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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.

We prefer that contributions be submitted as Word document attachments via e-mail to: rebecca.mlynarczyk@gmail.com. If electronic submission is not possible, mail five copies of the manuscript and abstract to:

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You will receive a confirmation of receipt; a report on the status of your submission will follow in about sixteen weeks.

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.

We invite authors to write about such matters as classroom practices in relation to basic-writing or second-language theory; cognitive and rhetorical theories and their relation to basic writing; social, psychological, and cultural implications of literacy; discourse theory; grammar, spelling, and error analysis; linguistics; computers and new technologies in basic writing; assessment and evaluation; writing center practices; teaching logs and the development of new methodologies; and cross-disciplinary studies combining basic writing with psychology, anthropology, journalism, and art. We publish observational studies as well as theoretical discussions on relationships between basic writing and reading, or the study of literature, or speech, or listening. The term "basic writer" is used with wide diversity today, sometimes referring to a student from a highly oral tradition with little experience in writing academic discourse, and sometimes referring to a student whose academic writing is fluent but otherwise deficient. To help readers, therefore, authors should describe clearly the student population which they are discussing.

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

As the Fall 2008 issue of the *Journal of Basic Writing* goes to press, we celebrate a historic U.S. presidential election while, at the same time, reeling from a global financial crisis and economic downturn. The current political and economic climate differs dramatically from the world of the late 1960s and early 1970s that gave rise to the basic writing movement. And in this increasingly uncertain world, it is difficult to anticipate BW's future. Yet the underlying rationale for this field—the need for a well-educated and literate citizenry—is more pressing than ever. And so the question arises: How can we, as practitioners and scholars in the field of basic writing, work most effectively to support and promote this end? Surely, one of the keys is to communicate more effectively—with one another, with the wider world of university administrators and public policy makers, and with the general public. The articles in this issue suggest some promising directions for this wide-ranging conversation.

One way to begin is to share what goes on in our classrooms and institutions with one another. The first three articles accomplish this goal by using qualitative, ethnographic approaches to look closely and analytically at the experiences of individual students or teachers. In the lead article, "Roberta; or, the Ambiguities: Tough Love and High-Stakes Assessment at a Two-Year College in North Georgia," Spencer Salas reports the insights gained through a five-semester study of a full-time, temporary adjunct (and former community college student). Though there have been numerous studies of individual ESL or BW students, many of them with an activist orientation, comparable attention has not been paid to their teachers. This article, characterized by the kind of thick description advocated by Clifford Geertz among others, paints a portrait of Roberta, a hard-working, dedicated, and effective ESL teacher (as judged by the consistently high passing rates of students in her classes). But, as Salas's narrative unfolds, we see that she, like her students, is enmeshed in a web of seemingly contradictory forces—many of them related to the complex system of assessments students must pass to exit her course. According to Salas, Roberta has dealt with these contradictions by "improvising" a construction of her professional identity in which she sees gatekeeping as advocacy, embracing both roles as she attempts to shepherd students through her course and into the college mainstream. But, at the end of a tough semester, the emotional cost of this complex and improvised professional identity is clear.

In the next article, Nancy Pine focuses on the experiences of a single student enrolled in a service learning section of a basic writing course. "Service Learning in a Basic Writing Class: A Best Case Scenario" looks at a student called William,

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who used his required service—tutoring a first-grader in a local elementary school—as a bridge to academic writing. Unlike his classmates, William chose this section of the BW course because of the required tutoring component, and he was the only student in the class who used his tutoring experience as one of several "texts" in the required research essay on literacy or education. In her conclusion, the author raises important questions about how to effectively integrate service with academic writing. As often happens in ethnographic studies, we are left with important teaching problems to contemplate.

"The Role of Talk in Small Writing Groups: Building Declarative and Procedural Knowledge for Basic Writers," like the previous article, focuses on one student's approach to writing and revising a required essay. In this case, the emphasis is on the role of talk in a small writing group led by a skilled teaching assistant. Using the linguistic frame of conversational analysis, author Sonja Launspach includes relevant excerpts from the small group talk to show how the student, Ricki, gradually and with guidance from her group leader and peers deepens her understanding of the essay assignment and the conventions of academic discourse. In analyzing this case, Launspach distinguishes between declarative knowledge—knowing *what* to do—and procedural knowledge—knowing *how* to do it (in this case, knowing what strategies to use in accomplishing a particular writing task). Readers are able to observe Ricki's apprenticeship as she begins to acquire the meta-discourses that will help her move successfully into the academic mainstream, supporting the author's conclusion that "for basic or inexperienced writers, access to talk in peer groups enables students to construct meaning in social interaction through collaborative learning, facilitating their participation in the larger academic conversation."

