for including excerpts from student writing.

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All manuscripts must focus clearly on basic writing and must add substantively to the existing literature. We seek manuscripts that are original, stimulating, well-grounded in theory, and clearly related to practice. Work that reiterates what is known or work previously published will not be considered.

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We particularly encourage a *variety* of manuscripts: speculative discussions which venture fresh interpretations; essays which draw heavily on student writing as supportive evidence for new observations; research reports, written in non-technical language, which offer observations previously unknown or unsubstantiated; and collaborative writings which provocatively debate more than one side of a central controversy.

EDITORS' COLUMN

Composition, it seems, is always defining itself. But the field of composition studies, perhaps more than other disciplines, tends to resist all-encompassing definitions. In our lead article for this issue, "Present-Process: The Composition of Change," Jessica Yood calls into question the idea that the "writing process" can truly be called a paradigm. Yood examines the roots of the notion of "process" as paradigm, which she traces to Maxine Hairston's influential 1982 article "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing." Hairston asserted that the process movement, which views the writing process as messy, recursive, and holistic, represented a paradigm shift in the way knowledge is created in composition, which was comparable to the paradigm shifts described by Kuhn in the "hard sciences." Nearly twenty years after Hairston's article appeared, the notion of process as paradigm was problematized in another influential publication, Thomas Kent's 1999 collection *Post-Process Theory: Beyond the Writing-Process Paradigm*.

Yood describes her initial attraction to the idea that composition studies was "post" process. In fact, she argues that viewing process as paradigm—a fixed way of solving problems and generating new knowledge—is particularly unsuited to a field that is constantly changing in response to societal forces, perceived student needs, and institutional priorities. However, in this article she works to rehabilitate process as a useful perspective, if not a definitive paradigm, arguing that "the vocabulary of process is exactly what is useful to us right now, not as a 'Big Theory' of how individuals compose, but as a way to talk about the power of change constructed within literacy programs in our local communities."

If the need for a way of talking about change is important for composition in general, it is especially so for basic writing, which was created in response to changing societal forces, specifically the influx of large numbers of poorly prepared students during the open-admissions era of the 1970s. The other four articles in this issue amply illustrate the types of changes that are currently buffeting basic writing programs and pedagogies. In so doing, they demonstrate the need for Yood's "present-process" concept of composition. In "It's Not Remedial: Re-envisioning Pre-First Year College Writing," Heidi Huse, Jenna Wright, Anna Clark, and Tim Hacker describe how the writing program at the University of Tennessee at Martin has responded in positive ways to a situation that has recently occurred in many parts of the United States—a mandate by the state legislature that "remedial" programs cannot be offered at four-year colleges and universities. The authors explain the process through which they used this "crisis" to develop a pedagogically sound—and credit-bearing—basic

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.2005.24.2.01

writing program. While it is too early to assess the long-term effects of the new program, initial results are promising.

Another challenge that is forcing change in basic writing is the increasingly diverse demographics of the student population. In "Uses of Background Experience in a Preparatory Reading and Writing Class: An Analysis of Native and Non-native Speakers of English," Diana Becket focuses on the growing number of "generation 1.5 students" in BW classes. This term is used to describe students who immigrated with their families as children or adolescents and were educated in U.S. middle and high schools. Many of these students fail university placement tests in reading and writing and are placed either in regular basic writing classes or in more specialized ESL classes. Regardless of where they are placed, this loosely categorized group of students is causing much consternation among teachers, who feel ill-prepared to meet the special challenges of students who are familiar with U.S. popular culture but unfamiliar with academic discourse. In this article, based on a study of the differences between native speakers and generation 1.5 students placed in the same preparatory course in reading and writing, Becket concludes that where students are born may not be the most important distinction in deciding what they need in the classroom. Rather, she feels that in order to promote student success, teachers need to individualize instruction to meet the specific needs of their students, regardless of where these students were born and educated. Again, the perspective of composition as a "process" seems appropriate in dealing with an ever-changing student population.

In "Represent, Representin', Representation: The Efficacy of Hybrid Texts in the Writing Classroom," Donald McCrary addresses another question facing instructors of basic writing. How can we make our students—as they are—feel that they have a legitimate place in the academy? For students placed in basic writing courses, language, which reflects cultural and social realities, often creates barriers. Too often these students feel that their own language is "broken" and has no place in the academy. To address this problem, McCrary, in his recent teaching at Long Island University in Brooklyn, has assigned examples of hybrid discourse drawing on the resources of black English or other languages and has encouraged students to experiment with using their own hybrid discourses in their writing. Although not all students choose to use hybrid discourse in the literacy autobiography essays they write for the course, some students do so in meaningful and rhetorically effective ways. Excerpts from three student essays are included, demonstrating McCrary's point that legitimizing the use of hybrid discourse can help to "dismantle the barriers" resulting from the dominance of standard English. Arguing forcefully for students' right to their own language, McCrary provides yet another example of a field in process: "If we really believe

in cultural multiplicity, if we're not just making noise but want to bring the noise, then we have to get serious about what we say and do with language in our own classrooms."

Pedagogy is another area in which basic writing is constantly in process. Pedagogical trends come and go, and sensitive teachers and scholars have to make informed decisions about how best to meet the needs of the students in their courses. Service learning has been a significant trend for many years, both in composition and in other disciplines, as a way of engaging students in genuine, meaningful work with visible outcomes. In "Servant Class: Basic Writers and Service Learning," Don J. Kraemer takes a critical look at what happened when he asked his basic writing students to engage in writing-for-the-community service learning projects. Although the students themselves often found these projects rewarding, Kraemer came to feel that the emphasis on producing a slick "product" to help the agency where they were placed robbed the students of something more important—the chance to use writing as a way of reflecting on important problems or questions, the work of more traditional academic writing assignments.

In its own way, each of the articles in this issue resonates with this statement from Jessica Yood's article: "[B]asic writing and open admissions are under attack at most institutions; composition is in the process of distinguishing itself anew from other disciplines and from its own past. No paradigm, no movement, no discipline, in fact, seems immune from sweeping reevaluation." In today's world, as Yood points out, knowledge making is reflexive, recursive, and tied closely to the changing environment in which it occurs. In such a world, it seems important to take another look at the concept of process and what it might offer for thinking about the challenges that composition and, more specifically, basic writing face today.

—**Rebecca Mlynarczyk** and **Bonne August**

Present-Process: The Composition of Change

Jessica Yood

ABSTRACT: Because the writing-process movement has been deemed our field's founding "paradigm"—at least since Hairston's 1982 essay declared it so—"process" has remained stuck in the philosophical and historical assumptions of a "paradigm." The paradigm theory, has, from its first associations with composition, offered a view of change wholly unsuited to work in writing. Today, as we face monumental changes in public higher education, thinking in paradigms is even more useless, if not paralyzing. This essay traces the history of the link between process theory and paradigms, argues why the pairing of process to paradigms sold process short, and, finally, resurrects the term "process" as a term that helps characterize innovative approaches to disciplinary and writing program change. By drawing on theories of "process" from a range of fields and by connecting these theories to a case study of one new WAC/BW program, I offer "present-process" as a productive, workable perspective for our field.

The Profession of Process

"I suspect that the readers of this volume already know the central tenets of the writing-process movement about as well as they know the letters of the English alphabet" (Kent 1). So begins the introduction to Thomas Kent's collection *Post-Process Theory: Beyond the Writing-Process Paradigm*. Kent's project was to supplant these "ABC's" of process with three assumptions of the post-process movement: writing is "interpretive," "situated," and, most emphatically, "public" (Kent 1). "Change is in the air," Kent wrote (1). The era of "Big Theory," of "generalizable" approaches to composition, was over.

Kent's volume appeared in 1999, when many compositionists, including myself, agreed that those central tenets about process, famously summarized in Maxine Hairston's 1982 article "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," were both fully known and amply in need of moving beyond. In this article, Hairston detailed "process" as the term to describe the messy, recursive "processes by

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© *Journal of Basic Writing*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2005

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.2005.24.2.02

which individuals give shape and meaning to written text" (Perl, "Writing Process" 1). The writing-process movement would focus on "strategies" for composing, would be "holistic," viewing writing as "recursive," "expressive," "expository" (Hairston 124). It would emphasize research focused on writing and the teaching of writing and promote writing teachers who write. It would highlight a "rhetorically based" view of writing as well as regarding writing as a "disciplined creative activity" that could be "analyzed and described . . . taught" (Hairston 124). There were many more features of process; Hairston listed twelve. However, "process" is most famous (or infamous) not for any one of these features but for all of them, as they were put together in the revolutionary "writing-process paradigm." The words themselves—writing, process, and paradigm—seem to be one phrase, one entity, as evidenced by Kent's use of it in the subtitle of his book.

Being "beyond" process suggests that the field has already arrived somewhere else. Six years after the writing-as-public winds of change swept through composition, we should be celebrating a brand new climate in the field. But I, for one, feel less than blown away. Is being "post" paradigmatic? Is paradigmatic an accurate way to describe writing as public? Despite years of reading about process and its criticisms, despite years of working closely with pioneers of the process movement and then situating my work and that of my generation emphatically against that movement, I am, once again, turning back to process and wondering: what was it? And is what I do really "post" that?

Turning "back" to process is not quite the right phrase. I am too young to have been a part of the winds of change that revolutionized composition in the era of the "process paradigm." Yet I am also too steeped in my job teaching basic writing at the City University of New York—amidst monumental changes in public higher education that include the end of open admissions and upheaval in its legendary writing programs—to find the "assumption" that writing is "public" as something revolutionary, or, even, as "something new" (Kent 5). In the aftermath of the culture wars and in the wake of economic and political upheavals in education, critics in the academy and outside acknowledge that no one methodology or discipline can address the complexity of the global changes ahead in the knowledge industry. The fate of literacy education in universities generally and at public, urban colleges like my own in particular is tenuous. Many of the hallmark programs that defined the impetus for composition as a discipline were, just recently, "in crisis" and now are considerably overhauled. Higher education is growing, but study in the humanities is not; basic writing and

open admissions are under attack at most institutions; composition is in the process of distinguishing itself anew from other disciplines and from its own past. No paradigm, no movement, no discipline, in fact, seems immune from sweeping reevaluation.

"That the vocabulary of process is no longer useful is not a reason to despair" writes Gary Olson in *Post-Process Theory* (9). But if the discipline of writing is about anything, it is about change and the way we write in and about change—how we process our work. I argue here that process is exactly what is useful to us right now, not as a "Big Theory" of how individuals compose, but as way to talk about the power of change constructed within literacy programs in our local communities. Looking again at Maxine Hairston's famous article, "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing" is a good place to start rethinking our vocabulary of change.

The Winds of Change: The Process-Paradigm Connection

When, in the early 1980's, Maxine Hairston called process a paradigm, the "writing-process" movement was not new. Nor was the concept of paradigms, which Thomas Kuhn had made famous, nearly twenty years earlier in his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.[1] But Hairston's explicit combination of the terms "process" and "paradigm" was new. The particular way she paired these terms has made them exist in a kind of symbiotic relationship for compositionists. The process theory of composing—an outgrowth of the New Rhetoric and a pedagogy aimed at the unprepared, open admissions student represented in Hairston's article by Mina Shaughnessey's CUNY basic writers—met the paradigm concept of change—Kuhn's theory of how knowledge is made, a theory he reserved for the most elite corners of the academy, the "exemplars" of science. When paradigms blended with the "writing-process" something unusual happened. High and low, new and established, theory and practice, a changing public and a professional paradigm meshed—uncomfortably, unequally, problematically, and historically. This odd mixture produced the field we now call composition studies.

We cannot overestimate how radical a move this was. Hairston's impetus, to link writing, teaching, and institutional change together with epistemology, had incredible power and potential. But the radical possibilities of this mission were curtailed. Post-process proponents have gone a long way towards explaining what went wrong with process—its focus on the individual writer at the expense of social circumstances, its neglect of genres

and the variety of academic and professional discourse, its attachment to the first-year writing course and the problematic politics of that enterprise (Bartholomae, Bazerman, Lu, Crowley).[2] Historians, critics, and champions of process have put up for scrutiny almost every aspect of what Hairston in 1982 called composition's process "revolution" and what Barbara Gleason, writing nearly thirty years later, referred to as "the intellectual springboard for our modern field of composition" (2). Indeed, Victor Villanueva has labeled process the "given" of our profession (1). Likewise, the term "paradigm" has been dissected in so many ways by so many people that it seems simply to exist as part of our professional lives.[3] In the last few years especially, the term has become a staple in discussions about the academy and the future of English and composition and rhetoric.[4] But they—we—have missed a central tension of the process movement: its *tie* to the paradigm theory of change. While compositionists have used, revised, and debated the term "process," its direct link to the history and fate of paradigms has yet to be explored. Rather than historicize process or paradigms then, I want to locate the moment that "process" became folded into paradigms.

The paradigm-process pairing is as problematic as it was enticing. Kuhn's "paradigm" approach was in every way wrong for process, but dismiss process with paradigms, however, is to lose the powerful message Hairston provided in her pairing of these terms. In suggesting that writing is a process and that the writing-process is a paradigm, she suggested that writing and change are *in* process. They are embedded in epistemological and political shifts, in the movements that we, researchers, writers, teachers, students of composition, participate in as we work on communicating about and enacting change in this new society.

Hairston's link between process and product gives composition the impetus it needs now to (re)claim the idea that disciplinary change happens when public, political, and institutional change are tied to theories of knowledge, and when theories of knowledge connect with reflections on change. The importance of linking what we do in writing to a new understanding of change is nowhere more pressing for me than in our basic writing classrooms and programs, those areas found on the "margins of educational, economic, and political localities of influence" (Halasek and Highberg xv). What is marginal or central to the academy or to the local politic is shifting. If our vocabulary hasn't kept pace with our reality, then the swift pace of change that characterizes the teaching of writing and running of basic writing programs certainly reveals the often paradoxical, reflexive, even recursive nature of our work. Later on in this article I will show why this is true in general and

at my university in particular. For now I want to ask: what would process look like divorced from paradigms but still tied to epistemology and material, institutional reform—to the kind of changes currently underway in recent "revolutions" in the teaching of basic writing?

Paradigms and the Making of Knowledge in Composition

Paradigms have enjoyed enormous staying power in composition studies and in the academy at large because they create a useful way to categorize the many entities that go into the making of a discipline. A paradigm is both a tradition of knowing in science, and that which goes into the making of a tradition, "some implicit body of intertwined theoretical and methodological belief that permits selection, evaluation, and criticism" (Kuhn 16-17). Kuhn's view of science holds that a "cyclical pattern" occurs in knowledge making in which a series of revolutions contributes to a paradigm change. Such cycles are all encompassing. They are "revolutionary": when the new paradigm emerges, it completely reorients the scientist's worldview. Revolutions occur, Kuhn writes, "when an individual or group first produces a synthesis able to attract most of *the next generation's* practitioners" (Kuhn 18). When this happens, Kuhn writes, "the older schools gradually disappear" (Kuhn 18).

This concept showed the sciences and, eventually, most of the disciplines in the academy, how one idea could be replaced by another. For Hairston, however, paradigms became the tool for showing how an idea, a public movement, and a professional mission could be one and the same enterprise. In "Winds of Change" Hairston isolates the social, political, philosophical, and linguistic developments leading to the process revolution. First, she focuses on the intellectual spirit of change generating the revolution—the "intellectual inquiry and speculation about language learning" that she attributes to many fields, "notably linguistics, anthropology, and clinical and cognitive psychology" (118). She then cites a particular event in the field of English studies, the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching and Learning of English at Dartmouth (often called the Dartmouth Conference) as another, programmatic force propelling the "winds" of change (118). And finally, and most notably, she finds a novel theory for a discipline in the so-called "crisis" of the open admissions movement of the 1970s.[5]

In joining a disciplinary identity with student need, Hairston offered the discipline a profound misreading of Kuhn. This misreading is the site of my re-reading and resurrection of "process" from its current state of para-

digm-paralysis. Kuhn emphasized paradigms as a synthesis of forces, one generation of specialists replacing the ideas of the next. But Hairston defined paradigms not as a duality but as a complex, three-part event: a community of research specialists, a community of public activists, and a community of teachers constitute the process paradigm. Writing more than a decade after "process" was first used as a term in composition, Hairston argued that composition was only in the "first stage" of the paradigm shift because the *teaching* of "current-traditional" rhetoric was still the most practiced and the most acceptable practice of teaching writing. The "revolution" for Hairston would occur only if writing teachers became part of the research and publishing community and if that had an effect on their teaching. What Hairston's article did was bring theory, pedagogy, and the public together, not as an idea but as the building blocks for a new profession, the material for a paradigm. More importantly, she claimed that one couldn't be understood without the other.

But what is particularly moving for me is not merely the idea that intellectual shifts are built on social change, but that they are based on knowing and teaching the kind of student in the kind of environment least likely to be considered "exemplar" for disciplinary knowledge-making: the open-admissions student in a basic writing program at an urban, public institution. Hairston cites nearly a page from *Errors and Expectations* where Mina Shaughnessy describes the group of open-admissions students at CUNY whose writing "met no traditional standards" (Hairston 83). She supposes that the work of these students and their teachers could serve as "important stimuli in spurring the profession's search for a new paradigm" (121).

While Hairston brought this feature of the profession to the surface, she fell short of bringing it to "paradigmatic" importance, by placing this discussion in a section entitled "The Transition Period." The "Transition Period" in Kuhn's work refers to the point in a paradigm shift that leads to, but isn't quite part of, the paradigm. This contradictory message about the "important stimuli" of process is significant because it reveals the potentials and pitfalls of the paradigm model. In the "Transition Period," according to Kuhn, "someone who cares" needs to "recognize that something has gone wrong" (Kuhn 65 qtd. in Hairston 120) with an academic field. Hairston names Mina Shaughnessy as the person who cared to recognize a problem with the academy of the 1970s. She discusses how Shaughnessy sought out philosophical and institutional solutions to what many perceived as the problem of "strangers in academia"—open admissions students admitted to CUNY in the 1970s.

Yet we know now, as clearly as writing teachers knew in 1970, that there are still many "strangers" to the academy. Kuhn's theory of revolutions assumes that what is transitional becomes "normal science." The "wrong" elements of a field get righted, once and for all in a new paradigm. Following this line of thought, once the paradigm has been put in place, this public and its teachers are no longer needed as stimuli. Instead, they become the spectators of a paradigm, the "given": always mentioned but frozen in history. But to work with basic writers today is to stand as proof that the "problem" of the academy never went away, never "transitioned." As I describe later, the open admissions basic writer, the "new student of the seventies," (at CUNY and elsewhere), has become the closed-admission "new student of the millennium" enrolled in WAC and Writing Intensive courses. Their problems with literacy and our problems with addressing their needs are unique to our present situation but also deeply rooted in the history of public higher education in New York City and in the nation at large.

The structures of higher education are shifting and our paradigms are in process. Can we find a way to see these shifts as observable, recordable knowledge? Might it be time to revise process for a new present?

The Problem with Paradigms, the Potential for Process-Revised

Outside of our field, important discussions on the fate of disciplines in the twenty-first century shed light on the problem with process as it was married to paradigms. In his book debating and critiquing the considerable influence of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Steve Fuller, a pioneer thinker in social epistemology and Science Technology Studies (STS), puts the problems of paradigms this way: "Kuhn simply repeats the popular historiography of science as the succession of trailblazers at the research frontiers, except that the heroic genius is replaced by the self-perpetuating cult" (9). His criticism rests on the idea that paradigms provide an outlet for a few researchers and scholars and an "activity," or performance for the public to enact that paradigm (8). Fuller acknowledges the enormous influence Kuhn has had on the academy, but he concludes that the overall effect of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* has not been salutary. Rather, its effect has been "to dull the critical sensibility of the academy" (7).

Fuller sees paradigms as antithetical to democratic, rhetorically sound scholarship and teaching because the real work of change is already finished when the paradigm hits.[6] Because paradigms were all encompassing, the academy, Fuller argues, came to expect—to require—"revolutions." Most of

these revolutions involved one "generation" supplanting another, one set of ideas being overpowered by another. Paradigms proliferated; new disciplines and specialties within those disciplines accumulated. In turn, the need to justify these paradigms to the academy and to the public and the desire to reflect on what brings various aspects of our professional interests together became the stuff that happened outside of knowledge making. Teaching or writing programs or mere experience—the material justifications for all of our theories—are considered transitional or marginal at best, and outside at worst, of our paradigms. Fuller writes:

> Good paradigms make for good neighbors. What dropped out of this picture was a public academic space where the general ends and means of 'science' (or 'knowledge production' or 'inquiry') could be debated just as vigorously and meaningfully as the specific ends and means of particular disciplines or research programs. (7)

Historian John Zammitto, as part of a larger project that helps define the new field of science studies, details the hierarchical and pedagogical nature of paradigms this way: the "emergence of normal science is both constraining and enabling, and it is enabling *through* constraint" (56). What he means here is that paradigms propel increased specialization and "rules" that govern that specialization. These rules both encourage and limit the possibilities of science. But Zammitto goes on to explain that once the paradigm had shifted, determining how that paradigm would fit into the public was a task for the "writer of textbooks" (56), an activity for the classroom. Paradigms are tools for solidifying ideas, not for generating connections.[7]

Thinking in terms of revolutions or paradigms means understanding disciplines as constellations of ideas, removed from the often shocking, or debilitating, or invigorating changes in student population or politics that fuel our work with writing. This is why being "post" process feels empty to me. While a central "assumption" of post-process theory is "writing is public," there is no mention of who or what that public is in relation to our discipline's idea of itself.

Kuhn saw that intellectual change is constructed in communities, but he couldn't account for the ongoing, recursive relationship that a community would have with a public and with itself, with the continual struggles to find meaning and contemporary relevance in an academic discipline. Fuller offers the term "social movements" as an alternative to "paradigms." New knowledge is understood in the intellectual and political context of a

changing public and in response to the image a profession creates of itself. He writes:

> a new distinction [between paradigms and movements] . . . conceptualizes scientific justification as removing the idiosyncratic character of scientific discovery . . . not simply the fact that a discovery was first reached by a given individual in a given lab, but the fact that it was reached by a particular research tradition in a given culture. (417)

"Movements" are self-referential and reflexive—they recognize how knowledge in disciplines gets made and changed not only by people creating ideas but by the *interaction* between ideas and a public and by the interaction between a community's thinking about knowledge and their actualizing it in the form of politics and programs—like writing programs. Key to this concept is the notion that knowledge making today needs to be understood as reflexive, in a recursive relationship with its image of itself and with the changing environment. It requires being a social and intellectual body in movement, hanging on the hinges of a transforming society. It requires being okay with process.

The Complexity of Change, The Autopoesis of Composition

Science and technology studies (which emerged around the same time as composition—a fascinating convergence of anti-disciplinary disciplines that begs for further discussion) is the subject that Fuller nominates to recognize and define such "movements" in the academy. But our field can do more than *observe* the reflexivity of our current epistemological and political moment. Mere description and critique of knowledge activities can end up evoking grand theories without enacting what Kurt Spellmeyer calls "genuine, real-world politics" (286). Composition, in the throes of unprecedented change, is poised to observe and participate in understanding and generating transformative perspectives on disciplines and knowledge making. What if we thought of shifts in our programs as intellectual structures in process?

Considered without its political and paradigmatic baggage, we are able to see how process can, first, release our field from the constraints of paradigmatic thinking, and secondly, help the field make sense of, even celebrate, this moment of change as uniquely important to and for students and teachers of writing. Sociologists of knowledge and systems theorists

provide useful ways to think about process in a complex, present-oriented way. Complexity theorists, a constellation of thinkers that includes social theorists, philosophers, and scientists, focus on what I see as the central mission of composition—the "how" of composing, on "autopoesis." These thinkers use the terms "reflexivity" and "recursivity," important concepts in the writing-process movement, to highlight the need for a more integrative understanding of change. Reflexivity is a function of an increasingly complex "network-generated mind" (Collins 791), a concept whereby "systems organize using communication" and do so with multi-level "non-linear interactive processes" (Blackman 143). Recursivity, in writing-process theory, refers to the back and forth movement, the "retrospective structuring" (Perl "The Composing" 54) of composing. Complexity theorists use recursivity to describe the essential give and take between an environment and its observers. The public or social condition of knowledge does not simply "change how knowledge procedures are conducted" but rather alters "what knowledge is and how we may interact and use it" (Rasch and Wolfe 27).

Autopoesis, literally meaning "self-production," is a term used to highlight how an "organization"—an organism or a social system—comes into being through "interdependence." With its focus on observing systems as we participate in them, autopoesis is a concept that can help writing scholars connect to process in a different way. A central feature of this theory is that life is internally organized and recursive. We are all observers and participants in change; in turn, we are all changing and remaking both our environments and ourselves.

The concept of autopoesis deserves a hearing in our field because it offers a way out of the process/post-process debate and it provides a frame for understanding our interactions with a changing academy. Of particular importance to my notion of present-process is understanding knowledge making in our complex world as a circular, feedback loop. Two Chilean biologists, Humberto Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, are best known for their idea that the essential feature of living systems is its self-referentiality, the self-reproduction of a system's network. Contrary to the common Darwinian assumption that the basis of life is reproduction, Maturana and Varela argued for a more holistic approach to life—as self-production. Both autopoesis and process theories of composing highlight the role that reflexivity, recursivity, and self-referencing play in the making of knowledge. As Dietrich Schwantiz puts it, "social systems consist of events" and the "raw material of events" is "communications" (488).

The key features of autopoesis are central to the task facing scholars of writing and culture today: to see knowledge as a living entity, a feature of the work we do as writers and teachers and scholars, not something we comment on, but something we produce reflexively. The systems theorist Niklas Luhmann has defined reflexivity as the recursive way an environment—a public—and a social system communicate. Theorizing on the sociology of social systems, like higher education, Luhmann offers the following analysis, which helps connect process with more "constructivist" elements of the profession:

> Paying attention to this condition of the capacity of observing, we can see that the system *makes* the *difference* between system and environment and *copies* that difference in the system to be able to use it as a *distinction.* (36)

Here Luhmann is rearticulating the mathematics of George Spencer Brown, whose *Laws of Form* sought to show how every act—"intellectual or psychical" is meant to "draw a distinction, to distinguish figure from ground" (Wolfe 257). He connects concepts of process with a focus on "observing" as making a distinction and marking difference in a thought or a piece of writing. This link between observing and recognizing distinction and difference allows us to see the potential for reflexivity as a way of recognizing and enacting change. This approach to process eschews the dichotomies that pervade our field: process versus product, progressive versus constructivist, analytic versus postmodern. Thinking about process this way does not mean a nostalgic return to some yesteryear of revolution. Rather it incorporates much of the criticism of post-process and considers process as a metaphor and agent of change.

In composition, perhaps the most influential approach to distinguish itself from process has been the constructivist movement, best represented by David Bartholomae's early work. In his now canonical essay "Inventing the University" Bartholomae persuaded many writing teachers that "what our beginning students need to learn is to extend themselves into the commonplaces, set phrases, rituals, gestures, habits of mind, tricks of persuasion, obligatory conclusions, and necessary connections that determine what might be said and constitute knowledge within the various branches of our academic community" (600). His point encapsulates much of the thinking behind the social constructivist movement. What is already there is constructed; what is produced in response is constructed in turn.

Bartholomae, Lu, and others were right to critique elements of the writing-process paradigm. But can we use this critique to help reconnect to a more integrated view of the profession? Hairston declared process to be a "revolution" in the teaching of writing. I suggest that process is something much less and much more. It is not a twelve-step program of what goes on "during the internal act of writing" (Hairston 121, 124). Nor is it merely the "processes by which individuals give shape and meaning to written texts" (Perl xi). But it is, as Hairston and others have suggested, an "investigative strategy" that seeks to connect writing with "practices" (Hairston 123), that "emerge" in the act of trying to know "how" a "product came into being" and "why it assumed the form that it did" (Hairston 121). Hairston's focus was on creating a picture of the composing process, recording and knowing the often-invisible activities of "people's minds" that can be studied through reading their texts. But I am interested in pictures of the act of composing knowledge as we process this activity through local, literacy practices and programs. These are the *processes* that emerge when we study how the disciplinary community and the public interact and how that interaction occurs through both the theories and the programs that comprise what we do in the academy. Is there a way we can make these processes visible? And what good would that do?

Concern with paradigms and with post-paradigms allows our field to miss the role that reflexive behaviors can have on definitions of the profession and on the realities of students, teachers, and institutions. These behaviors include our study and recording of phenomena as they are occurring and the analysis of how professions and the public are composed in response to and in conjunction with the rapid pace of political, epistemological, and institutional change. If paradigms can name and contain change, autopoesis can describe it as it is happening, as we compose it through programs and pedagogies.

In what follows, I draw an analogy between this approach to thinking about change and our contemporary scene of composition, or what I am calling a present-process moment.[8] I offer one perspective on what Fuller would call a "social movement" occurring at my university, CUNY, focusing on the autopoetic or present-process activities of the university's new WAC program. My example is but one and certainly not representative of many writing or public education initiatives. But because of CUNY's unique place in this history of composition, it is an example that exemplifies the paradoxes and possibilities of the new connections among writing, the public, and the processes of understanding and making change

Basic Writing, WAC, and the Shifting Ground of Composition

I suspect that readers of this journal already know the basic history of composition at CUNY and its tie to the emergence of composition as an academic discipline.[9] Compositionists of every stripe acknowledge Mina Shaughnessy and her work with open admissions, basic writers at CUNY as pioneering the process era and as material that propelled a profession into disciplinary status (see Lu, Bazerman, Bruffee).

However, recent historical shifts in the national scene of public higher education—the end of open admissions at many institutions, coupled with a surge of interest in process that is developing outside of our field—suggest a need to reconsider this shared history. My colleagues in basic writing at CUNY and elsewhere have done much to explore the political fall-out of the first concern (Soliday, Sternglass, Lewiecki-Wilson and Sommers, Gray-Rosendale, to name but a few). But the parameters of this shift need contextualizing in light of recent intellectual, political, and programmatic changes.

The official end of open admissions, initiated in 1998 and formalized in 1999, when CUNY's Board of Trustees voted for the cessation of this policy, right before its thirtieth birthday, has been the most dramatic of recent shifts at CUNY. Remediation is, at least in word if not fully in deed, disbanded at the eleven four-year schools. At the two-year schools, basic skills courses are still available and at four-year schools, certain 1970's-era open admissions programs remain, including SEEK (Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge). But everywhere at CUNY there is a major shift in the culture of the university—a sense among faculty and students that the teaching of writing is as charged as it was in 1970, but in wholly different ways.

CUNY students who cannot meet placement criteria in math, reading and writing must first go to the community colleges and then, perhaps, transfer for a B.A. or B.S. Part of the call to "revitalize" CUNY and set higher standards for the colleges involved adding a new "rising junior" high stakes test. The definition of "public" higher education has changed in New York City yet the "the errors and expectations" of our students are just as great, perhaps greater then they were in 1970, because the contemporary CUNY student is *still* often under-prepared, likely to be an immigrant or child of immigrants, struggling financially, speaking English as a second language or dialect, and often the first of the family to attend college.[10]

Students now navigate a system where the terms "remediation" and "basic writing" have been discarded but where enrollment and graduation

are contingent on new—but not fully agreed upon—standards. The students and faculty who must negotiate these changes do not represent a "transition period" for a paradigm or for our university. They are New York City public school graduates, but they are also, increasingly, coming to look like the future of higher education nation-wide.[11] They and we make up the public that responds to and revises the political and intellectual ground that is changing as I write this.

This political scene set the stage for major programmatic and philosophical shifts in writing education. When the Board of Trustees moved remediation out of the four-year schools, many of the campus basic writing programs that formed the bedrock of CUNY's writing program (and the inspiration for many others) were also removed. While almost every campus still teaches basic writing in some way, the university's identity with this program and its philosophies—diverse in theory though intimately tied together through history and politics—is receding. Students in the community and comprehensive colleges still take basic writing courses; still travel though the always-changing maze of remedial, required classes that bring them to their degrees. Yet the stakes have changed—the new exam, and increasingly, additional "writing-intensive" courses have altered the focus of their composition studies. "Basic writing" as a requirement for and an identity of CUNY composition is no longer. In its place came not a paradigm but a program: CUNY's first university-wide WAC program, which was instituted in 1999.

This program serves all seventeen colleges. Most of these campuses have developed new "writing-intensive" courses to accompany faculty development workshops and student WAC seminars. Writing fellows, advanced graduate students from a variety of disciplines, serve as consultants to faculty and departments on all seventeen campuses. Here we—coordinators trained under process and post-process paradigms, some pioneers of open admissions, others faculty of the new closed-admissions campuses—address many of the same issues we would in basic writing classes. But we do so in a different context, with different students. There is no guiding paradigm, only a tradition of process theory and the recognition of where process could not meet the needs of this changing population.

In 1999, some of the original pioneers of process and basic writing at CUNY came together to create a template for this new university-wide Writing Across the Curriculum program.[12] The first year of the program included a series of workshops aimed at training faculty and writing fellows. These "writing institutes" were built on the model offered by the New York City Writing Project and the Institute for Literacy Studies (housed at my CUNY

campus, Lehman College). The emphasis was collaborative learning as Kenneth Bruffee and other early process-era theorists defined it and on teaching general practices to help with the composing process. The thrust of these workshops was on developing what Hairston called a "holistic" knowledge about how one writes and to engage in some of the rhetorical demands of writing in school. Because the New York City Writing Project has emphasized consulting in the schools, it was no surprise that the workshop relied heavily on collaborative activities for composing and on the processes one takes to compose a text.[13]

Within eighteen months of this program's enactment, campus coordinators, some aligning themselves with "post-process" thinkers and others who were new to the profession entirely, challenged the emphasis of WAC, citing each campus's differing needs and the problems with students' abilities to write in a variety of disciplines. Many of the pedagogical techniques program coordinators used in the first few years of the program were praised—group work, teaching drafting and revision—but the framing for these heuristics was challenged. In the first year, the workshop began and ended with a text the participants were to compose within the space of the week. In the following year, that activity was replaced with a set of readings on the composing processes.[14] By 2001, the program had a larger set of leaders, and workshops altered to focus on what one coordinator called "modes of inquiry in discourse." These workshops asked for contributions from faculty from across the campuses and curricula, teachers who could speak about the changing needs of their departments, students, and disciplines. In the following two years, this model prevailed. New coordinators were added as workshop leaders, including some with no ties to basic writing, and some outside of English and composition altogether.[15]

But in the year that followed, there were complaints by graduate writing fellows and debates among faculty about what was needed—at the institutions and for the writing fellows. Talk of "generalizable" principles for teaching and for teaching writing returned. Writing fellows, new members of their own disciplines, wanted a variety of ways of ways of thinking about writing and teaching that could be translated to any field. This was not a request for process theory per se, but rather for a closer examination of how we might use some of the techniques of process in a more contextualized way. And it was a desire to find principles that could be considered part of a Big Idea about writing, an idea that, once applied in various disciplines, would become "situational" and "public." This was process shaping up to be something radically transitory but tangibly meaningful.

In the last two years, the WAC program has become more centralized—coordinators and graduate writing fellows are part of a yearlong training initiative—but campus programs have changed dramatically, varying according to shifts in curricula and student population.[16] While the implementation of writing-intensive requirements at most colleges signals the success of the program, there is uncertainty still about its goals and its permanence in the academy. CUNY, like many universities, is also now rebuilding general education and the question of WAC's "independence" is paramount. Writing fellows and coordinators are intent on focusing on "WID"—writing in the disciplines—but marrying that focus with the call for articulating a liberal arts curriculum.

The WAC-WID program at CUNY has demanded something new of composition faculty: the need to mix pedagogies and programs, past institutional policies and current program needs, and pedagogical innovation with reflection on present politics. What is required now is a focus on enacting change while we observe it. Each university-wide WAC meeting feels, in some ways, like the chance to define writing for the first time for a new CUNY, even as we constantly reference the still visible politics of our university's and discipline's pasts. Leaders create schemas that get revised and reworked as results of test scores return, as new professors are hired, as ideas are generated about the fate of composition. Needless to say, work in WAC tends to be self-referential and self-reflexive; experienced faculty often call upon the resources of former projects and research from student inquiries, past and present. Newer faculty often call upon theory and the political context of their new institution.[17] We are, only six years into the program, reflecting on its "past"—a past that is both long and short for CUNY.

Basic writing at CUNY was created out of the needs of a changing public. But this WAC program was generated out of a change in public policy and a student public *and* propelled by a group of faculty members who are of mixed generational and theoretical "paradigms." Indeed many of us would argue that our mix means we don't belong in a paradigm at all, but in a reflexive system of constant change. These forces, taken together, enable this WAC program to be the material with which the university can see change, as it is being conceived and composed for students and faculty alike.

Present-Process

How can we describe such a program? What makes up its composition of change? While the program sorts itself out, there is a systematic shift in what writing and public education mean at CUNY: it is no longer one thing—process, basic, a paradigm, or "interdisciplinary"—it is all of these things. And I believe this sends a message to students and faculty about communication and about change: that it cannot happen in any one-dimensional scheme, whether that dimension was shaped by government action or university administration.

Hairston, quoting Kuhn, found the possibilities of paradigms to be revolutionary and enlightening. Paradigms, according to Kuhn, cluster or embody the suppositions of a group of scientists and determine the revolutions that set the field in motion. But what they can't do is describe a field *in* motion, which in my mind is a pretty accurate description of what it is like to teach writing at this particular moment in time. What is happening at CUNY, and, no doubt elsewhere, is the simultaneous emergence of a common activity built for and with students but without the accompanying "body" of beliefs. Rather what we have is an outward acknowledgment of our differences and the need to carry on despite and because of them. It is the mix that matters and the uncertainty of our paradigmatic identity propels us forward.

This does not mean that we cannot record, cannot know, cannot be convinced or convince others about the worthiness of our pedagogies or programs. Rather, it implies that we do so with the knowledge that even as we write our new present, it is moving, connecting with the public and philosophical processes of our time. At CUNY, I don't see revolution. But neither is there paralysis. No prescription for the future then, just a process for coming to know, and change, the emerging present.

Notes

1. In composition studies, Robert Zoellner's essay on behaviorism in writing is considered the first essay to cite paradigms (1969) followed by Young (1978) and Bizzell (1979). While these theorists were first to use "process" and "paradigms," Hairston's pairing of the terms offered composition a more radical argument about the relationship between the two. Her suggestion was that, within composition studies, paradigms could not exist without process.

2. See Kent, Berlin, and Crowley for this. See also Lu's critique of Shaughnessy's work and Sirc's discussion of the problems with expressivist philosophy (80-91).

3. Thomas E. Blom's critique of Hairston's article directly addressed what he saw as a misuse of Kuhn. Robert Connors and Patricia Bizzell discuss composition's use of paradigms in terms of an overt or covert "scientism" and Susan Miller finds fault with "paradigms" as a measure of the activities of the field. Gesa E. Kirsch offers an insightful summary of perspectives on paradigms.

4. In Bloom's essay in *Composition Studies in the New Millennium*, she defines her understanding of paradigm, a term brought up in many chapters in this influential collection.

5. Sharon Crowley's *Composition in the University* (especially pages 114-17) provides additional historical background for the emergence of process and offers an alternative view of dominant histories of this movement.

6. For discussions of Kuhn's theory in the fields of sociology and science studies, see in particular Phillips and Jones.

7. For a discussion of how Kuhn highlighted the sociological or group-oriented elements of knowledge see Zammito, chapter five.

8. N. Katherine Hayles, whose focus is on literary theory, is one the few humanities scholars to engage in this area. See Blackman for discussions of complexity theory and Livingston for a discussion of the relevance of autopoesis for the humanities.

9. In the *CCC* journal's 50th anniversary edition one of the featured articles concerned the emergence of composition as part of the open admission project. See Lewiecki-Wilson and Sommers. The very fact that the *Journal of Basic Writing* is housed at CUNY speaks volumes about this connection.

10. CUNY's central website offers particular demographics. See http://portal.cuny.edu/portal/site/cuny/.

11. See David Stocum's work, especially pages 10-19. Stocum discusses the demographics of urban colleges and universities and reveals how diverse populations and the "non-traditional" students are increasingly features of a variety of regions in the United States. See also Andy Hargreaves's recent book about the fate of teaching in what he calls "the Age of Insecurity."

12. For a description of the history of CUNY's WAC program see: <http://humanities.lehman.cuny.edu/WACAC/WAC(CUNY).html.>

13. Sondra Perl's "Guidelines for Composing" is just one example of the kind of heuristic we used in the workshop. It is a good example of the influence of the process era on how we framed a post-process program in WAC. And it reveals the influence of particular persons and situations. Pioneers of basic writing, like Sondra Perl, returned in the early years of 2000 as leaders of this new program.

14. Articles by Peter Elbow, Mike Rose, and Toby Fulwiler were commonly used in the first two years.

15. For a different discussion of this program, see my essay in *ATD* where the focus is on Writing Across the Curriculum and its particular suitability for a "knowledge society."

16. Indeed many campuses, like my own at Lehman College, are now undergoing assessments of our programs, to gauge how or if WAC has become part of the culture of the colleges.

17. The history of this new WAC program at CUNY is now being researched and reflected on. For thoughtful work that has emerged from CUNY see Hirsch and DeLuca and Soliday. Conversations with Sondra Perl, Marcie Wolfe, Elaine Avidon, Peter Gray, Hugh English, Mark McBeth, and the editors and reviewers of *JBW* have also been useful in articulating my thinking about WAC.

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It's Not Remedial: Re-envisioning Pre-First-Year College Writing

Heidi Huse, Jenna Wright, Anna Clark, and Tim Hacker

ABSTRACT: Responding to mandates from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to eliminate "remedial" or "developmental" courses from state-funded, four-year institutions, the University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM) Department of English developed a college-level pre-first-year writing program for entering students identified as underprepared for college-level writing expectations. In this article, we describe the design and implementation of our new two-course program of college-level writing courses for underprepared students and reflect on the program's status after one year. We offer a general context for UTM's developmental courses into which we place our specific courses as they began and later evolved into our current English 100 and 110 program. Our goals in writing this article are to help other institutions with limited resources that face situations similar to those we've encountered over the past few years—institutions that, like UTM, have difficult decisions to make while still seeking to enhance all their students' academic success.

In late 2001, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) began eliminating remedial courses in mathematics, reading, and writing from Tennessee's four-year institutions, making such coursework the exclusive responsibility of Tennessee's two-year community colleges. THEC's decisions arose when the state legislature insisted that for the 2001-2002 school year, both the University of Tennessee (UT) and the Tennessee Board of Regents schools must cut spending and work effectively with fewer state resources (Stephens). According to a May 2002 online *Tennessean* article, "THEC officials said they aren't opposed to remedial and developmental courses. But as they prepare for a state budget that might provide no additional funding for several years and could even cut higher education funding by more than $90 million . . . THEC administrators are focusing on maintaining the quality of the courses higher education was meant to offer" (Cass). An early concession was to allow four-year institutions to offer remedial or developmental courses but only at the community college "per student rate" (Cass). The University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM) student newspaper, *The Pacer*, reported that

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© *Journal of Basic Writing*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2005

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.2005.24.2.03

if UTM offered its remedial and developmental courses at this reduced rate, the school could lose up to $125,000 (Toy). The THEC decisions had the potential to impact a significant portion of the Tennessee public four-year college and university population: "More than 49% of all first-time freshmen at state schools took at least one remedial or developmental course in the fall of 2000" (Cass).

But in these early years of the twenty-first century, Tennessee's state-funded four-year public institutions are not the only ones confronted with budget cuts affecting programs designed for underprepared students. In fall 2003, for example, around the same time that the program described in this article was first being implemented at the University of Tennessee at Martin, the online *Cincinnati Post* reported on Ohio state funding decisions that parallel those in Tennessee. Like THEC, the Ohio Board of Regents proposed eliminating funding for remedial programs in Ohio four-year schools by 2007. The impact on students was potentially significant as well, since a noteworthy percentage of Ohio's entering students begin their college experience with remedial courses—32% in 2002. The Ohio Board of Regents reported that the cost of remediation programs for the almost 20,000 students taking remedial or developmental courses at Ohio schools ran approximately $9.5 million for the 2001-2002 school year ("State Plan: Cut Remedial Class Funds"). Likewise, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (*CHE*) reported in 2000 on the 22-campus California State University (CSU) system's attempts to eliminate remedial programs by barring underprepared students from attending any classes at a four-year CSU campus. According to the *CHE* report, for the 1999-2000 year, almost half of the system's first-year students required some kind of remedial course, at an annual cost of around $10 million (Selingo), so the budgetary impact on this large college system and the impact on the students requiring the classes are, again, potentially great (see Goen and Gillotte-Tropp for a discussion of how San Francisco State University responded to this challenge).

Perhaps most surprising is the elimination of courses for underprepared students from four-year City University of New York (CUNY) schools, a system that virtually initiated "open admissions" for U.S. institutions in the 1970s. William Crain explained, in the online article "Open Admissions and Remedial Education at CUNY," that it was in the CUNY system, in 1970, where the open admissions experiment began, bringing an influx of underprepared students to four-year colleges and universities. Extensive programs were developed to meet the academic needs of these students and prepare them for college-level reading, writing, and mathematics. CUNY's

efforts to provide quality education to any student who sought it have been controversial since open admissions began. As Mina Shaughnessy pointed out in *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing*, written only a few years after the CUNY open admissions program began, "The numbers of such students varied from college to college as did the commitment to the task of teaching them. . . . This venture into mass education . . . began . . . amidst the misgivings of administrators, who had to guess in the dark about the sorts of programs they ought to plan . . . and the reluctancies of teachers, some of whom had already decided that the new students were ineducable" (1). Crain added that the 1998 decision to eliminate remedial students and remedial programs was difficult for many of the CUNY trustees who support the presence of and assistance to these students but who were pressured politically to vote in favor of the elimination. As recently as April 2005, CUNY's decision to "abolish remediation in the senior colleges and presumably introduce tougher admission standards" is being challenged by some. CUNY History Professor Sandi E. Cooper, in an address to the New York State Board of Regents posted on a CUNY listserv, questioned whether or not eliminating "remedial" students and instituting higher admissions standards has resulted in the actual increases in graduation rates expected by those involved in eliminating the CUNY developmental programs from the senior colleges: "Naturally the central administration must claim [the elimination of the developmental programs] to be a rousing success. . . . As someone who works in the trenches, I urge the Regents to mandate an outside, independent evaluation of the success of these policies." More pointedly, Cooper questions the preparedness of any entering student for college-level work and the impact of the programs' elimination on mainstream entry courses, in particular, first-year composition: "Are these so called better prepared students really prepared for freshman English or has freshman English quietly become remediation?"