Much is to be gained from qualitative research as reported in articles such as these and a similar case study in our Spring 2008 issue.[1] By creating detailed and nuanced portraits of individual teachers' and students' experiences, such articles help us to see specific experiences of teaching and learning within a wider social and educational context. To use the terminology of Donald Schön,[2] most teachers are skilled at reflecting *in* action, responding to the constant questions and decisions that arise in the course of a teaching day. But studies such as the ones just mentioned provide a valuable opportunity to step back and reflect *on* action, entering into other teaching worlds to reflect on what is happening there

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[1] Roozen, Kevin. "Journalism, Poetry, Stand-Up Comedy, and Academic Literacy: Mapping the Interplay of Curricular and Extracurricular Literate Activities." *JBW* 27.1 (2008): 5-34.
[2] Schön, Donald A. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action.* New York: Basic Books, 1983.

and consider the social and educational issues being raised. We carry these worlds with us as we re-enter our own classrooms, and they often help us to see more clearly or question more incisively. They are, in an important sense, part of our ongoing professional conversation.

Yet, as some have rightly argued, research that focuses on the individual will not get us very far when reasoning with administrators and public policy makers. Laura Gray Rosendale makes this point in her 2006 *JBW* article.[3] While recognizing the importance of ethnographic studies of individuals or small groups, she feels that if the field focuses too much on local knowledge and individual cases, we run the risk "of abandoning the important national and global concerns that have defined our discipline for many years and have been fundamental to making successful arguments on behalf of our students" (19). If we are to effectively make our case with those who control the budgets and set the public priorities, we need to speak their language—a language of outcomes and pass rates, a language based on numbers. And this is exactly what Sugie Goen-Salter does in "Critiquing the Need to Eliminate Remediation: Lessons from San Francisco State." Reviewing the long, unsuccessful history of the California State University system's attempt to eliminate remediation from its colleges, Goen-Salter and her colleagues at San Francisco State asked if they could "eliminate the 'need for remediation' by providing students with an enriched literacy experience during their first crucial year of college." This enriched experience integrates the teaching of reading and writing and enables students to fulfill both the remediation and first-year English requirements within one year. In the seven years since the first pilot section of the Integrated Reading/Writing Program, Goen-Salter and her colleagues have assiduously collected comparative data on "outcome measures" to document the program's success in terms of retention rates, test scores, pass rates, and dis-enrollment rates. These data, often expressed in charts and tables, speak effectively to state and university officials. What began as a small pilot program is now the approved, credit-bearing course of study for all incoming students at San Francisco State judged in need of remediation. Goen-Salter ends with a powerful call for BW scholars and teachers: "I hope we can find in this story the grounds to advocate for higher education as *the* appropriate location for basic writing and to advocate, in turn, for the resources necessary to theorize, develop, and sustain a rich variety of approaches to basic writing instruction—instruction that might justifiably focus on reading as well as writing."

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[3] "Back to the Future: Contextuality and the Construction of the Basic Writer's Identity in *JBW* 1999-2005." JBW 25.2 (2006): 5-26.

As we ponder the future of basic writing, it is important to remember, and at times to reassess, the past. In "A New World: Redefining the Legacy of Min-Zhan Lu," Brian Ray takes another look at the well-publicized debate of the 1990s in which Min-Zhan Lu, among others, questioned the legacy of basic writing's founding mother, Mina Shaughnessy. In her 1991 *JBW* article, "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy," Lu criticized Shaughnessy's approach to student error as one that isolated language from meaning and minimized cultural and linguistic differences. Supporters of Shaughnessy rose to her defense, but the debate eventually ended in stalemate. In this article, Ray proposes that the views of Shaughnessy and Lu are actually not so far apart when viewed through the concept of linguistic charity, which he feels "offers a refreshing new direction for discussion regarding the ambiguous and often controversial role of Standard English in our pedagogies."

This issue of *JBW* concludes with News and Announcements. Readers are asked to respond to the National Survey of Basic Writing Programs (http://comppile.org/cbw/), a user-friendly questionnaire designed to collect facts about the current state of basic writing—where it takes place, what constituencies it serves, how it is changing.