So Tennessee is not alone in confronting budget constraints and tense political decision-making that have directly affected state higher education curricula, factors that Shaughnessy, already in the 1970s, acknowledged are significant to how formal instruction of students is implemented (276). It would be easy if not justified to take issue with long-standing sentiments about underprepared students at four-year institutions such as those expressed in the newspaper article above, that while the THEC officials making budget-related curriculum decisions "aren't opposed to remedial and developmental courses," they nevertheless want four-year schools to invest their efforts primarily in "maintaining the quality of the courses higher education

was meant to offer." According to such reasoning, preparatory courses such as developmental reading, writing, or mathematics don't fulfill the "real" work of higher education. As has been true in the CUNY system, supporters of educational opportunities for underprepared students around the U.S. have been fighting similar viewpoints since open admissions was instituted. But for many state-funded institutions, such as the University of Tennessee at Martin, recent financially based decisions by state administrators to cut developmental programs at four-year schools are out of the institutions' and programs' control. When such decisions are made, it is then up to departments and faculty to live with the consequences, within the budgetary and financial means available, and to do what we can to provide for the needs of all of our students.

In the Department of English at UTM, we realized that eliminating developmental programs would not, as Cooper implies above, necessarily mean eliminating the students needing additional assistance to become effective college-level scholars. We determined to design college-level composition courses offering students additional support while still meeting the new THEC requirements for courses at four-year institutions. In this article, we describe the design and implementation of our two-course program of college-level writing courses for underprepared students and reflect on the program's status after one year. We offer a general context for UTM's developmental courses into which we place our specific courses as they began and then evolved eventually into our current English 100 and 110 program. Our hope is that our story can be helpful to other smaller institutions with limited resources facing experiences similar to those we've encountered over the past three years, institutions that have difficult decisions to make while simultaneously seeking to enhance all their students' academic success.

DEVELOPMENTAL ENGLISH AT UTM

Mike Rose points out that first-year college composition instruction originally developed because Harvard faculty, in the late nineteenth century, wanted to halt the weak writing they received from their upper-division students—in other words, to offer writing "remediation" to all entering students as a preventive measure ("Language" 526). Currently, college students are generally placed into "remedial" or "developmental" courses by their respective institutions if these students demonstrate an inability to perform at college level, primarily in the skills of reading, writing, and mathematics.

While Rose has regularly challenged the labels and teaching methodologies to which college students identified as underprepared frequently have been exposed, he acknowledges that in fact there are students on American college campuses who do have difficulty meeting the "demands of university work" ("Language" 543). Bartholomae portrays these students in strongly political terms, as the "students who are refused unrestrained access to the academic community" ("Inventing" 600).

The evaluation of a particular student's competency and placement into either mainstream or developmental courses varies among institutions, from strict standardized skills tests, to less rigid entrance exams given during first-year orientation or on the first day of classes, to ACT/SAT scores or high school grade point averages, or to some combination thereof. The demographics of students in developmental writing courses demonstrate great diversity: high school honors students as well as students at risk throughout their previous school experiences, non-traditional students returning to college or entering college later in their lives, immigrant and foreign students for whom English is a second language, and entering students who are the first generation in their families to attend college. Many are students whose previous educational experiences have not, for a variety of reasons, sufficiently prepared them for the college-level reading, critical thinking, and writing required of them from their first semester in college. As Rose points out repeatedly in his literacy narrative *Lives on the Boundary*, developmental writers are often those students whose experiences with writing in school have severely damaged their self-confidence as thinkers and writers, even though they may demonstrate complex thinking and discourse competency outside of school—often in discourses that are not valued academically. However, it is not uncommon for students who had success writing in high school to be placed into pre-first-year composition courses in college, much to their dismay if not their outright resentment. Across the U.S., underprepared students come from diverse backgrounds and educational experiences; this diversity is equally true for the underprepared writers at UTM.

Located in the northwest corner of the state, the University of Tennessee at Martin is a small, rural, state-funded public university—part of the statewide UT system—offering a liberal arts curriculum and emphasizing quality undergraduate education. The student population for the 2004-2005 school year was approximately 5,800 (5,400 undergraduates), with an entering first-year class of approximately 1,350 students ("Xap Student Center"). This student body includes resident students and commuters; graduates of

small rural and large inner-city public and private schools; international students; and traditional and non-traditional students—including first-generation college attendees, military veterans, single mothers and fathers, and older students embarking on second careers often, in this region, because of industrial layoffs. Most of the population comes from within the state of Tennessee. The underprepared students at UTM could easily fit into the portrait of students Rose paints in his opening chapter of *Lives on the Boundary*, who fill Dr. Gunner's "English A" class at UCLA, the institution's "most basic writing course" (2): some sit tall in their chairs, some slouch, some sit up front, others as far back and as close to the door as they can get, some are open to their instructors and classmates, others suspicious and untrusting, some quiet throughout every class while others speak out freely, and sooner or later they all demonstrate their fear, their resistance, their hope, and their complexity—a complexity often denied them by those who only see them as "the truly illiterate among us" (2, 3).

At many institutions developmental or remedial courses have regularly been regarded as "pre-college" courses and generally have not counted toward any degree. They are often listed in catalogs with course numbers clearly distinct from the "real," college-level courses. At UTM, for example, lower-division courses begin at the 100 level (the mainstream first-year composition courses are thus numbered as English 111 and English 112); the previous pre-college developmental courses at UTM were numbered 080 and 090. Students successfully completing English 080 and 090 earned three credit hours per course, but those hours did not count toward a degree as do English 111 and 112, and now the recently created English 100 and 110.

The developmental English program at UTM had evolved positively since its beginning in the early 1970s when a Mastery Experience course was added to the English curriculum. In this course, where skills mastery is strongly implied by the course title, students studied the basics of grammar and writing, earning university credit for their efforts. In 1978, with the arrival of the federally funded Advanced Institutional Development Program, more attention and concern were focused on developmental English. Thus, English 1001 and 1002 (often referred to as "core English") were developed.

Enrollment was limited to sixteen students per class and each designated teacher had two assistants, allowing for in-class individual tutoring. By fall 1987, there were eleven sections of developmental English, each with approximately eighteen students. The goals and objectives of English 1001 and 1002 were stated on departmental documents and in the Department's

1988 self study, and they mirror an emphasis on error correction of English mechanics that was not uncommon in developmental curricula at that time, despite a growing body of "basic writing" pedagogical literature that challenged the effectiveness of such coursework for underprepared writers:

> The purposes of these courses are to practice writing, to improve writing skills, and to help prepare the student for English 1110, 1120, and 1130. Basic English grammar, mechanics, and syntax are emphasized. Each writing exercise (a minimum of fifteen paragraphs for 1001 and six essays for 1002) is graded and returned before the next assignment is due so that students may take advantage of suggestions for improvement. Corrections and/or revisions are required for each writing exercise. (Clark and Wright)

In fall 1988, UTM switched from quarter terms to semesters, and English 1001 and 1002 were redesigned into English 080 and 090, which were offered from fall 1988 through summer 2003. These three-credit-hour courses, like their predecessors, did not count toward degree credit requirements, but the students' final grades appeared on their academic records and were counted in their grade point averages. English 080, as explained in the formal Department of English course description, was similar to the Mastery Program courses in its emphasis on mechanical correctness:

> The purposes of English 080 are to practice writing and to improve writing skills. The focus of this course is on writing, but basic English grammar, mechanics, and syntax will also be emphasized. Each writing exercise (and there will be a minimum of fifteen paragraphs and three essays) will be graded and returned before the next assignment is due so that the student may take advantage of suggestions for improvement. Corrections and/or revisions will be required for each writing exercise. ("Developmental English 080")

While in its official catalog description English 090 strongly implies a language remediation methodology similar to that of English 080, the course, in practice, moved students well beyond the sentence and paragraph writing of English 080 and emphasized essay writing, with students producing as many as eight to ten essays over the semester, including research-based essays. In English 090, critical thinking skills were also emphasized, as students worked on their essays and participated in class discussions. Many

instructors of both 080 and 090 asked students to create portfolios of their work over the semester, which were then evaluated at semester's end. In addition to submitting portfolios, which were required to be "coherent, logically organized, and relatively free from grammatical and mechanical errors," ("Developmental English 080"), students in both courses were required to pass a two-part exit exam before progressing into the first-year writing courses, English 111 and 112: a skills test of grammar, mechanics, and usage, and a timed essay-format writing test. Although both courses stressed language remediation, together English 080 and 090 provided the means for UTM students who were proficient in other skills and were otherwise prepared for college work to be admitted to UTM and progress through their college courses while also working to communicate effectively in the academic discourses required of them as college writers. Typically student attrition can be high in the first year of enrollment in a four-year institution, and UTM is no exception. But by the time students completed English 080 and 090, they had completed their first-year of college and were sophomores when they began English 111 and 112; they were then identified as "retained" by the university, which, at least in theory, strengthened the likelihood of their continued success and completion not only of the UTM first-year writing program, but their completion of their college education. The English Department currently has no data comparing the retention rates of English 080/090 students with those who placed directly into the English 111/112 program. But two of the authors of this article have been heavily involved with both the design and implementation of the 080 and 090 courses, and they have seen many of their former 080 and 090 students graduate on time. As we gather data on success and retention rates of students in the new English 100/110 program, we will also be able to retrieve retention statistics for students from our previous developmental courses with which to make more statistically based evaluations of these earlier programs.

As Rose notes, colleges and universities, despite their desire to "defend the integrity of the baccalaureate," are highly reluctant to undertake any actions that might reduce their student populations ("Language" 541, 545). Yet THEC's decision to eliminate developmental courses in fact posed a potential threat to UTM's ability to recruit and retain students. While other four-year institutions in the state are close enough to a community college that students can easily continue taking other university courses while taking required preparatory courses at the community college, UTM has no nearby two-year institution. The lack of a convenient community college potentially means that underprepared students who can no longer

get the courses they need at UTM just will not attend; instead they will seek admission to a university that allows for quick and easy access to a community college. In Tennessee, the state budget problems and THEC decisions came "at a time when the state is desperate to increase its number of college graduates, a key to economic development" for the state (Cass). Like all of the state higher education institutions, UTM is always seeking to increase its student population and student retention. So the possibility of an exodus of students to other institutions as well as a serious obstacle to recruiting new students to UTM were serious concerns.

THE DESIGN OF ENGLISH 100 AND ENGLISH 110

Fortunately, as the early rumblings from the state legislature and THEC became public, faculty in the UTM Department of English were asked to plan ahead and design an alternative for the developmental English courses we had been offering, allowing us to meet the pending mandates while also meeting the needs of students who were underprepared for college-level writing expectations. A small task force of Department faculty was formed to study the matter, comprised of the authors of this paper, two of whom have been involved with UTM's developmental writing courses from early on, and two of whom have had graduate coursework in basic writing pedagogies and extensive teaching experience with underprepared writers at other institutions. Our charge was to investigate the consequences to students and the Department of the pending cuts, to research the possibilities—particularly looking at successful programs at other schools—and to design a college-level, student-centered alternative that would fit within specific instructional resource parameters at UTM while still meeting students' needs.

We had to act relatively quickly, so over the next year we conducted research and drafted plans for pre-first-year college-level courses that we could offer to underprepared students. Previously, our two-semester English 080 and 090 developmental program gave students a full year of writing instruction before they entered our two-semester composition sequence of English 111 and English 112. So students placing into English 080 received two full years of writing instruction. It was difficult for those committed to the English 080/090 program to reconceive courses they felt had provided students the best opportunity to effectively improve their reading, critical thinking, and writing skills. But the task force members also knew that we couldn't simply renumber English 080 and 090 with a college-level number-

ing system, leaving the courses themselves virtually untouched. We knew we had to jettison English 080 and 090 altogether and create an entirely different program in order for it to pass through the gauntlet of necessary approvals—on campus through to THEC. That is, we had to demonstrate that these new courses were worthy of full college credit. Further, to get Faculty Senate approval in time for publication in the UTM course catalog for 2003-2004, which was printed in the spring of 2003, we had to have specific courses designed by December 2002. Consequently, English 100 first became part of our curriculum in fall 2003, and English 110 in spring 2004. Students taking English 080 and 090 who had not yet successfully passed these courses by the end of the summer 2003 term moved into English 100 since we stopped offering 080 and 090 at the end of the summer 2003 semester.

The required changes to our program, if UTM was to continue offering course assistance to underprepared writers, actually became an opportunity to enhance the pedagogical foundation for the courses we offered, allowing us to move away from heavy emphasis on correction of students' mechanical errors, and paragraph and short essay writing, toward a focus on enhancing the students' writing processes and helping them to develop full-length, research-based essays. English 100 and 110 are loosely modeled on the pedagogy of David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, authors of the 1986 composition course description *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts: Theory and Method for a Reading and Writing Course*. In the words of Bartholomae and Petrosky:

> There [is] no reason to prohibit students from doing serious work because they [can]not do it correctly. In a sense, all courses in the curriculum ask students to do what they cannot yet do well. [Therefore,] there [is] no good reason to take students who were not fluent readers and writers and consign them to trivial or mechanical work in the belief that it would somehow prepare them for a college education. It would make more sense, rather, to . . . provide the additional time and support they needed to work on reading and writing while they were, in fact, doing the kinds of reading and writing that characterize college study. (preface)

Further, as Mina Shaughnessy points out, too often in "remedial" writing courses, too much focus is placed on error correction, such that "'good writing' . . . means 'correct writing,' nothing more" (8). Consequently, the students placed in such courses often assume that the form of their words is

all that is important and that their words are devoid of meaningful content. At UTM we wanted to create a pedagogically sound writing program for underprepared students so that they could get the assistance they needed to be successful college writers while also learning to believe in the power and significance of their own words. Of course, this goal is shared by the entire first-year writing program at UTM.

Student Placement and Classroom Practice

All students entering UTM as first-year students now place into one of two possible composition tracks based on ACT scores and high school grades: (1) our traditional first-year track of English 111 and English 112 (2 semesters), or (2) our new track of English 100 and 110, then English 112 (3 semesters). English 112 has become the central course for successful completion of the UTM first-year writing requirement; all roads now lead to and through English 112 (whereas previously students in the developmental writing program completed first English 080 and 090 and then both English 111 and 112). Underprepared students entering English 100 now complete only three semesters of instruction rather than the previous four semesters some students received in the 080/090 program. In all of the 100-level composition courses, students must pass with a grade of C or higher; if they receive a lower grade, they are required to repeat the course until they earn a C. In other words, whether students move through English 111 to English 112, or through English 100 and 110 to English 112, they must earn a grade of C or higher in each of the courses. This decision as to how to evaluate a student's success in first-year writing was made by the Department and University long before the developmental writing task force was created. So students in English 100 and 110 are evaluated in the same manner as students in English 111 and 112. In terms of the number of sections offered, the 100/110 program is much smaller than the 111/112 program. In the fall semester, approximately 10 sections of English 100 are offered compared with 40 sections of 111. In the spring semester, approximately 8 sections of 110 are offered, allowing for some student attrition.

To determine the students' placement into English 100 or 111, the English Department and the University configured a stair-step cut-off point, on the basis of both ACT scores and cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) as follows:

- Students with an ACT/English score of 19 or higher go into English 111.
- Students at or above ACT/English of 18 *and* a GPA of 2.5 go into English 111; below they enter English 100.
- Students at or above ACT/English of 17 *and* a GPA of 2.75 place into English 111; below into English 100.
- Students at an ACT/English of 16 or lower, regardless of GPA, go into English 100.

For second-language international students, the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score determines their admission to UTM but not their placement into a first-year writing course. Students coming to Martin with TOEFL scores below the minimum admission score and thus needing additional English instruction can go through a private, on-campus language program that can help them enhance their facility with English and gain admission to UTM. Once international students gain UTM admission, either through an acceptable TOEFL score or successful completion of the six-level private language program, they have two options for first-year composition placement: they can simply register for the English 100/110/112 program, or they can take a placement test, administered by the Department of English, to see if they can place into the 111/112 program.

We have one final means of ensuring all students find the most appropriate courses to meet their writing needs, and that is to have students in all 100 and 111 classes write a brief in-class essay the first day of each semester, similar, perhaps, to an informal entrance exam. If English 111 instructors note significant weaknesses, they can recommend (but not compel) individual students to move into English 100; conversely, English 100 instructors can recommend that students whose writing is extremely proficient move into English 111.

As was the case in English 080 and 090, the class size in English 100 and 110 is smaller than in English 111 and 112, to provide students with additional attention from their instructors. While English 111 and 112 courses are kept to a maximum of 23 students, English 100 and 110 are both kept to a maximum of 18 students. One major difference between the English 080/090 and 100/110 courses is that while students in 080 and 090 were encouraged to visit the Department's Hortense C. Parrish Writing Center for additional assistance with their writing, English 100 and 110 were created as four-credit-hour courses, with three weekly classroom hours and one hour required weekly in the Writing Center. When the course was being designed

and we were anticipating running the gauntlet of necessary approvals, we deliberately set up the course on paper to include a weekly "writing lab" so that it would appear in the UTM course catalog in similar form to the descriptions of four-credit hour lower-division science and foreign language courses, which also include out-of-class instructional requirements. Our goal was to facilitate approval of the courses by presenting them in a format familiar to faculty across campus who would be voting on the courses in various committees and in Faculty Senate. However, no one involved in the design of the courses views the students' required weekly hour in the Writing Center as a "remedial" task.

Another important change that has been implemented in the new courses is that now only faculty with graduate or terminal degrees are eligible to teach English 100 and 110, as has always been true for English 111 and 112 and all UTM college-level courses. Because all first-year composition courses at UTM are now taught by experienced faculty who have come to expect a high degree of creative and instructional autonomy in how they teach their courses, the faculty who seek to teach in the English 100/110 program seek similar autonomy. However, to ensure some consistency in the instruction students receive in all English 100 and 110 classes and in their Writing Center experience, we began the program by requiring all instructors to use designated writing textbooks and writing handbooks. To select appropriate college-level textbooks, the Department expanded the developmental task force to include faculty who have had specific training and experience implementing second-language and basic-writing pedagogies. As a result, for both English 100 and 110, the first textbooks focus on writing genres, literary and visual analysis, effective research, and the writing process, with mechanics instruction included only in appendices. Both current textbooks offer multiple readings, from personal narratives to argument essays, on complex social issues. Additionally, while the courses' primary focus is on writing, we also hope that students' reading facility, individual meaning making, and ability to interact in depth with others' words will be enhanced. Therefore, students also read and thoughtfully interact with at least one assigned book-length fiction or non-fiction text each semester.

After the approval process was completed for English 100 and 110 and we began considering specific logistical concerns, such as textbook choices, we generally agreed on a theme of literacy for English 100. In that context, we began by asking all instructors to assign Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* as their book-length reading selection for fall 2003. We now provide for some flexibility with assigned readings by making available a list of reading texts

for 100 and a separate list for 110, from which instructors can make selections. Since the first semester of the program, additional reading texts have been offered as acceptable alternatives or additions to *Lives on the Boundary*, such as Ron Suskind's *A Hope in the Unseen* and Stephen King's *On Writing*. Currently, all faculty teaching English 100 and/or 110 together decide what writing textbooks and reading texts are added to the two course lists, which we review each semester.

Although English 100 and 110 instructors are required to use certain textbooks, they have great flexibility with regard to the actual writing tasks assigned, though all major assignments are essays now as contrasted with the paragraphs or short essays which were the primary types of assignments in the previous developmental program. In both courses, by the end of the semester, it is expected that students will produce a minimum of 15-20 typed, double-spaced pages of college-level written text, in Standard Edited English, through multiple and diverse writing assignments ranging from personal narratives to literary analyses, formal persuasive letters, and in-depth research essays. Further, although all instructors determine a final course evaluation for each student in the form of a letter grade, they have autonomy on how they evaluate the work students produce throughout the semester. For example, instructors decide whether to evaluate each piece of writing individually after a revision process, or whether to evaluate a portfolio of writing completed during the course and submitted at the end of the term. Neither English 100 nor 110 requires instructors to give the grammar and short essay final exit exams that had previously been required in English 080 and 090. Students in Tennessee four-year institutions are required to meet during the final exam period, but as in all English Department courses, the English 100/110 instructors determine for themselves the kind of final evaluative tasks they will ask their students to complete.

English 112 is designed to specifically assist UTM students in developing effective strategies for interacting with texts, whether for literary analysis or non-literary research. And while most English 110 instructors engage students in effective research to prepare them for the research they will be doing in English 112, some instructors already begin teaching effective research writing in English 100.

Whatever is taught to students in the classroom is enhanced by the students' weekly visits to the Writing Center, which we will now describe. The overall goal for the two-course program is that upon completion, students will be well prepared not only for the writing required of them in English 112, but for any writing task assigned to them as college students.

Required Writing Center Visitation

The Department of English Writing Center at UTM has traditionally been a resource available to all students across campus (from undergraduate to graduate and from discipline to discipline), and the Center continues this role in addition to its new responsibilities to the English 100 and 110 students. The Writing Center is staffed by both writing tutors with degrees—some tenured faculty, some with master's degrees in English—and peer tutors, undergraduate students who are majoring in English or some other discipline. The heart of the Writing Center is one-on-one tutoring. In addition to offering assistance with essay generation and research and writing skills, the Center has five computers available for student use and for computer workshops as well as for individual computer-assisted tutoring. The Center also offers an online writing lab (OWL) and a grammar hotline, and twice weekly offers workshops open to all UTM students. Students who speak English as a second language can get help at the Center's Talk Time, an opportunity for students to practice their conversational skills in a comfortable environment led by a Writing Center peer tutor.

The Writing Center averaged approximately 2,000 student visits each semester during the five years leading up to the implementation of English 100 and 110, with 95% of those visits being student-initiated, not formal referrals from faculty. With the addition of the English 100/110 series in fall 2003, the number of student visits increased significantly, and spring 2004 saw over 3,300 student visits. There is no question that implementation of this new support role of the Writing Center has had an effect on the Center's overall operation, especially on the budget, student tutoring, writing workshops, and Center administration, as well as on the community of campus writers.

The budget was the first major area of impact. At the beginning of the fiscal year of implementation, the Writing Center had the same budget as the year before. Since much of the budget was used during the fall semester (the first semester), we had to cut staffing hours for the spring semester, even though student usage was not decreasing, making this a difficult time for the Writing Center. The staff was told of the budget woes and asked to essentially stay with the program until more money was allocated. As the spring semester began, students had to wait as long as an hour for help, and tutors left their shifts exhausted. By mid-semester, the UTM administration saw the need for more funding, and the Center added staff and increased the number of tutors working each shift. In addition, the Center ensured

that two degreed assistants were assigned for each Writing Center shift (previously we had assigned only one degreed assistant). Nevertheless, a significant portion of the Center's operating budget still comes from "soft" grant funding from around the university rather than from "hard funds" as part of the regular University budget, despite the fact that every semester now brings increasing numbers of UTM students who are required to visit the Center on a weekly basis. As a result, meeting the needs of all students with the resources available is a continual challenge.

Within the Center itself, tutoring for students in English 100 and 110 became the first major area of impact as tutors were bombarded by the number of students regularly using the Center. As one staff member said, "The most positive impact of English 100 and 110 on the Writing Center is the number of students using the Center's services." The same staff member added, "The most negative impact of English 100 and 110 on the Writing Center is the number of students using the Center's services." This paradox was experienced most in the one-on-one tutoring. At first, while some autonomous work time was permitted during the weekly Writing Center visits, the English 100/110 students were expected to meet individually with a tutor for the better part of their hour. However, the realities of increasing student demand coupled with limited resources forced a modification of the requirement, and now students are required to spend at least fifteen minutes of their weekly Writing Center hour with a tutor. Regardless of this modification, students are expected to take their ideas for papers and/or drafts-in-progress to the Writing Center at each visit. How students and tutors use the time varies—from assistance using computers for research and writing, to brainstorming ideas for papers, helping with content development, organization, style, or mechanics, and implementing correct in-text citation and documentation of sources. Tutors also provide assistance with writing in response to assigned readings, such as help with summarizing, analyzing a writer's argument or literary style, or quoting or paraphrasing correctly. Some faculty give students specific tasks to complete during their weekly Writing Center visit while others want students to use the time on the specific areas of writing with which they need the most help. Thus, even though there is consistency in the overall objectives and goals of the program, there is diversity in Writing Center activities assigned by different English 100 and 110 teachers.

On the other hand, Writing Center staff members have observed that one of the best results of the 100 and 110 program is their ability to establish rapport with students and track their progress. Many of these students come

at about the same time each week—by their choice—and thus tutors are privileged to see the students' progress. Also, there is a strong sense among the tutors that by seeing and helping more students early in their university careers, there will eventually be more confident and effective writers across campus. Tutors are also predicting a domino effect of this program as students who are required to come to the Center tell their friends about the benefits of getting extra help with writing. In addition, they expect that many of the 100 and 110 students will continue to use the Writing Center long after they fulfill the UTM first-year writing requirement.

Probably the most evident change in the Center as a result of English 100 and 110 is the need for paperwork because students are *required* to visit the Center weekly in order to successfully pass each course. Until the program was implemented, tutors documented student visits only for referred students. Now there is a much more formal and consistent format for recording the Writing Center visit—regardless of its purpose.

An additional area of impact from the English 100/110 program is the writing workshops in fall 2003 since many faculty allow attendance at a workshop to substitute for an individual Writing Center visit. The Center expanded the workshops from once to twice a week last fall. The workshops cover all aspects of writing, from brainstorming and revising, to avoiding plagiarism and using and citing sources correctly, to writing style and mechanics. One workshop each semester also provides a forum for students, including students in English 100 and 110, to read their writing to a public audience beyond instructors and Writing Center staff. In addition, one workshop each year is devoted to allowing international students to read literary texts from their native countries—first in their native language and then translated into English. Another workshop provides a venue for students to read the literature produced by American ethnic minority poets and authors. These workshops in which students are the central actors are often the best attended. Online workshops may be integrated into the English 100/110 program in the future, as one possible means of offering students the required individual assistance despite limited financial resources and personnel.

Finally, Writing Center administration has been significantly impacted by English 100 and 110. The two Writing Center co-directors have spent more time than ever before in seeking budgetary support. Working with overworked staff, specifically in the area of tutoring, has been a major responsibility—one that with increased funding will no longer be an issue. Identifying peak usage hours in order to continue offering a drop-in policy

for students while providing adequate staffing for the required program is an ongoing challenge. The number of staff meetings and the amount of training for tutors have already been increased. One of the rewards of coordinating the Writing Center with the 100/110 program has been the increase in dialogue among faculty, Writing Center tutors, and directors. As the program evolves, it will be increasingly important for the Writing Center staff, the English 100/110 faculty, and the university administration to work together to create an environment in the Center where the campus community of writers can learn, produce, and flourish.

PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE NEW PROGRAM

One of the greatest benefits of designing the English 100/110 program is that the many discussions about program writing requirements and content have helped to create more involvement and interest from a broader range of faculty members within the Department. The support of the Department chair has also contributed positively to the general success of these courses; the chair is committed to meeting the needs of underprepared students with these intensive college-level courses, and she has worked carefully to limit class size, offer interested teachers the opportunity to teach in the new sequence, and secure funding for the Writing Center component. Since we first began discussing the possibilities for a college-level writing program for underprepared students, more faculty in the Department of English have become better informed about all English composition courses; more faculty have also expressed interest in teaching English 100 and English 110 than had previously done so for English 080 and 090.

As instructors ourselves in the program, we have been encouraged by the numbers of students placed into English 100 who have been highly dedicated to their coursework and ready to meet the challenges they face. These students' work ethic and success contradict those who argue that "underprepared" implies unmotivated or unable. For example, those of us implementing writing portfolios in our classes have been pleased to see the quality and size of the students' portfolios; by the end of the semester, the students, in some cases, have completed up to nine essays (all typed and revised) along with numerous other pieces of thoughtful work. We have seen our students make great progress and gain more confidence in their own abilities and words. The students who succeed in English 100 have met the additional challenges in English 110, and by the end of the program, they

are indeed ready for English 112. In fact, Margrethe Ahlschwede, a long-time faculty member teaching English 112 with several students who have been the first to progress through English 100 and 110, has noticed observable differences between these students and students from English 111 (or students repeating English 112). "They know how to do school," she enthusiastically reports. "They have been taught well by the English 100 and 110 instructors, and it shows in their class participation and work." Student evaluations of the two courses thus far also reflect satisfaction with the courses.

English 100 and 110 instructors note a range of student responses to the required weekly Writing Center visit. Some report noteworthy success in ensuring the majority of students meet the weekly requirement. Their students are increasingly aware of the Writing Center component of the class and often go more than the one hour required each week.

Nevertheless, the weekly Writing Center visit, required to fulfill the parameters of a four-credit hour course, causes confusion if not frustration for some students. So one area that needs our immediate and future attention is increasing the numbers of students who consistently attend the Writing Center. One obstacle some instructors have faced is getting students to realize that working weekly with a tutor on a paper draft is a course requirement and not simply a suggestion. Part of the confusion might arise because, unlike the UTM science or math courses that require labs, where the course is a three-credit hour class with a separate one-credit-hour lab (and students register for two distinct classes), English 100 and 110 are set up as four-credit-hour courses, with flexible scheduling as long as students visit the Center for one hour each week. Despite repeated reminders by all instructors about the importance of the required visit to the Writing Center throughout the drafting and rewriting process, for too many students Writing Center absenteeism is high. But with many of these students, class absenteeism is also high, accounting for a number of students not passing the courses on their first attempt. Others who take drafts of their work to the Writing Center weekly still insist that the decision to work on their writing with a tutor, outside of in-class instruction, should be theirs alone and not a course requirement, despite their understanding that English 100 and 110 are four-credit-hour classes, which means students must fulfill four hours of instruction each week.

Unfortunately, the Center's limited resources may also be a factor in absenteeism, since the increased demand without an equivalent increase in tutorial staffing has resulted in many "heavy use" days when students have to wait significant amounts of time for a tutor to become available.

Students, most of whom have other family, school, or work obligations, get frustrated and leave, but they don't return to make up the time. The Center has implemented an appointment schedule to help relieve the pressure on heavy use periods, but so far this has only minimally relieved the problem of absenteeism. Even assigning specific tasks students must complete in the Writing Center does not necessarily result in improved attendance. At this point, getting students to see active engagement in the Writing Center as an integral part of the course as a whole is a work in progress.

Another area requiring close attention is dealing with the special needs of second-language English speakers. As a rule, second-language students work very hard to maintain passing grades in English 100 and 110. However, some faculty insist that these students would benefit from greater in-class emphasis on grammar and sentence structure, which made up a large component of the former English 080/090 program. In the current program, while most faculty members offer periodic in-class instruction about mechanics, many students now complete grammar and syntax work primarily on their own in the Writing Center. Some faculty members are concerned that this practice puts the work too far outside of their supervision. Other instructors note that the college-level reading challenges also have been difficult for some of the second-language students to meet. For example, the program-wide requirement to assign Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* in English 100 caused a number of second-language students particular difficulty. These students had trouble understanding Rose's reflective literacy narrative, especially when he moves suddenly from a particular narrative to a complex analysis of a specific observation about literacy. Rose's language also caused frustration for many students, both second-language and native English speakers. Such students required additional help in individual teacher conferences and during the required Writing Center hour in order not to fall behind with the assigned reading. The idea of offering some sections of English 100 and 110 exclusively for second-language students has been raised, but currently UTM simply does not have a substantial enough base of international students to warrant offering ESL-exclusive sections of English 100 or 110.

Despite occasional problems, we have found that many of the nontraditional students enrolled in English 100 and 110 have been highly committed to making their late entry or return to college both successful and personally fulfilling. Against the common stereotypes of "remedial" students who don't think or communicate well, these students have prepared thoughtful written texts that in many cases have been astounding in

their depth of critical thought and, in the case of narratives, their powerful honesty. For example, several students have taken the risk of writing honest personal narratives about experiences of abuse. One student in English 100 was an ex-convict who had transformed his life and was committed to continued improvement through education. He wrote a powerful research essay about the lack of voting rights for citizens with criminal records and the racist implications of keeping the vote away from those who have supposedly paid their debts to society.

Our goal for English 100 and 110 is the same as it is for students taking English 111 and 112—to increase students' resources for effective written communication with any audience and for any purpose they might encounter as college students and beyond, in addition to enhancing their confidence as writers and their belief in the power of their own words. Our means of meeting this goal for students in English 100 and 110 is to accomplish in two semesters what the course in the other strand of first-year composition, English 111, accomplishes in one. When this article was drafted, we had not yet had a contingent of students complete the full 3-semester cycle of 100, 110, and 112. Recently, however, the second year of the program came to an end, though we have not yet had an opportunity to fully evaluate the success of our new two-semester program in any detail. Over the next year, we will be better able to assess our progress and to determine statistically if student performance in the two writing course tracks is comparable, or if differences in ultimate performance are significant. Any differences we identify will allow us to discuss the kinds of program-wide changes we will need to make in order to more closely reach the desired outcome for students who place in the English 100 and 110 program.

As is always true, statistics must be interpreted. In this case, we will have to weigh the presence or lack of a statistical difference in the performance of these two groups of students against some confounding variables:

- As with students completing English 080 and 090 previously, students successfully passing English 100 and 110 who then move into English 112 will have been retained by the University. That is, they will have successfully completed their first year of college and will be entering their second year, which of course we celebrate. However, their performance, especially of students taking English 112 during spring semester of their second year, will be compared with students completing the entire "first-year" writing requirement as first-year college students. That is, we will be attempting

to compare the success of true first-year students completing the first-year writing program with students who may be well into their sophomore college year when they complete the "first-year" program.

- Although all sections of English 112 require approximately the same amount of work from students, there are differences across sections. Some faculty members teach English 112 using a theme-based approach; others rely on the Department's standard textbook and reader. Some are highly involved in their students' writing processes, responding to several drafts of each assignment; others are less directly involved. Some respond to drafts but only evaluate students' writing in portfolios at the end of the semester; others evaluate each individual paper students write. And so on. Such differences might diminish in importance if students were randomly assigned to specific composition classes, but they are not. Students at UTM register for their own courses online, so they may choose to take English 112 from a teacher with whom they have had success in English 100 and/or English 110. That is, we will be attempting to make cross-program generalizations about student success in a program that is taught with some diversity (although within Department-established parameters).
- Despite a recent increase in the minimum ACT score required for UTM admission, the University continues to admit students with comparatively low SAT/ACT English sub-scores who especially struggle with the college-level work of English 100 and 110. UTM also continues to admit second-language immigrant and international students with significant weaknesses in both English writing skills and reading comprehension. These students may have passed the TOEFL with acceptable scores and/or have completed a pre-college language program on campus. Nevertheless, they still have difficulty with both oral and written English language skills beyond those of native English speakers who place into English 100 and 110. That is, our efforts to carefully reflect on the success of students in the 100/110 program are complicated by a wide range of differences in ability with and confidence in writing.
- A related point is that SAT/ACT scores or high school grades do not necessarily identify all "underprepared" writers. There are quite likely students in English 111 who might benefit from increased assistance with writing and reading but who may not be identified by

their instructors and/or who cannot be required to move into the 100/110 program even when their struggles become apparent.

- Students in English 100 and 110 have an additional curricular requirement beyond what is required of students in English 111 and 112, which is the weekly Writing Center hour. The increased demands on the Writing Center space and staff, without equivalent increases in resources, stretch the ability of tutors to meet the needs of all the students they serve, especially the 100/110 students who are required to visit the Writing Center. One statistic that we do have from this second year of the program is that during the spring 2005 semester, the Writing Center recorded 4,800 student visits (over double the average number of visits each semester before the program was implemented). The students' positive or negative experiences in the Writing Center can have a direct impact on their ultimate success in either English 100 or 110, a curricular variable that does not exist for students on the 111/112 path.

As we assess the performance of students in English 112, we must be prepared to revise English 100 and 110, both program-wide and as individual instructors: with new texts and assignments, new collaborations with the Writing Center, new instruction methods, and new forms of evaluation. And we have already begun to expand by adding one more reading text option to the English 100 list in spring 2004, with plans to add to the English 110 reading list in fall 2005. We have also expanded the writing textbook options for English 110, including a textbook focused entirely on effective research writing. So faculty now have greater options for how they choose to teach their 100/110 sections than they had when the program began two years ago. The faculty and Writing Center staff continue to meet regularly, at least once each semester, to assess how the program is working and what changes we might wish to implement to strengthen the effectiveness of the courses for our students. One activity still missing from formal faculty interaction is any kind of discussion about the strengths and struggles evident in specific student papers, although such discussion does take place individually between instructors. Perhaps we can integrate faculty-wide discussion of specific examples of student-generated texts into future English 100/110 faculty and Writing Center staff meetings. On the other hand, we have created an English 100/110 notebook that is available to all Department faculty. All English 100/110 instructors are invited to contribute to the notebook prompts for reading response tasks, essay assignments, Writing

Center assignments, and so on, that have been successful in their classes, so that other instructors can borrow or adapt them for use in their own sections of the courses. The goal is not to create uniformity of writing assignments throughout the 100/110 program, but to offer faculty additional resources for engaging students in the act of writing.

We look forward to the coming year when we can begin to analyze the data from our first two years and determine just how well students on the English 100/110/112 path have fared compared with the students on the 111/112 path. We anticipate a good level of success and look forward to continued improvement of the program to ensure even greater success in the future.

CONCLUDING COMMENTARY

Much has been written about the race and class implications of eliminating remedial or developmental courses in reading, composition, and mathematics from four-year colleges and universities. Robert K. Fullinwider points out that it was "racial tensions . . . and considerable political pressure" that led to the 1970s open admissions policies and remediation programs for the many underprepared students who began entering the CUNY schools. Likewise it has been ongoing political pressure, virtually since CUNY began its open admissions policies, in addition to cost considerations, that have led to the decision to bar underprepared students from CUNY's four-year institutions until they demonstrate skill competency on the required exams (Fullinwider). In 1971, then U.S. Vice President Spiro Agnew lamented that directly because of open admissions, CUNY would be granting "100,000 devalued diplomas" (Crain). More recently, however, Charlie Roberts, president of Jackson State Community College in Tennessee remarked that eliminating remedial or developmental courses from Tennessee four-year institutions will have only a negative impact, making Board of Regents schools "an exclusive system" and having a "devastating effect on minority populations" attending four-year public colleges and universities (Cass).

In a thought-provoking observation about preparatory coursework and the presence on American college campuses of students who have been labeled as underprepared, Rose argues that "there will probably *always* be . . . students who do not meet some standard" for a variety of reasons. He points out that because of pressures on university administrations to make higher education accessible to students from a broad range of backgrounds,

constant evolution in disciplines and in society, and ever-changing definitions of what it means to be educated, "there will always be a percentage of students who will be tagged substandard" ("Language" 541). There will always be those who want to keep such students out of four-year higher education institutions. But at the same time, "there are too many economic, political, and ethical drives in American culture to restrict higher education to a select minority," however that minority might be constructed ("Language" 541).

The debate about who belongs at the university and who does not has existed since long before open admissions. Regardless of what boundaries state legislators or higher institution governing boards currently set for admission to public four-year institutions, and what qualifications or standards are used to determine admission at any given time, there will always be students needing some additional coursework, in one area or another, in order to fulfill graduation requirements. We want to offer what courses we can within the academic and budgetary parameters set by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. We agree with the University of Cincinnati's Senior Vice President and Provost for Baccalaureate and Graduate Education that "[a]ssisting underprepared students is a core function of higher education" ("State Plan"). Crain adds that "[o]pen admissions demonstrated that when people are given opportunities, they often achieve stunning success," and we have seen this success achieved by students here at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Our hope and expectation is that by providing underprepared students with college-level work in reading and writing rather than a more conventionally "remedial" approach, the UTM pre-first-year college-level composition program will offer these students the opportunity to achieve the academic, personal, and professional success they seek.

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Uses of Background Experience in a Preparatory Reading and Writing Class: An Analysis of Native and Non-native Speakers of English

Diana Becket

ABSTRACT: The goal of the study reported in this article is to analyze ways students in the first course of a three-quarter college preparatory sequence in reading and writing write about their experiences in their essays. The student participants were three native speakers of English and three native speakers of Punjabi, who had lived and studied in the United States for between three and five years at the time of the study. In order to assess how these students' writing related to the context of the class and the students' backgrounds, both faculty and students were interviewed. The students were asked about their reactions to their placement, their pre-college educational experiences, and their perceptions of the preparatory class. The reading and writing sections are taught separately and in sequence. The instructors share equal responsibility for assessing the students, so both instructors were asked to evaluate the students' achievement in relation to their expectations for the course. Analysis indicates that, for the students in this study, both native and non-native speakers of English are trying to find ways to make the transition from high school to college. However, in order to succeed, each of these students needs individual orientation to the demands of the preparatory class. Some students need more help with development of ideas whereas others need more help with editing for correctness.

In many open-access colleges, high school graduates, whether they are native or non-native speakers of English, take the same test to place them in composition programs. At some of these colleges, all students who are identified as not yet ready for college-level courses are placed in the same preparatory classes. To a certain extent, the attitudes of the students towards this placement as well as their peers and teachers in the preparatory courses influence their progress in writing. These placement practices assume that both native and non-native speakers share experiences that will provide common ground for them to complete the assignments. A comparison of the experiences that both groups of students select to use as content for their essays and the writing qualities they use to do this may indicate aspects of the common ground they share both in high school and in communities in the United States.

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© *Journal of Basic Writing*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2005

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.2005.24.2.04

For some time, there have been calls for research that will enable faculty who work in preparatory programs to understand, in greater depth, the students who come from different backgrounds (Harrington 92). The need for such research is growing, as the extent of the diversity in such classes is steadily increasing (Harklau, Losey, and Siegal). Teachers frequently require students to draw on their personal experiences to complete their written assignments, and it is important that teachers understand the ways that all students in these diverse classes represent themselves in their writing. It is from this understanding that teachers are able to respond to the students' texts and help these inexperienced writers to stand back from the subject matter of their papers, assess the implications and significance of their experiences, and use them as "as a productive means of developing . . . writing proficiency" (Harklau "Representing Culture" 126).

Native and non-native speaking high school graduates have many educational experiences in common. So-called Generation 1.5 students moved with their parents to the U.S. when they were young children or adolescents, graduated from American high schools, and are still studying in U.S. educational institutions (Harklau, Losey, and Siegal). For these reasons, they can be defined as "products of our own secondary education system" (Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, and Warschauer 153). At the same time, they share values and background influences with their parents' generation. Although they constitute a significant proportion of those in college preparatory programs, there has been little research that investigates how they relate to their native-speaking teachers and peers in preparatory reading and writing classes.

There are some studies, however, that assess why Generation 1.5 students are struggling in their college classes. Lay et al. describe three Chinese students who felt that their high school preparation was an inadequate "program of discrete skills development" without enough opportunities to write (Lay, Carro, Tien, Niemann, and Long 180). It is not only their problems with writing, however, that are holding them back. All the students in this study comment on the isolation they felt in class because they could not participate orally. Blanton discusses the difficulties that both basic writers and Generation 1.5 students have in finding a confident voice in their writing to explain "their own ideas clearly as they connect to the ideas of others" (122). At the same time, the non-native speakers are struggling because they "have gotten stuck in a sort of inter-language" that makes their spoken and written English difficult to understand (124).

In the majority of universities, Generation 1.5 students are separated from their high school peers and placed with recently arrived international students in ESL classes (Harklau, Losey, and Siegal). Studies have compared the ways both groups of ESL students study, interact, and participate in class. One faculty member found that, in comparison with international students, she needed to work hard to give Generation 1.5 students a "sense of academic motivation," as these students did not complete and turn in assignments (Muchinsky and Tangren 223). Reid describes how Generation 1.5 students "understand the slang, pop music, the behaviors and 'cool clothing' " of their high schools. However, in contrast to international students, their lack of understanding of written discourse limits their reading, while their writing reflects the "conversational phonetic quality of their 'ear-based language' " (18). One Polish student, Jan, looked back on high school as relatively easy and commented that in his pre-ESL class, the "'foreign people' . . . found him too Americanized," while his teacher "told him his English was only slang and street language" (Leki " 'Pretty Much' " 29). Questions need to be asked about how Generation 1.5 students look back at their high school experiences and how they relate these to teachers and peers in college preparatory programs.

As it is the experiences that they build upon to develop the ideas in their papers, one of the significant problems for permanent residents in ESL preparatory classes is in completing assignments that are framed for international students who need cultural orientation to life in the United States. After several years "in the multiethnic, urban U.S. social milieu" (Harklau " 'Good Kids' " 55), students' memories of the countries of their birth lack relevance for their lives in the United States. In preparatory classes, both native and non-native speakers share a common background in the local community and in their high schools. All are initiated into "the culture of school and are largely literate about classroom work" (Nelson 411). Although they do not have the support in mainstream classes from ESL teachers, Harklau suggests that the needs of Generation 1.5 students may be met more effectively in "developmental writing courses, where they will be among students with the same academic training and experience" (Harklau "Representing Culture" 124).

The papers that they write for class indicate ways this common academic background has influenced their writing. If the texts are documents of the students' experiences and a record of the ways that they are using this experience in their writing, they represent what Matsuda has called a "virtual world . . . in which the writer and reader meet each other and construct a

shared social reality" ("Contrastive Rhetoric" 251). The final drafts cannot be evaluated in isolation, however, as these are influenced by instructors' comments. Fife and O'Neil stress the importance of responding to students' texts in relation to the process approach used in composition classes. This process begins with the class discussion and students' interaction with their peers. Both native and non-native speakers are "strangers" in the context of the "strange lands" of college courses (McCarthy 233). This "context" comprises both the ways that the texts relate to the background of all the students and the context of the preparatory writing class where the papers are being written.

The goal of the study reported in this article is to analyze how students write about their experiences in their essays for the preparatory writing class. In order to assess how these assignments relate to the demands and expectations of the class, the students and instructors were interviewed. As in many colleges, faculty had "no choice but to place" both native speakers and Generation 1.5 students in the same class (Matsuda "Basic Writing" 68). By comparing the ways native and non-native speakers completed the assignments, I wanted to understand how the diversity of the class was represented in the students' writing.