Finally, we return to the question with which we began: How can researchers committed to basic writing work to promote the best interests of the students we serve? It is important for scholars to do what we advise our students to do—consider purpose and audience when writing. The articles in this issue suggest that authors are following this advice, reaching out to different audiences with different methods and writing styles, reflecting on the past history of the field and suggesting positive directions for future classroom approaches, research, and social activism in 2009 and beyond.

—**Rebecca Mlynarczyk** and **Hope Parisi**

Roberta; or, the Ambiguities: Tough Love and High-Stakes Assessment at a Two-Year College in North Georgia

Spencer Salas

ABSTRACT: This ethnographic narrative employs a neo-Vygotskian perspective (Holland et al.) to examine how, in the setting of a remedial ESL program at a public two-year college in North Georgia, the subject position of an ESL basic writing instructor was mediated by her understandings of and engagement with the multiple and interactive contexts of her professional activity. Despite a wide variety of tensions that complicated the instructor's understandings of who she was professionally, Roberta was able to position herself in ways that allowed her to make sense of her professional choices. However, her construction of gatekeeping as advocacy brought with it an emotional toll at the end of each semester when some students passed and some students failed—shaking the sense of her tough-love pedagogical stance. Representations of basic writing professionals are critiqued to argue the need for more nuanced research for and with basic writing faculty in the activist college composition literature.

KEYWORDS: two-year college; teachers' mental lives; basic writing; ESL students; Generation 1.5; postsecondary remediation

In a navy blue Vietnamese *ao-dai*, Roberta,[1] a temporary full-time ESL adjunct, leaned across the screen of her PC's keyboard and into her e-mails. Not Vietnamese, as her traditional costume might have implied, Roberta was Thai, and from the northern reaches of that country. Adopted by Evangelical North American missionaries at three months old—hence her Christian name—Roberta commented that she was routinely complimented on the quality of her spoken English by her colleagues at Sweet Water, the two-year college in North Georgia where she taught

Swiveling toward me as I knocked on the door of the yellow cinderblock cubicle in Academic III, Roberta initiated our Monday morning ritual—trash-talk starting with the story of how the weekend's violent thunderstorms had knocked over a Bartlett pear

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> tree in the front yard of her house in suburban Atlanta, a house that she and her husband were about to put on the market. Dave, her computer-geek husband, hoping it might grow back in the spring, pruned it down to a stump. Immediately, Roberta had him remove the "Charlie Brown tree" to the woods behind their house.
>
> "So what's your secret for getting so many to pass the Compass?" I asked—shifting to my researcher role. To the delight of Sweet Water's Learning Support administrators, 85% of Roberta's students consistently entered the postsecondary mainstream—passing her course, the English Department's exit essay, and the COMPASS exam in Writing.
>
> "'Cause I'm a MoFo" [motherfucker].

This "tale of the field" (Van Maanen) is about Roberta's "MoFo"—an ethnographic narrative of how, in the institutional specificity of a public two-year college in North Georgia, a full-time, temporary ESL basic writing adjunct was able to position herself in ways that allowed her to make sense of who she was professionally, what her work achieved, and, furthermore, to construct the gatekeeping in which she implicitly participated as a form of advocacy for the students she taught.

Contemporary activist research for L2 postsecondary writers has worked, among other things, to deconstruct the complex and layered histories of monolingual English writing instruction in U.S. institutions of higher learning (Horner and Trimbur; Horner), the representation of U.S. educated English learners in postsecondary classrooms (Harklau, "Representations"; Harklau, "Newcomers in"; Harklau, "From the 'Good Kids'"), narrowly conceived notions of academic literacies (Zamel and Spack; Canagarajah, *Critical Academic Writing*), and the hegemony of "standard" written English (Lu, "An Essay"). Collectively, such discussions are characteristic of a twenty-year Freirean critical consciousness raising/"conscientizaçaõ" of postsecondary composition studies framing basic writing instructors as potentially transgressive or transformative intellectuals whose critical pedagogy represents a brand of cultural politics for liberating L2 writers from the asymmetrical power relations of the postsecondary writing classroom (for a comprehensive twenty-year review, see, Durst).