THE STUDY

The students described in this paper were placed in Preparatory Reading and Writing I, the first course of a three-course preparatory sequence at one of the open-access colleges of a large university in the industrial Midwest. This is a six-credit course taught by a reading and writing instructor. The reading and writing sections are taught separately and in sequence. The class meets for two hours three times a week. The reading instructor teaches the first hour and focuses on the texts selected to support that section of the course. The writing instructor teaches the second hour, where the focus is on helping the students to use and develop the ideas in the texts in writing the assigned essays. The instructors meet frequently to discuss what they have covered in their classes, but they do not team teach in the sense that both instructors teach the sections at the same time. The two instructors share equal responsibility for assessing the students, so both instructors were asked to evaluate the students' achievement in relation to their expectations for the course. I am an instructor in the program, but I was not teaching the class that is the focus of this article. Twelve students volunteered to participate

in my study, and during our open-ended conversations, toward the end of the quarter, I talked to all of them about their lives before they came to the college, their reactions to their placement, and their perceptions of the class and their peers. The students gave their permission for me to tape these conversations and analyze them and their assignments after the course was finished. All student names in this article are pseudonyms.

After the final portfolios (containing all the completed assignments and drafts) had been submitted at the end of the quarter, the students' written assignments, which included the comments of the instructor, were analyzed. I read and reread their descriptions of their experiences to assess how these were used to develop the writing prompts for the essays. I discussed the students' written work with the reading and writing instructors and asked them how the completed assignments represented the students' progress throughout the quarter. With the instructors' permission, these conversations were also taped. The conversations with both students and faculty were analyzed and used to understand, in greater depth, the ways students had written about their experiences. The reading and writing instructors of the class read and gave feedback on the final drafts of this article.

Students' Backgrounds and Perceptions of the Class

For this article, I selected the six students in the group who were recent high school graduates; Rahul, Vijay, and Meera are Generation 1.5 students, and Marian, John, and Ian are native speakers who have never lived outside the state. Although Meera arrived in the U.S. after adolescence, she attended a mainstream American high school for three years, and the ways she worked for the class indicate that she was shaped by the American education system and, in these respects, can be considered as a member of Generation 1.5 (Matsuda et al.). For Rahul, Vijay, and John, this open-access college was their second experience in postsecondary education, as these students had attended different colleges the previous year. Rahul and Vijay had not found the courses they wanted or the help they needed in their first colleges, and John had found the courses too difficult. For Meera, Ian, and Marian, this was the first college experience.

The non-native speakers all come from India and are native speakers of Punjabi. Rahul and Vijay had attended public schools in India, where classes were taught in Punjabi, and Meera, a private boarding school, where English was the language of instruction. Rahul and Vijay took ESL English classes in high school, while Meera was mainstreamed in general English

classes. At the time of the research, Vijay had lived in the U.S. for five years, Rahul for four years, and Meera for three. Vijay's family had recently received American citizenship, and Rahul's was in the process of applying. Although the students do not write about India, the memories they had of Indian schools and their parents' motivation to give their families a better life in the U.S. are important for the ways they perceive themselves in the United States. All remember India as a place where the education system is more demanding than in the U.S. Whether they attended public high schools or a private boarding school, the students had no choices in the classes they took, and the emphasis on rote learning, reinforced by corporal punishment and extensive testing, meant that life at school was stressful. Meera commented that, in contrast, "the American school system is easy. If you know what you are doing, it is easy."

Vijay's family came to the U.S. for job opportunities, which were limited in India, where "to get a job, you have to pay money." Rahul's family wanted to move to the United States where "everything is better" especially "education and lifestyle." His mother now works in a clothing factory, and his father drives a forklift truck. Meera's family moved to the U.S. for the education of the children as "it is very difficult to get into college in India and costs a lot of money." Both her parents now work in a nursing home for the elderly "helping people in the dining room, and they have no choice" of other employment. Vijay was intimidated by the thought of high school because he "didn't know any English," and his uncle had to "force" him to go. However, like Rahul, he remembers the high school ESL classes as supportive. Rahul also recalls a history teacher who "really helped" him because "he gave [him] different tests." Both Rahul and Vijay had little contact, however, with the other high school students. Rahul commented that although he liked the students in high school, they did not talk to him because he could not carry on a conversation in English. Vijay had similar feelings of isolation within the native-speaking community because he could not express his thoughts in English.

All the non-native speakers were uneasy about their placement and achievement in the preparatory college class. Meera thought she did well in high school because her grades were As and Bs. She felt that her English was especially strong until she took the test at the college and was placed in the first preparatory class. She was disappointed with her B for the course and felt she should have done better. She worried that another non-native-speaking student in the class had higher grades. Rahul felt he "learned more in school than in college." He said, "I don't feel I need to be there"

as the instructors cover "the same stuff in reading and writing." Vijay was disappointed with his grade of B- and thought he could have done better if he had worked harder. Both Vijay and Rahul felt that their spoken English was holding them back in the class. Rahul found speaking English was still very difficult, and he was only able to express himself orally if he understood the topic "really well." Vijay said, "In the class I won't speak up. I am scared that I don't speak English very well." He was surprised that the native speakers, who could speak so well, were taking this class. He felt that if he knew as much English as they did, he would have done better. He commented, "They don't try hard."

The non-native speakers looked back to high school as a place where they felt they had fulfilled their potential better than in college. In contrast, college was stressful. They were concerned about their level of achievement and their ability to participate in the class, and they felt that they compared negatively with some of the other non-native speakers in the class.

Marian, John, and Ian were also recent graduates from high school, where Marian and John had taken general English and Ian, vocational English courses. In contrast to the non-native speakers, these three students felt that college represented a relief after the stresses of their high school experiences. Both Marian and John struggled to graduate. Marian said that in high school she "really didn't get along with most of the people and wasn't normally there all the time." However, it was the relationships with the faculty that made her want to drop out. She commented, "When I did not like the teacher, I didn't do anything." The twelfth grade general English teacher would not explain the assignments she had missed and told her to ask another student. She remembered, "I told her it's your job, and I never ever went to her class again." Instead, she said that she "would just go and do [her] work at the principal's office."

John looked back on high school as "a huge nightmare every time [he] woke up." Like Marian, it was the memories of the teachers, who "should treat [students] with more respect," that had left the most lasting impression. He remembered little structure in the class: "students would goof off and the teachers wouldn't say anything." He felt he had achieved nothing from these academic classes. Although Ian "hated elementary and junior high school," high school was very different. He tested as learning disabled and commented, "It's helped me a lot." Ian explained that he had always been a "poor test taker" who "couldn't pass proficiencies." In his senior year, he was exempted from these tests because of his "disability in test taking." He did well in vocational English computer graphic classes, which he passed

with "all As and Bs." He had resisted coming to college, but his job in a local distribution company required college qualifications for promotion, so he felt forced to come.

In general, the native speakers came to the class with negative perceptions of themselves as students and writers. In contrast to their high school experience, the class offered them space to express themselves, and they felt respected by the faculty. Ian found the teachers "almost at friend level." He liked the class discussion in both the reading and writing sections. He found the students' contributions to be very important in class especially those of the "foreign students," who "contribute so much about languages and beliefs." Marian felt confident in the class, accepted by both faculty and students, and she had little difficulty with the work. In the beginning, John found the class difficult; however, he soon found that "students help each other and the professors treat you with respect." He explained that he struggled so much with writing that his mother and brother's girlfriend always helped him to write his papers. He commented, "I always miss the grammar."

Although the native and non-native speakers share the same high school background, their attitudes, which have been affected by these experiences, are different. Memories from Indian schools influence the non-native speakers' attitude to American high schools, and they feel a pressure to succeed because of the efforts of their parents to give them a better life in the United States. The native speakers feel no such pressures, but they struggle with negative memories of high school. Both groups of students are, however, working in their own ways to adjust to the demands of college life.

Faculty Perceptions of the Class at the End of the Quarter

Both reading and writing sections are taught as interactive discussion classes. The goal is for the students' reactions to the topics that arise from the readings to dictate the direction of the class. The reading and writing instructors had worked as a team to teach the combined sections of the class for several years, and they met frequently to discuss what they had covered in their classes. Both instructors viewed the class as an interactive one, and they frequently found students already discussing the topic of the papers when they arrived.

The instructors perceived Meera as the most interactive of the students involved in this study. She often initiated the topic for discussion and helped other students to become involved. Marian and Ian were also involved par-

ticipants both in small group discussions and in the class as a whole. John was less involved, and Rahul and Vijay "kept themselves on the edge." Rahul "was very quiet and modest." The writing instructor remembered only one occasion on which he contributed to class discussion when he became very heated as "he described an American in the gas station where he worked whom he perceived as a whiner." She felt that Vijay's aloofness was not the result of shyness but an attempt to adopt a "cool, punk allusiveness." He gave her the sense that "he did not want to write these essays and didn't want to deal with these Americans." She thought he felt that "Americans were not quite as good as the Indians. They were lazy, not sufficiently grateful, and spoiled." The impression that Vijay left with her was that he did not "care" about "doing anything."

The fact that both Rahul and Vijay were not involved with the class "affected their assignments because it meant that they could not benefit from the community brainstorming of ideas." Both instructors commented that Vijay regularly turned in his assignments late. The reading instructor attributed this, in part, to the fact that he was working forty hours in a local gas station, as well as being a full-time student. This was a problem because when these late assignments were returned to him, he did not have time to revise his work. He only passed the class because the writing instructor "gave him coaching to get assignments out of him." In her perception, "his competency was reasonable, but the amount of effort he put in was not sufficient." In contrast, Meera was an "'A' type perfectionist." She wrote and rewrote her papers and was never satisfied with the results. All the students passed the class, however, as they fulfilled the course criteria, which were based on the quality of the revised assignments in the final portfolio of work. In these revised drafts, the students needed to show that they were developing their ideas in their essays and editing their work at the sentence level. (In assessing student work, the reading and writing instructors evaluate the work done in their sections on a scale of A to C-. Each section represents 50 percent of the final grade. At the end of the quarter, the instructors meet to discuss the students' results, and they come to a consensus over the final grade by re-reading the work in the portfolio. If the instructors cannot agree on the grade, the portfolio is sent to the composition coordinator, who makes the final decision.)

Of the six students, John found the class most difficult. The writing instructor was surprised at "the absolute incomprehensibility of his writing." She found the work he did in class presented profound sentence-level difficulties and was convinced that he had "someone at home to edit his

papers." She perceived his disability to be "more profound than Ian's." Although Ian was the student identified with disabilities, she found him "a smart assertive user of the system."

Both instructors felt that the group was average for a Preparatory Reading and Writing I section. The non-native speakers "came in at the same level as the native speakers in the group," and "both had an equally poor command of spoken and written English." The writing instructor commented, "All shared the same disjunctive experience when they started, because they were all in a foreign academic land." The "common denominator" that they shared was that they were all "foreigners in college and not necessarily foreigners in the U.S." The fact that John, Vijay, and Rahul were not active participants while Ian, Meera, and Marian were led the writing instructor to assume that "participation is not culturally dependent." Both instructors drew on the students' pre-college experiences to guide their responses to the texts and facilitate the writing of their papers.

THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Explaining the Significance of Personal Experience

In both the reading and writing class the students' personal experience was an important component of the work. The reading instructor approached each text by asking questions that required the students to think about how the topic related to their own personal experiences. As these students were all in their first quarter at the college, they related their ideas to events that had happened to them before they enrolled in college. All of the class time in reading was used for these discussions. The themes of the readings were also referred to in the writing class. Here, the focus was on brainstorming ideas that could be used as material for essays. In order to develop these ideas, the students were asked to think about their experiences. After the initial brainstorming, the class worked to organize the ideas in an outline, which was used to complete the first draft of the essay. Throughout the reading and writing processes, the instructors asked the students to think about events in their own lives that were similar to those related in the texts. These personal experiences became the subject matter for the essays.

In the first assignment, the students were asked to analyze an example of positive or negative pressure they had experienced from peers and to use this to draw conclusions about the situation, the peer pressure that had been

exerted on them, and the significance that this may have for society. After the initial presentation draft, the students were required to redraft their papers at least twice before submitting them in the final portfolio. The goal for the class was for the students to develop the ideas in their papers beyond two double spaced pages. The topics for all the papers were developed from readings that had been collected by faculty and custom published (*Critical Bridge*). An example from the readings on this topic was "Salvation" by Langston Hughes.

Vijay and Rahul chose to write about pressure from peers in the first colleges they attended. In both papers, there is the same focus on the confusion of their situation as they try to find a place in the "system." Rahul wanted to specialize in computers, but, as he was "new in the computer field," he talked to a friend, who "forced [him] to come to the same college that he was in." The advantages of this first experience of college after high school, as described by his friend, included the fact that "he did not get homework at school and also sometimes they let him go home early." In addition, his friend had told him, incorrectly, "that this college is the cheapest college," where it was possible to be successful while "working 40 to 50 hours a week." The school did not work out for Rahul, and he felt that the "money and the valuable time" which he spent were "never going to come back." Vijay describes a similar situation where he was persuaded to attend a college where it was possible to graduate "within one year," which he thought "could be money saving." However, the diploma he received did not give him access to opportunities he wanted, and he felt that the courses were a waste of his time and money.

Both Rahul's and Vijay's papers reflect their confusion about the education system, a confusion that they share, in many respects, with the native speakers in the group. Similar shared concerns are the realities of trying to find financial resources for college and the problems of balancing the needs of studying with those of holding down a full-time job. The comments from the instructor on early drafts encourage the students to develop their writing by showing the significance of the events they are describing. In the final drafts, the body of their papers remains unchanged, although Rahul adds in his conclusion, "We should always listen to friends' advice, because we gain our knowledge from listening to them. But make the decision only yourself because it's your gain or loss." Vijay adds no comment to explain the significance of the pressure he experienced, and the instructor suggests he needs to "develop some of these ideas and explanations in more depth."

The other students in the sample all write about different kinds of pressure outside school. Like Vijay and Rahul, Marian and Ian do not develop

their papers in sufficient depth, and their first drafts of little over one page remain largely unchanged through the drafting process. Marian focuses on a description of the pressure she experienced from a peer to drop one boyfriend and go out with another Like Rahul, she adds ideas to her conclusion: "Being pressured to do something can change everything and sometimes bad or good." She advises against allowing friends to exert pressure in her situation because "you end up being depressed and you think it is your entire fault." Ian pulls back from his description of positive peer pressure to change jobs and comments: "My peers have helped me come a long way, and I am thankful to them for the extra push they gave me." Both native and non-native speakers select topics with which all students are concerned: choosing colleges, changing jobs, and deciding about relationships.

Meera wrote about the significance of her topic, throughout the assignment, most effectively. She focuses on the pressure that a peer put on her to send for acne medication. Her skin was distressing her to such an extent that, she writes, "It discouraged me by looking at my own face in the mirror." The medication did not help, however, and "the worst part was they just mail the solution every two months without asking." She concludes: "From this point I learned a real good lesson. Never take advice from an inexperienced person. Always trust yourself. Have self-confidence and that is the most important thing in your life." She concludes: "It takes time to achieve your goal." After an analysis of the situation, Meera uses her experience to generalize about peer pressure and advises her reader on this topic. She relates herself to others as she addresses the reader and makes generalized assumptions about the topic.

For the second assignment, the students were required to write about a change that represented a "rite of passage." They were given free rein to choose any experience that they felt related to this topic, but they needed to go beyond a description of what happened and indicate the significance of the experience in relation to the context in which it occurred and its significance for the rest of their lives Malcolm X's experience of teaching himself to write, excerpted from his autobiography, was one of the readings that the students discussed as an example of such fundamentally liberating experiences.

All the non-native speakers chose to write about aspects of their experiences of moving to the United States. Unfortunately, it is not possible to assess the influence of class and group discussion that led the non-native speakers to focus on their immigration experiences. The texts that they read and the requirements of the assignment led the students to think about experiences that have transformed their lives. For young people who are still

accommodating to the cultural life of the United States and still remember the country of their birth, their immigration experiences remain a powerful force.

The students describe the stress they felt as they tried to move into the American way of life while at the same time retaining the cultural roots they share with their parents. Vijay explains the tension of living under a green card status before he was granted citizenship. His father "told" him he "had to show good moral character to become a U.S. citizen," because "if anyone does something wrong, INS could send them back to their country." He was so determined to become an American citizen and not to let his family down that he could "remember all fifty questions [on the citizenship exam] by heart." He writes, "Citizenship makes me feel like an American." And, as his new status will enable him to marry an Indian girl easily, the experience of citizenship is fulfilling both personally and socially.

Both Rahul and Meera focus on the difficulty of adjusting to the pace of life in the United States, which they perceive as an important aspect of the difference between the Indian and American cultures and the source of many of their problems. Rahul concludes his brief paper by writing, "My lifestyle has been changed into a fast lane with all American." He sees an adjustment to the fast pace of life as his way of reaching his goal of citizenship. Meera also writes about the pace of life as a significant factor when she moved to the U.S. From the first confusing experience at the airport, where no one has time to stop and help her family, she describes her experiences of trying to find a way through the "rush" of high school, where people have no time to make friends. Eventually, she was encouraged by the achievements of another non-native speaker; she "started talking little bit in class and from there [she] made a few friends." For Meera, it was through her ability to interact with her peers that she resolved the difficulties of her initiation into the new culture.

The non-native speakers in the class write about the passage into American society and culture, which, on the one hand, was a "public" change in status that affected and was still influencing every aspect of their lives; however, they describe this change in terms of the contacts they have with their peers and members of the communities where they are living. The native speakers focus on significant "private" stressful experiences that they describe as being resolved, in different degrees, by the rite of passage of their initiation into college.

Marian describes her disruptive life in high school and focuses on coming to college. She writes, "I went through a rite of passage by having

changes in friends, my attitudes, and by caring more about others and me." John writes about his junior year, which was "probably the worst year [he] had in [his] whole life." He concludes his description by writing, "I am in college now studying to be youth pastor." In a similar way, Ian describes the stress that affected his extended family when his mother discovered that her stepfather was, in fact, her biological father. He writes of the way this has been resolved for him: "My life is running smoothly. I am doing wonderful at school and loving every minute of it." The native speakers write of the benefits of the changes they perceive as a result of attending college, while the non-native speakers are more aware of the ongoing pressures to become part of the American way of life. In this respect, the non-native speakers may be more aware of the realistic repercussion of such changes than the native speakers since college is still a very recent experience. All the students found ways, however, to use their current experiences to fulfill the demands of the assignment.

Using Personal Experience to Develop Argument

For the final assignment, the students were required to evaluate television from different perspectives. They were asked to establish a position, give reasons to support their position, introduce other ideas, or "counterarguments," and show how these new perspectives related to their original position. The resulting essays show how their writing has developed over the quarter.

John makes a clear statement about the potential that television has for drawing the country together after September 11, 2001, but he does not develop this by including other perspectives on television. The other students in the sample use the pattern of argument/counterargument in their papers. Vijay writes that "television gives us weather updated every moment so it would be a good thing for people to schedule their work," and is a useful source of information on current affairs. He goes on to comment that such information can also be found in newspapers and the library and not on TV alone. He develops the complexity of his paper when he responds to the "counterargument" by writing that "newspapers does has all the information, but it takes much effort to read, and I think reading newspaper would be time consuming, and it does not have the right at the moment updated information." As is the case for Vijay's essays throughout the quarter, this final draft needs proofreading and developing to meet the length requirements of the assignment.

The patterns of revision that the students adopt throughout the quarter indicate the level of success they achieve in the class. Vijay, Rahul, and Marian write relatively accurate first drafts, but do not make substantial revisions beyond correcting surface grammar errors. In contrast, the ideas in Meera's first drafts are developed but unstructured grammatically. She edits the grammar in her revisions while also structuring the ideas.

Examples from the final essay assignment make this clear. Meera's first draft is three pages long and is filled with ideas and comments that criticize the content of television while supporting its educational value. She writes, in her first draft, "Now days movies has influenced a lot to teenagers, which ruins there whole life by getting into trouble." Many of the surface inaccuracies are adjusted in the final draft: "Nowadays movies have influenced a lot of teenagers, which ruins their whole lives by getting into trouble." In contrast, Rahul's one-page first draft is comparatively accurate; for example, he writes: "TV is the fastest source of fresh information including news, weather, political matters and sports." However, this paper remains undeveloped in content and ideas throughout the drafting process. Like Marian's and Vijay's, his drafts were shorter than the required length, and although they are relatively accurate, he spends little time or thought on revision.

Ian redrafted his final assignment the most effectively to indicate the significance and importance of his position on the topic. In the first draft he wrote: "As a sports fan, I agree that TV is the only way that a lot of people can attend a game. I am also convinced that TV has done more to hurt amateur and professional sport than anything else." In his final revision, the personal reference has gone, and he focuses on the game, other people's relationship to this, and the wider significance that the topic has for the community. He writes, "In much the same way some people cannot afford cinema prices. . . . But just like all things there is a price to pay for the entertainment. Networks control the sports we watch." Of the students in this sample, Ian and Meera achieve the goals of using their experiences to generalize about the subject in ways that include their readers and comment on the concerns of the wider community most effectively.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In their writing, both native and non-native speakers in this study describe experiences from high school and from the communities where

they live and work. The topics they choose to write about and the ways they express themselves reflect these influences. They focus on personal relationships and discuss the pressures of trying to balance the demands of work and college. The non-native speakers write about balancing the demands of their parental culture with the American one, while the native speakers relate their experiences of high school to those of college. The design of this study does not allow for an assessment of how the students choose their topics. Such a question needs to be addressed in future research, where class observation, for example, is part of the research design. However, the students' written assignments show that they focus on their current experiences in the U.S., and this suggests that the writing needs of Generation 1.5 students can be met in classes where they use the same texts and assignments as native speakers (Harklau "Representing Culture"). As Harklau writes, it is by understanding and writing about personal experience in greater depth and complexity that students develop as writers. The instructor's comments on their papers encourage these students to analyze their experiences in order to find ways of developing the ideas in the texts. Meera's and Ian's essays, particularly, show how they relate their personal experiences to other people's and make assumptions about the topics of their essays.

This study does not suggest generalizations about ways native and non-native speakers use their experiences to develop their ideas and express them in writing. The non-native speakers have different strengths in these respects. Rahul and Vijay have difficulty contributing to class discussion, while Meera participates orally in class but needs help in editing her work. She has spent the least amount of time in the United States, but her background in India and in an American high school has given her most exposure to spoken English and native speakers. Her papers are "fluent" in the sense that she writes at length and develops her ideas. Rahul and Vijay write more accurately than Meera, which may be a result of the focus on grammar in their high school ESL classes. There is a similar difficulty in characterizing the native speakers' work. For example, like Meera, Marian has come from a general English class in high school. However, like Rahul, she writes short essays that are accurate at the sentence level, but the ideas remain undeveloped throughout the drafting process.