Problematically, L2 writing teachers such as Roberta—and the emotional toll they may feel because of their complex and, at times, conflicted, subject positions—are somewhat under-represented in the literature advocating on behalf of postsecondary English learners. When they do appear, they

are habitually portrayed as one-dimensional gatekeepers barring immigrant students from the two-year college mainstream (Valdés 145) or as self-styled provocateurs (Lu, "Professing Multiculturalism"; hooks; Shor).

As the number of two-year institutions offering English as a Second Language continues to increase dramatically, especially in areas of the country with large immigrant populations (Schuyler), ESL basic writing faculty are increasingly the first individuals such learners encounter in postsecondary education. How such professionals make sense of who they are and what their work accomplishes matters.

More nuanced descriptions of basic writing teachers working for and with English learners are needed to understand how individuals navigate institutional environments where, potentially, they are, as Roberta was, compelled to assume multiple, if not conflicting, roles and constituencies as advocates for the English learners they teach, and gatekeepers for the postsecondary institutions that employ them. These multifaceted professional constructions are potentially complicated by unyielding institutional definitions of what it means to be ready for college-level work, by the politics of immigration, and by the conundrums of the unfolding lives of those same professionals and the students they teach. More careful examinations of these teachers and students are needed to help make sense of the competing national and local discourses surrounding issues of English learners and other non-traditional students at the postsecondary level.

THE STUDY

Data Generation

Roberta's story emerged as part of a five-semester qualitative inquiry distributed over two academic years that initially began as a project for qualitative research coursework and grew into a dissertation. My entry to Sweet Water College followed from the coincidence of my running into its ESL Learning Support program coordinator early in 2004 and asking if she knew of an ESL classroom that I might observe. By mid-January of that year, I had made my first visit to the college—a commute that continued through fall 2004, spring 2005, fall 2005, and spring 2006. Participatory data collection shifted as the questions I asked during the semesters evolved, eventually constituting more than 250 hours of site visits as documented in 300-plus pages of fieldnotes, 500-plus pages of instructional artifacts, 10 hours of audiotaped classroom interactions, and more than 10 hours of structured

audiotaped conversations with Roberta and the four other ESL composition instructors involved in the study. My roles ranged from being a silent observer taking notes on an Alpha-Smart (a portable, battery-powered keyboard) to becoming an active participant helping with small-group or individual work in the classroom. In a number of instances, I willingly substitute taught for the participating teachers; and, in spring 2006, I joined the ESL program at Sweet Water as a part-time adjunct faculty member.

Theoretical Framework and Analytic Method

Cultural anthropologists have long argued that how women and men come to be as individuals is largely dependent on their participation in the societies or cultures to which they are born or recruited— what they commonly refer to as "cultural models" (Holland and Quinn). The anthropological construct of cultural models—processes that shape thinking and emotions through repertoires of presupposed and popularly shared knowledge—have since been affiliated to Vygotsky's notion of mediating devices. Complex sorts of Vygotskian "helping means" (Holland and Valsiner; Holland and Cole), cultural models enable individuals to know how, what, and why to do, to think, and to feel in any variety of human situations. They allow, for example, a North American undergraduate to fall in love or a recovering alcoholic to narrate his conversion to a group of likeminded peers (cf., Holland and Quinn; Holland and Lave; Holland et al.).

Bringing Vygotskian understandings of the liberatory and seemingly limitless possibilities of the semiotic mediation of children's play and Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic self to the construct of cultural models, Dorothy Holland et al. theorize a human propensity "to figure worlds, play at them, act them out, and then make them socially, culturally, and thus materially consequential" (280). Accordingly, Holland et al. propose the construct of "figured worlds"—worlds that women and men collectively write and rewrite in "practice" (Bourdieu) through what Holland et al. name, "improvisation."

Introducing the concept of improvisation with an anecdote, Holland et al. tell the story of Maya, an "untouchable" woman in Nepal. Prohibited from entering Holland and Skinner's home through the front door lest she "pollute" the cooking area, Maya climbed up the side of the house and into the office for the interview she and they were intent on having. Climbing up the side of the house was her improvisation—a spontaneous alternative to the subject positions afforded to her at that moment.

Thinking about Maya's story, and in a Geertzian tradition of humanistic, interpretive, and hermeneutic anthropological scholarship, I crafted the narrative that follows. As is typical in ethnographic approaches to qualitative research, data analysis was an inductive, recursive, and ongoing process that accompanied data generation and continued afterwards in a transformative interplay (Wolcott) of description, analysis, and interpretation to arrive at a "thick description" (Geertz) of Roberta and her participation in the figured world of Sweet Water College ESL Learning Support.