Both native and non-native speakers require individual orientation to the requirements of the preparatory class. For example, the data from this study do not suggest that the non-native speakers need to focus on grammatical accuracy, as Rahul and Vijay make fewer errors than some of their native-speaking peers like John. Similarly, as far as these students are con-

cerned, it is not necessarily the non-native speakers who require help with developing the length of their essays, as Meera's drafts are better developed than Marian's. In this sample of students, both the native and non-native speakers require individual help to fulfill the requirements that are necessary to pass the class. Each student is an individual with specific needs.

Class participation and involvement are important factors for all the students. The instructor's description of Vijay echoes Reid's comments on the "cool" appearance of a Generation 1.5 student, who works hard to fit in with recent fashion statements. Vijay's attempt to blend in with his peers, however, gives the impression that he is aloof and superior, and both he and Rahul are perceived by the instructor as critical, in different degrees, of the American culture. The students' comments echo the instructors' perceptions of them. However, from their own perspectives, it is not a feeling of "aloofness" that stops them from participating in class. In contrast, Vijay and Rahul stress that their lack of confidence in their oral competency is the factor that keeps them from voicing their opinions in class. Although John struggles more than Rahul and Vijay as a writer, the instructor comments that he is "supported by his feeling of being a member of the class." The experience of these students suggests that silence can be interpreted in different ways. In her case study of a Chinese nursing student, Leki stresses that some of the student's difficulties could be explained by the fact that there were no college courses which would help her to develop the essential oral communication skills that she needed ("Living Through College Literacy"). It is in the preparatory classes that communicative competency should be addressed.

Both native and non-native speakers of English need time to put their high school experiences into perspective. As a result of their previous negative educational experiences, the native speakers feel a sense of relief when they reach college. In contrast, the non-native speakers feel tension in different ways, and this affects the way they perceive themselves in the class. Having come from an education system in India that they perceive as inflexible, they find high school in the United States manageable. Meera, like Jan (Leki " 'Pretty Much' "), looks back on high school as a relatively easy experience. Rahul's frustration at his college placement contributes to his lack of motivation to revise his papers. He does not make the progress he wants to; therefore, he feels that he achieved more in high school. However, the frustration that all the non-native speakers feel does not influence their progress in the same way. Meera was as disappointed with her placement as Rahul and Vijay, but she works hard to achieve the best results that she can,

while Rahul and Vijay do not. Muchinsky and Tangren comment on the lack of "academic motivation" (223) they perceive in Generation 1.5 students. The experiences of the students in the present study suggest that such a generalization cannot be applied to all Generation 1.5 students. Although Meera feels frustrated, she makes more progress than Marian, who feels comparatively relaxed in the class. Marian does not rewrite her papers and, like Vijay and Rahul, could have "done so much better," in the instructor's opinion. Like the other native speakers, Marian begins with negative ideas about herself as a student, but the atmosphere of the class dissipates her negative feelings. For Marian and John, the improved relationship with faculty seems to hide the need for changes in academic commitment, however, while Ian appears to thrive in the college environment.

Most students in this open-access college work full-time to finance their tuition in the preparatory classes, and, as a result, their studies suffer. Similarly, many of these students resist revising their essays in a significant way. For the students in this study, the factors that most influenced their progress are the extent to which they are able to balance the conflicting demands of their lives, the motivation to thoughtfully revise their essays, and their overall attitude to the class. These factors are more important for their progress than whether or not they were born in the United States.

Author's Acknowledgments

I want to thank Ruth Benander, Susan Sipple, Sylvia Thompson, and *JBW*'s anonymous reviewers for their comments and feedback on earlier drafts of this article.

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Represent, Representin', Representation: The Efficacy of Hybrid Texts in the Writing Classroom

Donald McCrary

ABSTRACT: The article explores the use of hybrid linguistic texts in the writing classroom, both as articles of study and possible models of composition. Standard English linguistic supremacy prevents many students from using their full range of linguistic knowledge. The inclusion of hybrid texts in the writing classroom might help students, in particular working class and non-white students, to establish a linguistic and cultural connection between the beliefs and practices of the academy and those of their home communities. In addition to analyzing hybrid discourse from a popular urban magazine, a newspaper article, a scholarly article, and literary non-fiction, the article analyzes several student responses to hybrid literacy narratives and several student literacy autobiographies that use hybrid discourse. The article argues that students' reading and writing of hybrid texts might increase their awareness of language and eradicate the negative consequences of standard English supremacy.

Among many of the hip hop generation there is a mandate to "represent," which means to display one's skill and knowledge or express one's home identity in any given social situation. Some of my students "represent" in my writing classroom through dress—oversized clothing, baseball caps, doo rags, and bling—and attitude—laid back, non-committal, and unimpressed. When my students "represent," they see themselves as embracing their identities and cultures in the midst of academia, as playas in the college game rather than the game of college playin' them.

While the academy permits my students to "represent" in dress and attitude, it does not extend this courtesy to student language. In the academy, students are told, in a variety of ways, to leave their native language at the door and embrace, instead, standard English. However begrudgingly, most

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© *Journal of Basic Writing*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2005

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.2005.24.2.05

students heed the academy's dictate and try to acquire standard English; still, there are some students who, as Marilyn Cooper and Michael Holzman explain, see standard English acquisition and school itself as "the negation of the home (and of the street), its values the negation of their values, its skills hopelessly beside the point in a different—more pressing—context." (165). These students know that acquiring standard English doesn't necessarily mean they're going to get the paper, the chedda, the cream they desire. They know that acquiring standard English doesn't mean they can live where they want or do what they like—such as get a Manhattan cab driver to take them to Brooklyn after 8:00 p.m. They also know that their native language has served them very well in negotiating the often difficult public and private terrains of their lives.

Like my students, I know the value of my native language, black English, and the significance it has played in both my public and private life. However, many would challenge my claim that black English is both a public and private language. For example, in "Aria: A Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood," Richard Rodriguez argues for the separation of home and school languages because he believes the former is private while the latter is public: "They do not seem to realize that a person is individuated in two ways. So they do not realize that, while one suffers a diminished sense of *private* individuality by being assimilated into public society, such assimilation makes possible the achievement of *public* individuality" (231). I, however, view black English as a public language because it is the language with which I learned about the world, including the perils of racism, the importance of education, and the consequences of improper conduct. When Moms told me, "Don't go showin' your ass when I take you in this store," I knew she was telling me to behave respectfully, and I knew what would happen if I didn't. The black English I learned at home is the same black English I used outside the home. It got black people through slavery, and it saved my black behind a thousand times.

Hold up. I know what you gonna say. Talkin' that black English is okay at home and with your friends, but don't be speakin' that foolishness in school or at the j-o-b. And don't be tellin' no students they can speak that mess either. You want people (read: white) to think they ignorant? Right. Right. I hear you. I hear you. But let's be real. America loves itself some black English. Half the announcers on ESPN speak it, and I'm talking about the white dudes, too. Americans know more black English than they like to admit. Black English is intelligible and intelligent, and just because somebody tells you different, don't necessarily make it so. And that's what I want the

academy to understand. My students don't speak no broken English. They speak a legitimate dialect that conveys legitimate meanings.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that students should write exclusively in black English, or any other non-standard English language. Instead, I'm preachin' hybrid discourse, and one of the languages students use should be standard English because that is the language the academy knows best, and successful communication is an important concern. However, students should be allowed to combine standard English with other languages when they speak and write in the academy. Elsewhere I have argued that "students should be encouraged to experiment with hybrid discourses because they more accurately reflect the complex linguistic abilities that students—in particular other-literate students—possess"(54). As Elaine Richardson observes, "Effective language education deals with the *total* linguistic, cultural, and historical background of the learner. This background should be taken into account to more fully facilitate the acquisition of additional language registers and styles" (19). Students should be given the opportunity to express meanings in a language that is representational of their linguistic knowledge and complexity. They should be allowed to produce hybrid discourse, an idea and practice that other scholars have utilized in the classroom, including Kermit E. Campbell, Henry L. Evans, Xin Lu Gale, Judith Hebb, and Kelvin Monroe. In fact, I'd like to give particular dap to Keith Gilyard and Elaine Richardson, who, in "Students' Right to Possibility: Basic Writing and African American Rhetoric," blow up the linguistic spot by allowing their students to utilize their different languages in relation to meaningful course content. So, in essence, I'm bitin' from the work of others, but appropriation is honored among black folks, as long as you improvise, too.

An important feature of language is hybridity, which my man, Mikhail Bakhtin, describes as "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (358). Although many in the academy construe academic discourse as a noetic field, which James Berlin defines as "a closed system defining what can, and cannot, be known; the nature of the knower, the known, the audience, and the nature of language" (2), according to deconstruction theory, all language contains fissures, breaks, and absences that reveal the nature of the discourse and allow linguistic penetration. When we talk about the importance of Bakhtinian theory and hybridity for the writing classroom, we often ignore what John Trimbur calls "dissensus," which

Mary Kennedy describes as a sociolinguistic ground "against which writers can develop and distinguish, their own voices, their difference, and in this way make a contribution to larger conversations" (88). Contribution is somethin' we need to dig on because that is what is denied to many other-literate students in the academy—the freedom to make a contribution to academic discourse by using their own language or voices and the values embedded within them. Using hybrid discourse would allow students to identify and reconcile their encounters with different languages, to shape them into a single utterance representative of their linguistic knowledge, to make a valuable contribution to academic discourse. Moreover, we should not ignore the heteroglossic nature of language, by which, according to Bakhtin, [a]ll words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a part, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the date and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life"(292). If we follow Bakhtinian theory, then language derives from participation in specific communities, and my students' use of words such as "frontin'" or "representin,'" carries with them the political, social, cultural, and political beliefs and values of all those who have uttered those words. To deny the use of any language in the academy is tantamount to devaluing the social contexts in which that language is created and expressed. Such a move privileges one set of ideologies over other ideologies that may be both intellectually and personally expressive to students. Rather than prevent students from fully participating in academic discourse by erecting walls of linguistic intolerance, cross-cultural communication might be encouraged between the academy and students, enacting what David E. Hollinger calls "affiliation," which "suggests a greater measure of flexibility consistent with a postethnic eagerness to promote communities of consent" (7). As Victor Villanueva tells us, "When we demand a certain language, a certain dialect, and a certain rhetorical manner, we seem to be working counter to the cultural multiplicity that we seek" (183). Take that and rewind it back, as the rapper Ludacris might say. Privileging standard English is "working counter to the cultural multiplicity that we seek."

It's time to fish or cut bait. If we really believe in cultural multiplicity, if we're not just making noise but want to bring the noise, then we have to get serious about what we say and do with language in our classrooms. Either our students' lives and cultures—and language is a central aspect of both—have meaning, or they don't. Either students have a right to their own language, or they don't. Either we're real multiculturalists or we're bootleg multiculturalists, and the bootlegs sold in my neighborhood ain't worth a damn.

Constructed largely through intracultural rhetoric—the languages that different groups speak within their cultures—hybrid discourse can be found in such diverse English forms as sermons, novels, songs, poetry, and non-fiction writing. For example, Laura L. Behling locates hybridity among many multicultural American writers, including some African-American writers such as Charles Chestnutt, Zora Neale Hurston, and Charles Johnson who "use culture-specific myths or language and style from oral traditions . . . to doubly challenge traditional canonicity . . . " (416). We see the use of hybrid discourse in Terry McMillan's short story, "Ma'Dear," in which the widowed narrator, Hazel, discusses one of the male suitors she endured after her husband's death:

> Chester Rutledge almost worked 'ceptin' he was boring, never had nothing on his mind worth talking about; claimed he didn't think about nothing besides me. Said his mind was always clear and visible. He just moved around like a zombie and worked hard at the cement foundry. Insisted on giving me his paychecks, which I kindly took for a while, but when I didn't want to be bothered no more, I stopped taking the money. He got on my nerves too bad, so I had to tell him I'd rather have a man with no money and a busy mind, least I'd know he's active somewheres. His feelings was hurt bad and he cussed me out, but we still friends to this very day. He in the home, you know, and I visits him regular. Takes him magazines and cuts out his horoscope and the comic strips for the newspaper and lets him read 'em' in correct order. (458)

Hazel is seventy-two years old, and her language reflects her age; however, it seems clear that her speech, or more precisely McMillan's writing, reflects a mixture of black English and standard English forms. One cannot ignore that McMillan is rendering Hazel's narrative in writing because the language follows standard English conventions, including the coordination of independent clauses, proper use of commas, punctuation of interjections, and verb tense consistency. Despite the use of black English, note the consistent formation of the verb series in this sentence: "Takes him magazines and cuts out his horoscope and the comic strips for the newspaper and lets him read em." McMillan is using a standard English grammar convention to construct a sentence in black English. This narrative represents the very conscious efforts of a writer to use her knowledge of two languages to render a fictional narrative reminiscent of the speech of a particular black person at a particular time.

We can't talk about hybrid academic discourse without giving big props and much love to Geneva Smitherman, linguist supreme, whose groundbreaking 1977 *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America* paved the way for scholarly hybrid discourse. Other academics have embraced hybridity, as Patricia Bizzell informs us in "Hybrid Forms of Academic Discourses: What, Why, How." Exploring the texts of a range of academic writers—Mike Rose, Keith Gilyard, Victor Villanueva, and Helen Fox—Bizzell demonstrates how these writers' use of hybridity "is greater than the sum of its parts, accomplishing intellectual work that could not be done in either of the discourses alone" (13). A more recent example of hybrid academic discourse is an essay by the genre crossing Lee A. Tonouchi published in *College English*. In this excerpt from the essay, Tonouchi uses hybrid discourse to discuss the prejudice speakers of Hawaiian Pidgin endure:

> In da real world get planny Pidgin prejudice, ah. Dey, da ubiquitous dey, dey is everywea brah, dey say dat da perception is dat da standard English talker is going automatically be perceive fo' be mo' intelligent than da Pidgin talker regardless wot dey talking, jus from HOW dey talking. Get studies dat show dis kine speech biases and discriminations, but I no need really look da studies, cuz I can see dis happening insai my classrooms. (76)

Say what you will about Tonouchi's writing, I for one know exactly what he's saying, and to me, his use of Hawaiian Pidgin gives his ideas more depth, makes them more representational of the people for whom he's speaking. His Pidgin represents a specific history and culture lived by a specific people, who no longer seem mere objects of study, as they do in most academic accounts of their lives, but real living, breathing subjects.

In my own classroom practice, I use hybrid texts to help students to understand that their primary language holds meaning even outside their home environments, and that this language is capable of expressing and supporting complex thoughts. I use hybrid texts to awaken my students to the possibilities and use of language, to heighten their awareness of how language works and to what purpose. A central component of language acquisition is active engagement with language, and my students find the hybrid texts extremely interesting and familiar, responding to them with confidence, comprehension, and commitment. My goal is not to have my students parrot or reproduce hybrid discourse of their own, although I make it available to them as a rhetorical option. Rather, my goal is to help my students to recognize that although

standard English is a dialect of the powerful, it is not the only dialect with which people can make powerful meanings. My goal is to help students understand that other dialects, say, black English, are equally legitimate, and that privileging standard English is undergirded by social, political, and economic forces, not linguistic legitimacy. Most importantly, my goal is to help my students use a fuller range of their linguistic competencies as they communicate to and within the academy. To awaken students to their own linguistic competence, I ask them to read, discuss, and write about hybrid texts and literacy autobiographies, some of which employ hybrid discourse, and all of which speak to their own cultural realities. To facilitate further this linguistic exploration and play, I ask students to write literacy autobiographies and encourage them to use hybrid discourse as a means to representing and enacting their own linguistic knowledge. In what follows, I will discuss, respectively, several of the assigned hybrid texts, several student journal responses to assigned literacy autobiographies, and several student literacy autobiographies that are suffused with hybrid language. I have masked the identities of the students I use in my discussion.

Many popular culture magazines, including *XXL, Vibe, Don Diva,* and *DUBS*, acknowledge the sophistication and diverse interests of their audiences by infusing their articles with hybrid discourse that demonstrates knowledge of both black and mainstream language and culture. Of the different magazines on the market, *Slam* is quite interesting because it is one of the first sports magazines written for the hip hop generation. Taking its title from an expression for dunking a basketball that originated in black urban youth culture, *Slam* magazine offers articles about professional, college, and high school basketball that through hybrid discourse both celebrate and tweak basketball and mainstream traditions. Particularly illustrative of hybridity within *Slam* is the "Trash Talk" column, a letters to the editor feature that combines basketball acumen, urban contemporary black English, and standard English written correspondence conventions. Here is a letter from the February 2005 issue:

> Yo Slam!:
> What's up from Poolesville High school—it's first period and I'm lookin' at my mail from today and what do I find? T-Mac givin' me a cold stare. I was like, "hell yeah! My boy T-Mac on the cover!. The whole issue was off the chain! But I got a question: How come you don't put my other main man J-Dub (Jason Williams for all the Slim Shadys that don't know the name) on the cover? Have you seen the

> new jerseys? They look sick. All I'm saying is look at the Nuggets. First they suck, then with some new gear and Carmelo, they make it to the playoffs. So I'm sayin' that Memphis makes a good run at the championship this year. But hey, I might be wrong, that's just what I'm sayin'.
>
> PS: Yo, I need a job like Shaq needs a foul shot. Do you think you could hook a bro up with an internship or somethin'? (19)

Although I don't necessarily condone a high school student reading his mail during class, the letter writer does demonstrate comfort and skill playing with and within the conventional letter format, presenting a salutation that combines formal convention with an urban contemporary black English phrase—"Yo"—which can be translated as "hello" or "how are you?" In addition to colloquialisms such as "I got a question," "How come you don't," and "I was like," the writer uses modem black English phrases such as "off the chain," "they look sick," "All I'm saying," and "hook a bro up," as well as basketball lexicon such as "T-Mac," "J-Dub" and "new gear," to confirm his membership in the *Slam* discourse community, honoring but disrupting the traditional letter to the editor convention. As in a traditional letter of this genre, the writer responds to an article or idea in the previous issue of the periodical, using the letter as an opportunity to praise the previous issue but lobby for the inclusion of one of his favorite players, Jason Williams, on the cover. The writer anticipates the opposing view that Williams plays for the average Memphis Grizzlies and might not deserve to be on the cover by comparing the team's present situation to that of the 2004 Denver Nuggets. The present/refute strategy is a difficult one to teach, and it is interesting to see a high school student using it so deftly, as well as other forms of argument. In fact, in the postscript, the writer uses both argument and metaphor to convince the editors to give him an internship. Throughout the letter, the writer uses black English words and generational basketball lingo to create a hybrid form that is nonetheless comprehensible to a mainstream audience because it also employs a conventional letter form. There is an exuberance, an atmosphere of linguistic play in all the "Trash Talk" letters, the readers engaged in lively debates about topics in which they are invested. For those who believe that letter writing is a dying art form in America, in particular among young people, the "Trash Talk" participants clearly challenge that notion. Furthermore, the letters column challenges the belief that black English is unintelligible. In *Slam*, writers from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds—including many white readers—exhibit

facility with hybrid discourse, demonstrating the linguistic availability of both standard and non-standard dialects.

Greg Tate, whose groundbreaking 1992 essay collection, *Flyboy in the Buttermilk*, helped awaken me to hybrid discourse, demonstrates his linguistic fluidity in a more recent article about the white rapper Eminem, written for the alternative New York weekly, the *Village Voice*. Adopting hybrid discourse allows one the freedom to acknowledge and address different audiences. In "White Freedom," Tate reviews Eminem's latest cd, *Encore*, arguing that Eminem's "exercise of white privilege," which both inflates and constrains his artistry, fails to express the essence of black art:

> It [Eminem's exercise of white freedom] has also found him scribed on the covers of hip hop magazines as the greatest living rapper, which always makes me laugh and think of how predisposed white supremacy has made even colored journalists crown any white man that takes a Black art form to the bank, to mo' money than Shine ever seen, as the greatest who ever lived. Fred Astaire, Benny Goodman, Elvis, Eric Clapton, Larry Bird, take your pick. As if any of them understood the kind of casual fatalism I overheard on 116th and Adam Clayton Powell the other day, where one brother say to another, straight-faced and not a hint of irony, "He'll be out soon, he didn't get much time, he only got 10 more years." All that August Wilson sheet in other words. The real Black Angst. The kind of angst that only the burdensome, belaboring crucible of white supremacy could twist into those bizarre, contorted, and comforting expressions of Black Pleasure and Irony known as bebop and hip hop and the blues. (84)

Greg Tate constructs a discourse that weaves black and standard English to produce a linguistic quilt of sophisticated and complex critique. Tate combines black English forms such as "mo' money than Shine has ever seen," "one brother say to another," and "all that other August Wilson sheet in other words" with stylized standard English expressions such as "casual fatalism," "belaboring crucible of white supremacy," and "contorted, and comforting expressions" to create a stylish and engaging critique of Eminem's music and its relation to both the black world and the greater society. Tate honors his audience by expecting them to make the linguistic leaps with him, using different cultural, historical and political references as he freely selects language that captures his own complex knowledge of the world. Tate anticipates au-

dience knowledge of both Shine and Benny Goodman, both Adam Clayton Powell and Eric Clapton. Moreover, he gives as much privilege to the phrase "mo'money than Shine ever seen" as he does to "belaboring crucible of white supremacy." Tate uses a raw urban sentiment "he only got 10 more years" to uncover the "kind of angst" that is created by a black experience that suffers from the cruelties of white supremacy but struggles to find a way to express adequately that condition, a condition, Tate argues, of which Eminem is blessedly ignorant. Overall, Tate's discourse is driven by rhetorical purpose rather than so called correctness, which prompts him, for example, to use the antiquated and, in some contexts, offensive word "colored" because it evokes an idea of an oppressive thinking and social condition.

Donnell Alexander is another young black writer who luxuriates in hybrid forms. Alexander's autobiography, *Ghetto Celebrity,* is suffused with different voices and perspectives about language, sometimes intermingled, sometimes isolated, but always demonstrative of a writer who embraces and utilizes his multiple linguistic selves. In this brief excerpt from his book, Alexander writes about the unexamined racism exhibited by his editors at an "alternative" newspaper:

> **MY TOP EDITORS WANTED CRIME STORIES FROM ME—WASN'T THAT WHAT** hip hop was about? - and if you couldn't come up with that, pieces that posited niggas as pure victims would suffice. The *Weekly* was supposedly embracing diversity, but I was the only one who had to be diverse. The editorial mavens only deigned to see their favorite agendas in the vastness of my black mess: sexism, crime, poverty, whatever—when also up in there were jokes and camaraderies, spirituality and innovation. . . . What my bosses received well was writing about race that fell into the category my colleague Ernest Hardy named Water-Is-Wet Journalism. Water-Is-Wet material got praise and good placement within my host newsprint providers when it succeeded, foremost, at edifying white people. And I could dig that; that was they hustle. But when exploring racial issues relevant to LA's nonwhite majority (or some breathing subset thereof), I had to burn a ridiculous amount of space and energy explaining facts that were basic if you weren't white and/or middle class. In writing about the current lives of the 1965 graduates of Jordan High School in Watts, I first had to explain that Watts wasn't always a terrible place to live. Niggas knew that shit. Water is wet. And, my flow suffered. (145-46)

Beginning the subchapter with boldened capitals, a move that flaunts tradition while calling attention to the text, Alexander exhibits a facile touch with hybrid discourse, the integration, once again, of standard English and black English. Using black English words and phrases such as "niggas," "up in there," " that was they hustle, " "niggas knew that shit" and "my flow suffered," with highly stylized standard English words and phrases such as " posited," "suffice" "editorial mavens," "only deigned to see," and "foremost," Alexander demonstrates his ease with two languages or dialects without sacrificing meaning. In fact, Alexander employs hybridity to render a rather powerful statement on unconscious racism and the oppression of the white gaze, which demands he write articles that "edify" white people but forestall or prevent any real analysis of his own. Alexander counters this standard English sentence—"I had to burn a ridiculous amount of space and energy explaining facts that were basic if you weren't white and/or middle class"—with this succinct but linguistically loaded black English sentence—"Niggas knew that shit"—a brief but complex declaration that carries with it the anger, frustration, history, and truth of the many blacks who, under the white gaze, must explain even the simplest realities of black life to an unaware and often disbelieving white audience. Alexander's writing exemplifies the power of hybrid discourse, which can be utilized in the writing classroom not only to challenge standard English supremacy but also to help students engage in academic discourse in a manner that respects and utilizes the linguistic competence and complex meanings they bring to the classroom.

Before writing the literacy autobiography essay, the students read, discuss, and write about, primarily through journal entries, the various hybrid texts and literacy narratives I assign. In addition to the hybrid texts I have discussed, students read Kelvin Monroe's "Writin da Funk Dealer: Songs of Reflections and Reflex/shuns," Maxine Hong Kingston's "Girlhood Among Ghosts" and an excerpt from Victor Villanueva's *Bootstraps*. I devote considerable class time to discussing and writing about significant moments within these texts, although I allow students to connect with the texts at their own points of entry. I will discuss student responses to the literacy narratives because they represent a transition between the hybrid texts previously discussed and the literacy autobiography writing assignment. The literacy narratives are written in hybrid discourse and, thus, serve as content and language models for the students' own writing. The students wrote journal entries, locating significant ideas within the texts. As journals entries, correctness and revision were not concerns. Here is an excerpt from Tamara's

journal entry on *Bootstraps* in which she discusses the verbal-deprivation theory of black English:

> I enjoyed [when] that author talked about spelling. That brought up a lot of memories because I hated spelling as a child. [Although] the author enjoyed spelling his method of memorization never worked for me. I do admit I rarely studied vocabulary words. They were just a pain for me. I do regret doing that because maybe I would have had more verbal stimulation, or more verbal expression . . . which Bereiter talks about in his theory of why Black children do not excel in learning Standard English. I found his theory of Black English to be interesting but not something that is unpredictable. Even though I went to an all white school to get a better education, the advances of the school backfired on me. I was silent in school because of my means of expression which Bereiter talks about. I could not express different things the way my white peers could. I spoke Black English at home, and my peers and teachers were unfamiliar to that. Now though things have changed because Black English is popular amongst white kids.

Tamara ignores or disagrees with Villanueva's negative assessment of Carl Bereiter's research, which links black children's poor school performance to weak language abilities. Tamara was educated in white schools and was often the only black child in her classes. This linguistic/cultural divide was exacerbated by her experiences with neighborhood peers, who would deride her for attempts at speaking standard English. Tamara was certainly in an unenviable sociolinguistic position, and her confusion and pain are evident in her writing. Nonetheless, I think it is valuable for Tamara to explore her literacy experiences to identify her pain and confusion, to give them a name, to begin to understand them and perhaps heal them. Much of Tamara's literacy is constructed around her experience as a person living in two worlds and the languages that separated her from both of them. It will be difficult, I think, for Tamara to reconcile her membership in two distinct discourse communities that seem hostile to one another, but her brave and honest attempts to explore her construction of literacy might help her to make sense of her language knowledge and her feelings about it.

Here is Pamela's response to Villanueva's *Bootstraps*, in fact her response to the Bereiter discussion. Note how it differs from Tamara's response:

> The part of the [essay] that was most interesting to me was when the professors performed tests on the black children to gain a better understanding of why they were performing poorly in school. After the tests were taken the professors come up with the solution that "language of the culturally deprived. . . . not merely an underdeveloped version of standard English, but. . . .basically non-logical mode of expressive behavior." Instead of the children being labeled as incompetent, it was understood [by Villanueva] that they behaved in that manner because of their environment. The [essay] made me look at a lot of things regarding English and black people differently.

Pamela reads the Bereiter discussion in Villanueva's text and interprets it quite differently from Tamara. Unlike Tamara, who attended a predominantly white high school, Pamela attended a predominantly black Afrocentric high school in the Northeast. Most of her teachers and classmates were black and black history, culture, and literature were serious objects of study. Pamela's educational and sociolinguistic experiences allow her to integrate the ideas within Villanueva's text into a consciousness that, as she puts it earlier in her journal entry, "already [has] an understanding of the struggles we as black people face with literacy." Understanding the struggles and challenges that many blacks face regarding the societal demand to acquire standard English and dismiss black English, Pamela's ideas about black people and language are further problematized by her transformed thinking. For Pamela, Villanueva's text becomes a distinct encounter.

Before I discuss the literacy autobiographies of several students, I will end this part of the discussion with an excerpt from Yolanda's journal response to Kingston's "Girlhood Among Ghosts," a much-anthologized essay that illustrates Kingston's difficulties negotiating American school class as a Chinese girl. Yolanda is sympathetic toward Kingston's plight:

> Kingston didn't feel comfortable in her new space and decided to become silent. Her silence for her was her protection against dealing and interacting with people. When asked to speak up, fear overpowered her. Her inability to speak was because she felt like a stranger, an alien invading someone's territory. I think Kingston couldn't really handle the pressure of American school mainly because she didn't receive any help from school, instead of embracing her diversity, teachers and students isolated her and ignored her diversity, [thus] she became a silent creature.

Yolanda's perceptive idea about the refusal of the American school to recognize Kingston's dilemma and help her navigate the social and educational stream is important to understanding the state of literacy in our society. Rather than blame the young Kingston for her inability to integrate successfully into the American school system, Yolanda rightly places the blame on the school system itself, which should recognize Kingston's social and linguistic difference and address those issues proactively and sympathetically. Many of my students shared Kingston's school dilemma, and some of them took complete responsibility for their failure to negotiate the literacy demands of the classroom. The students' embrace of silence was a typical reaction to being thrust into an environment where neither teachers nor students understood or cared about their culture and language. Kingston's essay spoke volumes to many of my students about the inadequacy of most schools to address the problems of bilingual and non-native speakers and the silence this school inadequacy can produce in some students.

After the students thoroughly discussed and wrote about the hybrid texts and literacy autobiographies, some of which employ hybrid discourse, I assigned the literacy autobiography essay to encourage the students to investigate their own history with and feelings about language, in particular the language used at home and school, because the intersection of these two linguistic sites is often where students first experience feelings of language confusion and shame. In writing the essay, the students were encouraged to use the different languages they possess. Here is the writing prompt I gave them:

> For this essay, you should explore your literacy practices/experiences and how they affected your formal schooling. If you were not born in America, then you might discuss your home and school literacy practices in both your native country and America. Here are some ideas to consider:
> What language did you learn at home? What are/were your reading practices at home? What were your experiences with reading and writing at school? Did your home literacy practice help or hinder your literacy in school? Besides reading and writing, did other experiences—watching television or movies, attending church—affect your literacy? Do you experience any problems with reading or writing in school today? What are the best and worst experiences you had with reading and writing in school? Was there a teacher with whom you had a particularly good or bad experience concerning reading and/or writing?

> For this assignment, feel free to use hybrid discourse; in other words, you may use multiple languages in this essay, keeping in mind the language knowledge of your audience. However, one of the languages that you use should be standard English. Thus, someone might write his or her essay using standard English and black English, or standard English and Spanish, or standard English and Creole. If you want to write the entire essay in standard English that is entirely acceptable. If you want to use more than two languages to write your essay, that is acceptable, too.
> The essay should be at least four typed or word processed pages.

The students wrote three versions of the literacy autobiography, my comments urging them to consider issues, among others, of standard English supremacy, multilingual confusion, and cultural awareness. The most difficult aspect of the assignment for students was reconciling their feelings about their native language with their school instruction in standard English. Many of them had been told that their native language was forbidden in school because it was incorrect or ignorant. Thus, they had difficulty legitimizing their native language, let alone infusing it in their writing. Nonetheless, some students were able to make a linguistic leap of faith and reconsider the relationship between their native language and formal writing. Here are several examples of student texts that use hybrid discourse as a way to express complicated feelings and ideas about language legitimacy. As always, I have changed the identities of the student writers to maintain their privacy.

Marietta, a young woman of Cuban and African-American ancestry, juggled three languages—Spanish, black English, and standard English—as she navigated her way through several households and several schools. Here she discusses the language confusion that resulted from her multilingual experience:

> I began to get very confused and irritated between learning Standard English at school, Black English at home, then Spanish on the weekends. . . . So when I was ten my mother asked my father to "tell yo mama to stop makin' my baby learn dat Spanish." Abuela did not like this idea and wanted to continue teaching me. But mi papa told her not to teach me anymore porque he saw it was hurting his hija. Abuela soon gave up and ended my forced Spanish linguistics, "Lo siento " (I'm sorry), she would repeat. Even though mi abuela

> had ended my Spanish lessons, I still maintained knowledge of it over the years by speaking it when I talked to my sisters on the phone. So when I would visit her [Abuela], I took the initiative to hable en español to ensure her that I still knew some of what she taught me.

Marietta is caught in a difficult linguistic web, as she strives to untangle the different languages in her world. It doesn't help that her mother, who speaks black English, decides that Spanish is the problem, and like the schools, decides upon the eradication method. Marietta, however, wants to retain and maintain her Spanish, perhaps sensing its connection not only to her grandmother but her Spanish culture. Although Marietta's struggle with three languages is somewhat atypical, what is typical is the lack of support Marietta received at school, where neither her black English nor Spanish was acknowledged. Marietta was fortunate to have a teacher who, in Marietta's words, "encouraged me to never give up and work harder at what I was doing." However, if Marietta had been supported in embracing her full linguistic competence, at perhaps understanding better the different languages that she spoke, then perhaps she would not have viewed her linguistic diversity as a problem to solve, but a complexity to manage. Marietta's use of her different languages in her writing allows her to express this linguistic complexity in a way that is both real and representational. Acknowledging and utilizing her linguistic arsenal helps Marietta to make sense of her language history and recognize the importance of the different languages in her life, languages that hold significant cultural and personal meanings for her as she learns to navigate the world.

Brenda is an African-American woman who aspires to be a creative writer. Brenda grew up speaking both black English and standard English, and here she discusses her black English experience, using a scenario that occurred in her high school cafeteria to highlight the meanings or "codes" embedded in black English and the inability of teachers to decipher them:

> If the teachers had been able to understand me and some of my fellow classmates who occasionally spoke black English in the classroom and always spoke black English in the lunchroom, then the teachers would have an advantage of knowing what was being spoken about. Big Bully in the classroom:
> **Big Bully**: Yo, son, watup!
> **Son**: watup!

> **Big** Bully: You, you knowtha deal, go get them things, son.
> **Son**: wat thing?
> **Big Bully**: Don't get snuffed, son, you know I don't like to be repeating myself..
> **Son**: A'ight, dog! (Emphasis Brenda)
> During this situation in the lunchroom, no teacher said anything. While Big Bully was extorting Son, they didn't really have reason to involve themselves without physically seeing or mentally knowing that extortion was occurring.

When I first read this section of Brenda's essay, I asked her about the names "Big Bully" and "Son," and she told me they were pseudonyms. My curiosity stemmed from the fact that many young black men call each other "son," a mark of familiarity among friends that is related to equally familial appellations such as "brotha," "cousin" (or cuz), and "nephew," which the rapper Snoop Dogg is fond of using. Employing hybrid discourse enables Marietta to exemplify an important point about linguistic awareness. Although black English is excluded from the classroom, knowledge of the dialect might be beneficial for teachers, who might use that knowledge to better understand the lives and behaviors of their students. As Brenda correctly notes, the teachers might have prevented Big Bully from robbing Son, or at least been aware that a crime was taking place around them. Although "snuffed" is a word that the teachers might have known, perhaps they didn't understand it in the context Big Bully used it, or thought it was merely a case of hyperbolic language among teenagers. Or perhaps the teachers merely ignored students when they used black English, believing not only that they couldn't understand the language but also that those who used it rarely, if ever, said anything of consequence. Whatever the case, the utilitarian nature of language is quite evident in Brenda's example, as is the teachers' inability to recognize black English and protect one of their students.

The final example of student writing comes from Margaret, a Caribbean-American student who grew up speaking patois, and later encountered standard English. Margaret is typical of many of my students who are conflicted about their native language, perceiving it as "broken" and perhaps inferior but maintaining warm feelings for some of the people who speak it. Here Margaret recalls her grandmother's dictate about the importance of acquiring standard English.

> With the foundation that my grandmother has built for her family, literacy is taken very seriously. You don't want to embarrass yourself or who you represent by seeming ignorant. "If you know howta speak, speak properly na man. Not everybody havta know ya bizness. O, Goud, when you go out dere present yaself like a young woman.". . . .Words of a wise woman, my grandmother.

Although I identified the irony in Margaret's text, it was difficult for her to see it, even after revising twice. Earlier in the essay, Margaret tells us that her grandmother "is an elementary school teacher, and our grammar has and will always be corrected wherever she is." Yet Margaret never shows her grandmother speaking standard English. Instead, every representation of the grandmother's language is in patois. Here is another example: "All ya needta straightin dis house. I never seen children lazy so." Margaret considers her grandmother a wise woman who inculcated in Margaret the importance of acquiring standard English, yet Margaret fails to recognize that her grandmother dispensed much of her wisdom in patois, and that patois was used to impart information and ideas, even about the importance of standard English. Standard English supremacy wages such a linguistic and psychological assault on other-literate students that it is extremely difficult for many of them to resist its pernicious effects; however, Margaret's confusion notwithstanding, hybrid discourse holds hope in unlocking the chains of linguistic domination and freeing students to recognize, and perhaps use, the rich language variety they possess.

What I hope to illustrate with these excerpts of student literacy autobiographies, and have tried to explain throughout this essay is the possibility of using hybrid discourse to awaken students to their multiple literacies as they dismantle the barriers—linguistic, cultural, psychological—erected by standard English supremacy. I ain't saying that writing in hybrid discourse is easy; most of my students used languages other than standard English only when writing dialogue. Nonetheless, I contend that exposing students to hybrid discourse and encouraging dem to play around wif it, might help them to see that standard English isn't the only language game in town, that they know more about language than the schools give them credit for, that they can do a little somethin' somethin' with language, too. Equally important, exposure to hybrid discourse might increase students' awareness of language, help them to examine language more closely, to recognize structures, words, and styles. It is counterproductive to our notion of critical literacy and mul-

ticulturalism to have students believe that any aspect of their language or culture is inferior and unintelligent. Hybrid discourse may help students to feel more empowered about their own experience and competence with language. And that ain't nothin' to shake a stick at. Ya heard?

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Servant Class: Basic Writers and Service Learning

Don J. Kraemer

ABSTRACT: This article examines some of the tensions and contradictions between the process-oriented, learning-centered pedagogy commonly associated with basic writing and the product-based, performance-centered moment mandated by writing-for-the-community varieties of service learning. Because end-of-term "writing-for" projects cannot provide students with nearly as much opportunity to reflect on their practice and also to work through the narcissistic moment that academic discourse typically demands, it is suggested that students in basic writing classes would be better served by additional work in academic discourse rather than by being made servants by writing-for-the-community service-learning projects. Writing-for projects remove the students from the problems they would solve, whereas continued work in academic discourse encourages students to see themselves in the problems, the image of otherness helping them reflect on the new problems their solutions create.

Service learning is said to reduce defensiveness because it actively works against the objectification of students. Rather than objectifying students, service learning

> disrupts this process. It positions students not as deficient or passive novices who need to learn to perform critical consciousness for teachers and for grades, but rather as agents in the world beyond campus who pair outreach work with critical reflection (writing *about* the community), who use writing to aid social service organizations (writing *for* the community), and/or who help craft collaborative documents that instigate social change (writing *with* the community). (Deans 44; see also 146)

Each of these three service-learning paradigms has a different rhetorical emphasis. Writing *with* the community emphasizes shared and sustained "inquiry and research"; writing *about* the community features journals and "academic-style essays on community issues and/or pressing social concerns"; writing *for* the community requires students to "provide needed

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© *Journal of Basic Writing*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2005

DOI: 10.37514/JBW-J.2005.24.2.06

writing products for agencies" and can be assessed bluntly: "Did students produce documents that will be of real use to the agencies?" (Deans 17).

For my students and me, several factors discouraged two of the paradigms: time (we would have, in each ten-week quarter, about eight weeks of instruction) and limited resources (we had no community-university institute to fund, oversee, and guarantee the continuity of the work it helped initiate) ruled out writing *with*; my desire to see what reflective practice would be made possible by comparing non-academic writing (writing *for*) with academic writing ruled out writing *about*, with its focus on "academic-style essays." So basic writers placed into my courses found themselves writing *for* (hereafter "writing-for") the community. Our main service-learning text was Carolyn Ross and Ardel Thomas's *Writing for Real*, based on a writing-for program at Stanford University. *Writing for Real* generously displays finished examples of students' writing-for documents in formats many of which my students ended up using as well—and not simply because it was convenient to imitate, an urge I would have encouraged anyway.

Based on a year-long experiment with writing for the community service-learning projects in three basic writing classes, I believe that writing-for projects do not serve our students well because rather than inquire into the complexity of making leadership collaborative, they advance the process of making student servitude seem inevitable. They reproduce the status quo they promise to question, requiring students to write for it rather than critique or change it; they privilege a formulaic-product, performance-centered pedagogy that most basic writing courses try to displace with a learning-centered pedagogy; and their logistical complexity makes impractical the reflective practice that would make them a justifiable experiment. I conclude that because writing-for projects thrust students into "fast capitalism" (i.e., doing the work of outsourced labor—without benefits and for small profit), assigning additional academic work, perhaps of the writing *about* variety, serves basic writers better.

Because I Wished to Teach Deliberately

Basic writing teachers who find service learning appealing are often committed to basic writing as part of a rhetorical education, preparing students for leadership roles in workplace and civic deliberations—preparing them, then, to imagine their reading and writing as public acts. Teachers who believe in such preparation may be dissatisfied with writing as merely conceptual intervention, the type of assignment Thomas Deans calls "an

academic exercise rather than a purpose-driven rhetorical performance that moves readily into the public sphere" (102). To help my first-year basic writing students push their writing out of non-credit-carrying courses into community work that counted, I wholeheartedly embraced the promise of purpose-driven rhetorical performances that would inspire my students to think of themselves not only as literate beings in the classroom but also as engaged citizens whose literacy had public value. Even as my students worked on their service-learning projects, they were also writing a number of conceptual-intervention assignments, such as inquiring into whether parents or peers exercised more influence over adolescents or exploring what kind of case could be made for or against U.S.-perpetrated prison abuse and torture.

But even when my students found the conceptual-intervention assignments of interest, they were still writing for me—their teacher, not the public—and for a grade, not social change. It is one thing to deliberate about an assigned topic and how to present it to a teacher for a grade; it is quite another, and better, thing to deliberate on issues and contexts that are meaningful not only to the writer but also to an audience who might materially benefit from the deliberations.

To summarize what service learning promised to deliver: in principle, it mobilizes a public writer's core objectives: the what, the how, and the why of writing. I reasoned that service learning, first of all, would animate my students' writing, not merely their topics but, more vitally, the interventions into real problems they would propose and enact. In the spirit of John Dewey's "reflective inquiry," the animating power of service learning would come from, and be sustained by, writing that began in

> (1) perplexity, confusion, doubt in response to a situation whose character is yet to be determined; (2) a conjectural anticipation, a tentative interpretation of the given elements; (3) a careful survey of all attainable considerations which will define and clarify the problem at hand; (4) a consequent elaboration of the tentative hypothesis to make it more precise and more consistent; and (5) the development of a firmer hypothesis upon which to act—one which itself remains open to further testing and revision. (qtd. in Deans 31-32)

To inquire into a problematic situation and then be able to test and revise one's hypothesis struck me as superior to the conceptual testing and

revising to which I had been subjecting my basic writing students, naturalizing classroom constraints and perpetuating power dynamics that kept them in a familiar place working at writing rather than helping to place them as writers who worked.

As writers who were doing work that would count, my students could engage more productively the why of writing. And in caring more about writing's aims, they might, it seemed to follow, care more about its means: the how of their written designs. Influenced by John Dewey, Donald Schön has created a model of teaching and learning that addresses these two objectives, caring and crafting. Intended for teaching future professionals, that is, future leaders, Schön's model articulates one of the civic aims held by basic writing teachers interested in service learning: teaching our students to inquire as leaders, to read and write as leaders (an aspiration alive in the correctness paradigm as well, insofar as it presupposes a caring, judging public for one's writing).

In contrast to pedagogical models informed by win/lose-right/wrong outcomes (Schön *The Reflective Practitioner* 226), Schön's model is informed by values that invite the learner to make a commitment, to design with care, to consider consequences. In contrast to the belief that too much reflection leads to paralysis, this model represents reflection as itself a kind of action, increasing critical understanding of and emotional investment in meritorious tasks. The undertaking of such tasks is not only inherently rewarding; their complexity requires reflection on the consequences and limits of our interventions:

> • "Try to create, for oneself and for others, awareness of the values at stake in decision, awareness of the limits of one's capacities, and awareness of the zones of experience free of defense mechanisms beyond one's control"
> • "Increase the likelihood of internal commitment to decisions made"
> • "Try to create conditions, for oneself and for others, in which the individual is committed to an action because it is intrinsically satisfying—not . . . because it is accompanied by external rewards or punishments" (*The Reflective Practitioner* 231)

That this model values an individual's intrinsic commitment is clear; it also seemed clear that, by connecting students' rhetorical performances with social needs, writing-for service learning did rein in extrinsic motives,

successfully inspiring intrinsic motives. As my student whom I'll call Joshua (all student names are pseudonyms) put it, "I did not care as much about the grade I received on this project as I did about it being a good resource for the church and community." One of the reasons students cared about the project itself is that people besides a teacher cared, a point Christopher's term-ending assessment made:

> Well for the community/service learning writing, it was something different. It seemed as though more people were interested and wanted to know more. Writing for an academic audience is something like a summary that does not relate to the audience. For instance, when people read my papers, I usually write about some things they can't really relate to, such as a summary or a response to a story. Where as, writing for a community/service, people tend to get more interested and want to get involved in some cases. Overall I took this project as something totally different and a very good writing lesson. Not only did I just focus on my own writing but it seemed as though I was writing to represent something and it made me feel more caring in my writing.

Christopher represents his classmates, not only his community, when he reveals that students do not typically regard teachers as a real audience. A real audience can relate, can get involved, can make writers care more. That my students felt the reality of audience so strongly in their writing-for projects has a compelling claim on me, a claim I will return to in the last section—after demonstrating what writing-for service learning did not enable.

Finally, the most-salient promise service learning held was that, from "free and informed choice" and "awareness of the limits of one's capacities," reflection about craft would also follow. My students and I rarely begin thinking the same way about revision: I say, "Design moves have consequences, so rethink what you've done here"; they respond, "You want me to change how I express myself." Our images of self are in competition—the teacher who would help a developing self and add to its rhetorical repertoire vs. the individual who would maintain integrity—a competition between teacher and student that invests the drafting process with counterproductive emotion, keeping defenses on high alert. If the draft, however, is construed as an instrument to be put into the hands of a third party, as a tool to help that party meet its needs, then teacher and student are more likely to work

together. And what they are working on, furthermore, is rhetoric in action: documents to be used, documents that must invite people in and shape their responses (see Schön *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* 127-30). The questions of ends and means to negotiate—what the document should be used for and by whom, why this content and not that, what format will be most appealing, what appeals will persuade, and so on—are pretty high stakes. To lower defenses between teacher and students before documents went public seemed essential.

Writing for a community audience rather than for the teacher should have lowered defenses, making questions of craft more substantive and discussion of them more meaningful. When teacher and student are allied in service, difference in judgment is strategic opportunity, not rank asymmetry. But the rank asymmetry I'd hoped to balance was precisely what service learning, for all its virtues, not only reinforced but exacerbated, displacing the asymmetry from one relatively accessible institution, the academy, to an institution far less accessible, the community.

Writing *For* the Community

The discourse of "problem" is probably not the best way to frame what went wrong (and what I have reason to believe will go wrong, even given preparation, experience, and skill far superior to mine). Deans uses the problem-frame when he discusses one of the virtues of writing-for projects: they "tend to avoid the problems of hypothetical or case study contexts and imagined audiences—they demand real-world and purpose-driven writing for an audience other than (or more accurately, in addition to) the teacher" (10). Whether imagined audiences present problems for a writer or whether the problems they do present should be avoided are matters I will save for the end. For now it makes sense to discuss the problems I failed to foresee, and to discuss them less as problems than as *contradictions*, contradictions that the service-learning writing-for component introduced into my basic writing classes.

Most overtly, the service-learning component exacerbated the difference between process-directed learning goals, "which aim to increase competence," and product-directed performance goals, "which aim to gain favorable judgments of competence" (McLeod 57). This distinction is Susan McLeod's. In *Notes on the Heart: Affective Issues in the Writing Classroom*, McLeod suggests that an "overemphasis on performance goals not only helped to create learned helplessness in some students, but it also had an effect on

mastery-oriented students, making them so protective of how their ability would be judged that they later rejected the chance to learn something new if it involved risking errors" (58). In scenes of writing that emphasize performance, students have "less control over outcomes, since they perceive that others are judging their success or failure against normative criteria rather than against their personal progress" (61). The consequence of this perception is that performance goals encourage "students to choose easy tasks to ensure success and to avoid negative judgments of their abilities"—symptoms of defensiveness rather than alleviations of it—whereas learning goals "appear to promote interest in the task itself and to create positive rather than negative responses in the face of difficulties" (61).

It is clear, I think, why many basic writing teachers try to create a process-directed, learning-goals atmosphere in their classrooms: students will be more likely to expose themselves to the difficulties that face more experienced writers. Rising to the level of challenging material, they will take rhetorical risks (and risk mistakes), experiencing difficulty as an opportunity not so much for securing correctness as for building competence. My guess is that teachers who subscribe to this pedagogy see, as I did, service learning as a meaningful frame for competence building.

But writing-for projects turn the distinctions McLeod makes between process and product into a troubling contradiction. The nature of such service learning is normative performance resulting in a term-concluding product that preempts the potential for reflective practice. In this normative, product-driven environment, the decisions students make are few—my students made and chose their own community contacts; they had some latitude in deciding how to lay out the final product—and so they are made comparatively helpless. There is, contrary to Schön's prediction, little "likelihood of internal commitment to decisions made" (*The Reflective Practitioner* 231). The potential for students' strong commitment to actions whose aims are "intrinsically satisfying" (*The Reflective Practitioner* 231) is real, but those aims are extrinsic to writing. And they are extrinsic because the symbolic actions are dictated by "normative criteria," not by the desire for "personal progress." The why of writing is scarcely at issue, not because it is insignificant but because it is, without question, significant, so significant it is not for a basic writer to question.

This absence of a writing question reduced anxiety. Because performance goals are supposed to raise anxiety levels, it was noteworthy how little anxiety the writing-for projects generated, compared with that surrounding our learning-goals framework. A framework in which Dewey's "perplexity,

confusion, and doubt" were high-value heuristics, the learning-goals assignments were, according to my students, more rhetorically challenging and more materially intriguing than the performance imperatives of service learning, which challenged them primarily logistically and mechanically. For them "logistical" meant trying to arrange meetings in easternmost Los Angeles County with stressed-out, budget-challenged community contacts and then arranging rides in a region notorious for its poor public transportation; Justin wrote that "getting the signature for the community writing contract is the hardest part of the project." And for them "mechanical" meant they were the typo-avoiding objects of schemes rather than typing-mad schemers with objectives. What Nina wrote was typical: the biggest risk the "agency project" posed was "in maybe looking bad, like no apostrophes or run ons."

My reading of Deans' national survey of writing-for programs suggests these problems are widespread. When students work with nonprofit agencies, he notes, it is the nonprofit agency staffs who "define community needs and what documents are required"; furthermore, when students write such documents to fulfill those needs, they do so "in collaboration with the agency contact person, to his or her specifications" (146). My students wrote flyers for Habitat for Humanity, Boy Scouts of America, and recycling centers; blood-drive handouts for American Red Cross; short articles about college requirements and the college "experience" in high school newspapers for students in the non-college track; safe-sex brochures for local health clinics; and so on.

Consider Cesar's one-page flyer for the La Puente Public Library, a project that represents some agency on the writer's part. Cesar's supervisor needed a short document that would appeal to parents and children, something that would get them through the door. "Education Is For Everyone," the title of Cesar's flyer, is centered at the top. There are three columns of typed print. The top-left column begins with a heading, "The Benefits Of Using The Library Service," followed by a brief note about the author and a two-sentence paragraph about the library as a self-education center. One-third of the way down is the next heading, "What Type of services?" This section consists of two short paragraphs, one on services (such as storytelling and read-aloud activities for children) and one on computers with Internet access (although this paragraph ends with two sentences about tutors available to help with homework). The middle column begins with a new heading, "Other Services," followed by three paragraphs: one on traditional holdings, one on video materials with an image from the *Matrix* movie inserted below

it, and then a paragraph on kids' videos with an emphasis on "free." The top-right column elaborates on "free," touting the superiority of the library over video stores like Blockbuster (this comparison and the *Matrix* image were Cesar's ideas). This column—and thus the flyer as a whole—ends with the heading "Library Atmosphere" and two paragraphs, one on the problematic distractions of home and one on the quiet of the library as their solution.

Cesar's supervisor was happy with this flyer's promise: it would attract new patrons. The supervisor did not point out the contradictions between selling the library for its noisy sociability and for the quiet solitude it affords. If soundproof rooms for educational videos make both logistically possible, the supervisor still did not point out the possibly conflicting, unarticulated representations of learning: the social, collaborative model of learning Cesar himself preferred (he liked the service-learning project because he "learned better by being active with the community and when it is hands on") under the same roof as the traditional quiet solitude that will help "students pay more attention to their work and learn better." How this conflict of representations might affect readers, what it said about learning, how it might affect the organization of libraries, whether organizational and thematic coherence mattered were questions that remained unexplored.

Such indifference to the relations between content, form, and audience was a predictable outcome, one which contradicted what other forms of service learning could do and what basic writing classes (as articulated above) ought to do. Writing for an audience other than me, their teacher, was supposed to give my students more agency, but in their assessments they wrote (accurately, as far as I could tell) that they had less latitude, less agency. In Steven's words, "When I am writing my own paper, I have the freedom to interpret it the way I see fit. Service learning has too many rules and regulations." The students' freedom to interpret—in their own writing as well as any agency-assigned reading—was powerfully effaced because their supervisors—another single-person audience, it must be noted—told them explicitly what was what, what to do, and in what form ("too many rules and regulations"; cf. Deans 44). Although my student Eduardo liked being told what to do, the way he puts this is revealing: "Writing for the community is a lot easier than writing for an academic audience. I think it is easier because, writing for the community is mostly based on facts than ideas and opinion." In the what and how of writing, then, the supervisor, not the student, *named* what information or facts were significant, even though such an act of naming is instrumental not only to a student's sense of commitment but also to her development as a reader and writer (see Bartholomae

and Petrosky 20). The supervisor also determined the shape—not to the extent Judy Hale Young fears ("an easily stamped-out, cookie-cutter-shaped product" [12])—but close enough to render audience-inspired reflection on form automatic, if not moot. That is, because their supervisors either dictated or suggested what form the writing should take, my students' reflections on how consideration of audience affected their writing were often limited to "it was what the supervisor wanted."

This supervisor-centered agency objectifies students, whose conscientious teachers, then, have little recourse but to adopt a teacher-centered pedagogy, as in Deans' representative example of a writing-for teacher, who

> devotes a large portion of the semester to teaching the genres and textual dimensions of nonacademic writing: résumé, cover letter, memo, proposal, publicity packet, personality profile, biographical sketch. She taught these genres, as well as some grammar and usage, before initiating the service-learning projects because, in her words, "I wanted to give them a good enough prep through all of those writing assignments" before risking the agency project. (66)

I, too, taught the rhetoric of cover letters and letters of introduction, contracts, and proposals, though the latter were precluded by the agencies' pressing needs, needs that left little room for negotiation. Most necessary, as Nina and her peers had accurately determined, was attention to mechanical correctness. Not wanting to look bad and knowing that the usefulness of their "for real" writing depended significantly on correctness, students paid attention in proofreading workshops—more attention, it can fairly be said, than in draft workshops for academic-only papers, where correctness was often subordinated to other questions, such as how the draft was representing the assigned readings or class discussions and how the audience was being appealed to, constructed, ignored.

Succeeding in getting students to pay more attention to mechanics is not tantamount to returning authority and ownership to student writers, as real-world writing is alleged to do (see James Britton, qtd. in McLeod "Pedagogy" 156). To a person, my students claimed that this kind of writing-for project reduced the authority and ownership they felt, even as it felt good to do something useful for the community. In writing-for projects, in contrast to their academic writing, students experienced more certainty, not less. And they were not less developmentally ready (a fear expressed by Joseph Harris, qtd. in Cushman 49) but more developmentally ready to write

them; the reason they were more than ready was that the precircumscribed format-driven demands of writing-for projects removed students from the exactingly uncertain contingencies of the rhetorical stance (see Deans 60, invoking Wayne Booth's phrase), returning them to familiar, old-school fill-in-the-blanks/follow-the-steps information hunting. In most cases, however, students didn't even have to hunt for information, but rather just cut and pasted it into the tri-fold brochures they adorned with brand-name graphics (sometimes having to "downgrade" for the sake of the supervisor, as when Javier had to convert his Microsoft 2003 Publisher file because his "mentor" worked with Publisher 2000). It is precisely because these contradictions so closely resembled so much of the rote aspects of students' overcrowded, cash-strapped (and therefore especially vulnerable to the curricular depredations invited by budgetary incentives attached to high-stakes-testing performance) K-12 language arts experience that they lacked heuristic value. The contradictions were redundant, much less something to learn than to unlearn, and a de facto subversion of my expectation that trying out design moves would help students discover the implications of their choices and revise more meaningfully.

In no way I could discern did their service learning constitute what Edward Zlotkowski has called "'theoretical and epistemological challenges to the status quo'" (qtd. in Julier 134), a status quo which was, if anything, reinforced. Far from writing "themselves into the world" (Deans 8), my students had little presence to assert. They may or may not, in Laura Julier's terms, have reproduced "condescending models of charity and missionary work that do more to undermine than to advance the goals of multicultural education and social transformation" (142), but there is little doubt that they themselves were patronized, graciously, by those with more power and privilege (and patronized more for their availability than for their ethnicity and working-class status).

There was, to be sure, more public in their projects—more public because they met more people (and they saw what workplace writing meant to such people). What my students wrote went public in ways that pleased both their supervisors and themselves. And why not? Either their projects had already gone into circulation, or their supervisors had indicated their projects would soon be used—a publication rate of 100% across three terms. Best of all, they were connected to these projects, as Huburt pointed out: "I enjoyed the opportunity to help out *my own* community" (my emphasis). Making them feel at home, allowing them to help their home communities, writing-for projects did not estrange students the way academic assignments can.

Another way of saying this, however, is that if my students' writing went public, it did not go very far. And although their writing did go public, that does not mean that they themselves did, that their roles as writers did. On the contrary, the earnest, unilateral predetermination of writing roles in writing-for scenarios renders moot the question of negotiating a dauntingly overdetermined public, even as the erasure of their relative autonomy and ownership raises questions about what has been sacrificed. Although writing instruction that directs students away from private purposes toward public purposes is undeniably rhetorical (see Richard Larson, cit. Julier 140), the loss of (the restless struggle for) ownership in my students' writing—the loss, that is, of responsibility and liability—was a blow to their rhetorical development.

Being Heroic Versus Sounding Heroic

Not all products are created equal or take equal effort to create. The problem with writing-for projects, then, is not that they favor product over process but that they necessitate a process so involved that it shifts scarce time and attention away from reflection and revision for a product that, despite its social merits, is undeserving.

One may object that it is possible to build ongoing reflection into a class that incorporates writing-for projects. The disconnect between "ought" and "is"—what I thought ought to happen and what did—certainly provided reflective material for me. But it did not for my students, for several reasons. Too little time is one. If a fifteen-week semester is said to be too little time for writing-for projects (Deans 62), what can be said for a ten-week quarter? Once the extended add-drop period and in-class examinations are subtracted, there remain eight weeks, eight weeks to work on critically reading and annotating difficult, non-fiction texts (texts which students claim to find dauntingly different from the mostly literary texts that constituted their secondary school language arts curriculum), four hours a week in the classroom to workshop drafts and argue about revision. Then there is the logistical burden of service learning: the overtime odyssey of making contact, studying the agency, securing the contract, doing the work. To get the project in on time is an achievement, essentially ruling out the kind of reflective, comparative assessment a portfolio of their revisions across several genres might enable. Last, the reflection the students did was insufficient, but not because they mistook the complexity of writing-for projects. They understood the requirements of these projects very well, insofar as they resembled many formulaically

formatted projects of years past. What they did not understand and needed more sustained, recursive work to understand, was what it meant to take responsibility for the complexity of a subject, the implications of how they claim it, and their designs on an audience.

So what? Why is this reflection important? Compared with what students like Christopher and Huburt said about working on behalf of and with their own communities, isn't the loss of a little abstract reflection a small loss at most? Writing-for projects helped my students be heroic in their own communities—not to the extent possible ("to bring about a new social order" [Dewey 134-35]), but to an extent they themselves found meaningful. "I feel that this is one of the best projects that I have done," my student Justin wrote, "because I feel that what I did will actually help people, and almost nothing makes me feel better than me helping out in guiding someone." If he sounds like a do-gooder, at least he did something. And if what he did was at his supervisor's bidding, at least it had social utility.

Compare these perceptions with heroic-sounding academic discourse, whose paper battles project an imagined future. We give assignments that, as John Gage puts it, "may not address some of the clerical writing tasks these students will be required to perform in the business of their lives, but . . . may nevertheless prove more adequate to the conflicts and cooperations that are necessary to improve the condition of the human parliament, as Kenneth Burke called it, that we are all born into" (169). The kind of writing asked for sounds heroic. The language game it implies requires "a willed, brash toughness of mind that enables a writer to bluff his way into a high stakes struggle for turf, for priority" (Bartholomae "Wandering" 113).

This struggle for priority on paper can sound grandiose while remaining unreal. There seems to be a real difference between service learning and academic discourse, the difference between being heroic and sounding heroic. Christopher noticed this difference: for him, service learning was actual heroism, doing good—something real for others, something others who counted would attend to and value. In contrast, sounding heroic was bluffing the teacher, as Thuy did in a paper on peer influence:

> One may say the lack of quality education is from the lack of parent participation. Others may say it is, because of the lack of educational supply. In reality, none of these situations are the case. It is because of peer pressure. Most high school students are going through a stage of identity. During this stage of their lives, they are being pressured by many of their peers, to do many of the imaginables.

In possession of the truth, Thuy sounds important. She is warming up her voice for a life beyond the classroom, a role in public deliberations.

This projected future, however, may be founded on myth. Consider Jim Henry's 2001 account of the realities of workplace writing. As predicted by the modernist sensibility that still informs our epistemology (and I would argue this is so for Bartholomae as well as Gage), the

> educated writer . . . would be able by virtue of her rhetorical savvy and elevated literacy to draw upon her sense of moral responsibility and code of ethics (most often grounded in liberal humanism) to assume agency, to effect changes in the community and the workplace, through democratic processes undergirded by the bond between government (at the local, state, and national levels) and the corporation. But globalization has broken this bond. And at the same time, workers in this new scenario find themselves obliged to work more and more hours (under the constraints of "flexibility") and to retrain constantly, limiting their time for civic engagement that earlier composition epistemology presumed. Otherwise stated, the "subject" we imagine under twentieth-century composition epistemology has become an anachronism. (5)

Insofar as Henry is approximately right ("broken" may be too strong), then the likelihood of being heroic *as a writer* is small—and, I would add, not just small but tiny compared with the immense certainty of sounding stochastically, possibly foolishly heroic. But wouldn't the significance—the usefulness—attached to the small chance of being heroic outweigh the guaranteed outcome of sounding heroic?

I say no. For one, whether globalization has broken or weakened traditional bonds of deliberation is something for students to examine, not accept. For another, to so examine and take a stand on such a significant, abstract charge is to undergo the kind of critical consciousness-raising easily parodied as "sounding heroic." Given the kind of pre-formed writing that has formed them, however, my students find a productive, anxious otherness in sounding heroic, its many failures only gradually, recursively understood through the humbling processes of writing as symbolic action: the epistemic energy of invention that disrupts attempts to arrange that are themselves inventional; the discovery in revision that style is a kind of proof; the imperative to speak for, or talk back to, the given facts. Such processes, as series of failures gradually understood, are relatively absent

in writing-for projects (hence the absence in my students' term-ending projects and assessments of the reflective practice *on writing* I expected). Without such reflective practice, the subject—whether anachronistic or emergent—will not encounter the other it objectifies. And if this encounter with the other does emerge, it may be partly because our interventions as teachers, "stimulating the imagination by playing the role of the Other for the student and fostering dialogue" (Johnson 85), pressure student writers to see themselves in the problems they're solving and to see their solutions as successes that are also failures.

Thus my response to my students who, like Christopher and Huburt, felt at home in their writing-for projects. Their audience was not so much other to them as an extension of them (which is also why their do-gooder postures were comparatively justified, not so much offensively patronizing as communally responsible). Endorsed by their audience, not in dialogue with them, they carried out projects administered by others. Their writing-for projects, then, did not begin the necessary process of working through *their* narcissistic projections of the other.

In her paper on peer influence, Neary, the daughter of immigrants, inquired into the source of hurtful stereotypes, using Guillermo Gómez-Peña's essay "Beyond the Tortilla Curtains" to assert that

> "American identity has historically depended on opposing an 'other,' be it cultural, racial, or ideological. Americans need enemies against whom to define their personal and national boundaries." . . . Those who are against immigrants forget that they too are descendants of immigrants. Which makes them hypocritical.

What is other here is not the topical other—still a fairly common topic in composition readers—but the other Neary's prose has constructed, the hypocritical immigrants who, to assimilate, need an enemy. The members of Neary's draft group suggested she explain better the charge of hypocrisy. In her revision of this draft, Neary added to her paragraph as follows:

> Those who are against immigrants forget that they too are descendants of immigrants. In the similar case as Amy Tan's mother they were treated unfairly because of their lack of being fluent English and of their race as well. Which makes the American who says it hypocritical for the reason that their ancestors were also immigrant from Europe. Therefore I agree with Gomez-Pena of what he saw and believed happened to new immigrants of America.

Neary followed this paragraph with testimony to her own propensity to stereotype, blaming television for its bad influence and then concluding that teenagers, who tend to watch a lot of television, are most vulnerable to its misleading images. She wanted to argue, I think, that teenagers are motivated in the same way adults are said to be motivated: to define themselves they need to define enemies. Television encouraged teenagers to laugh at others, reducing others to their ridiculous difference.

It struck me that Neary, someone with the potential and desire to have a voice in her community, should do more unpacking of "hypocrisy," a received discourse that does more to silence Neary than to illuminate the dynamics of prejudice. As a social practice, what if some timely hypocrisy is necessary, or what if hypocrisy at certain times is experienced not as hypocritical but as commonsensical self-interest, self-interest that new immigrants and unpopular teenagers in their turn are also trying to advance? Neary's non-hypocritical rehabilitation of immigrants also leaves untouched the logical structure of objectification, implying that it is okay, for example, if men objectify women, as long as those men were never once women themselves.

We could not stick with this line of inquiry, however, because Neary was producing a poster display on composting for a nearby community's organic garden. Although I am not saying that one or more weeks immersed in sounding heroic would have made Neary fluent in critical reading as a revising strategy, I am saying more time would have helped. And it certainly would not have hurt, neither misleading her about what academic literacy is nor mistreating her as a developing writer. For that is, finally, what happens with writing-for projects: they do to our students what every ethical authority on service learning tells them not to do to their community partners.

My writing-for service learning experiment can be framed as follows: my students and I experienced service learning together, but in tellingly different ways, even though we all came to resemble the professional writers Henry describes. I retrained and retooled, under mild duress in the "university of excellence" (Readings), adding service learning components to lower- and upper-division courses in a bid for institutional currency and favor—and in a bid to bind the ties between our work in the classroom and our surrounding communities. But in the big picture, I may have weakened the ties it's my job to fasten, and I may have done so by thrusting my students into fast capitalism, requiring them to become free-lance information workers: non-union, temporary, second-class, no ownership, out-sourced, the privatizing State's stop-gap substitutes for laid-off labor in underfunded programs in a country that forces its young men to register for selective

service, yet none of us to register for national-service alternatives.

This reflective experiment was useful for me because I was "*in* the problematic situation" I was seeking to "describe and change" (Schön *The Reflective Practitioner* 347). My experiment, intended to solve certain pedagogical problems, changed the "social reality" of basic writing, a change which created new problems and dilemmas (347)—new problems and dilemmas for *me*, however, not for my students. When writing for the community, students do good—but very little seeking, describing, naming, acting, and changing. Helping our students develop their rhetorical abilities is the best service we writing teachers can provide. If the case I have made against the writing-for variety of service learning is at all plausible, then we should reconsider whether our best purposes are served by writing-for projects.

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News and Announcements

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Paul Kei Matsuda and Tony Silva, Chairs
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In addition, the **Graduate Student Conference on Second Language Writing,** a special event held in conjunction with the Symposium, provides opportunities for graduate students to present their research and scholarship on second language writing. To submit a proposal, please visit: http://symposium.jslw.org/2006/cfp.html.

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The afternoon session is titled Building Community in Basic Writing: LaGuardia Community College's First year Experience Academies. The First Year Academies successfully transformed Basic Writing from a high-stakes testing-focused course to a course offering students a rigorous and contextualized intellectual experience by linking Basic Writing to content courses in the major and to the college's new e-Portfolio system. This interactive half-day workshop will examine the basic writing program component of the First Year Experience Academies at LaGuardia Community College, an urban two-year college within a large city university system.

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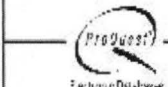

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