Specific procedures or methods for compressing, fashioning, and reading my data followed Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw's practical considerations of the processes of ethnographic research. These procedures included initial line-by-line open coding of my data with the comment function in Microsoft Word or a pencil to name my understandings; focused coding whereby the assorted tags I had previously established were reduced into larger categories; in-process analytic writing; initial and integrative memo writing; and content analysis of archival data.

ESL LEARNING SUPPORT

Roberta worked for the University System of Georgia. In this system the Board of Regents first institutionalized postsecondary Developmental Studies programs in fall 1974 "as a means of bringing the reading, English, and mathematical skills of marginally prepared students up to standard" (Office of Strategic Research and Analysis, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia). In 1993, Developmental Studies policy and procedures were reconfigured under an umbrella organizational structure of Learning Support whereby individual institutions were empowered to set higher regular admission standards and/or higher standards for exiting Learning Support than those set by the Regents themselves—but not lower. At Sweet Water College, Learning Support was not for the few, but for the majority. In fall 2005, the total number of first-year students at Sweet Water totaled 1,567. Of those, 803 (slightly more than 51%) were enrolled—for the most part, involuntarily—in one or more Learning Support courses.

Sweet Water's ESL Learning Support coursework was a complex curricular menu designed to prepare students whose native language was "not American English" for success in credit-bearing college courses. The program of ESL study differed, sometimes substantially, from student to student—depending on one or more of the following factors: (1) their SAT/ACT scores,

(2) their scores on the College's or ESL program's placement exams, and (3) their obligatory writing samples for the English department.

THE RE-EDUCATION OF GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Returning to the vignette with which I began this narrative, Roberta was young, young-looking, or, in her words, "what-ever." Consequently, she worried that if she weren't tough with her students, some might disrespect her diminutive five-foot Asian-American person. Accordingly, bravado was one of Roberta's strategies for garnering the respect of the mostly young adults she taught. However, data analysis indicated that being unyielding was more than Roberta's way of instilling discipline and respect. Rather, Roberta's tough-love stance was an integral part of her conception of what it meant to be an advocate for English learners in the context of Sweet Water, where test scores meant everything as students contended with a daunting battery of assessments (see Appendix A) .

Certainly, many of the students I had met in Roberta's Level III classrooms didn't "sound" like English learners at all. In fact, some had apparently grown up in the mountains of North Georgia, graduated with admirable grade-point averages, and were able to effortlessly "Yes Ma'am/No Ma'am" Roberta as all well-mannered North Georgians are expected to do. However, as Roberta explained, their presence in the ESL class was not determined by how they spoke, but by how they wrote.

Roberta explained that if Georgia high school graduates were in ESL it was because they had not been taught the basics in high school—or at least what was generally considered basic at Sweet Water, which was, after all, what mattered. Even if enrollment in Advanced ESL Grammar and Writing was a bitter pill for some of her U.S.-educated students, Roberta was convinced that it was for their own good. Thinking aloud about her course in an interview, Roberta said:

> It hurts now. Oh, it is so painful now you're going to cry now at the end of the semester when you fail [laughing] it's—it's that sort of "it makes you stronger" cliché [laughing]. And I hate to even say that—but it really is. But it pays off though, it *really*[2] does pay off. Again, when they go into 1101 and 1102 [Sweet Water's two-semester Freshman English requirement] and they are making *better* grades than native born American students or native English

> speakers, they always come back and say, "I know more" than these students. I know what a relative clause is and I know why a comma goes there and why it doesn't go here. And it makes them feel so much better.

Thus, Roberta's micro-preparation of her students for the high standards of grammar and mechanics that she believed the college's English 1101 professors were deeply intent on safe guarding, and to which, she believed, her students would be subjected once they entered mainstream college coursework, was what she could do and did do. In the setting of the two-year college, such was Roberta's advocacy as she had conceived it—that her students would pass their exams and be enabled, through her course, to succeed at Sweet Water.

Although Roberta considered her students to lack the basic skills needed for postsecondary composition, she did not consider ESL Learning Support as remediation. The argument in its various forms over the five semesters went, "It's not remedial if they've never had it in the first place." Or, as Roberta ruminated, "Here's what a noun is. Here's a verb. Here's subject-verb agreement. Here's verb tense. They don't get any of that in high school." For the others, the international students, ESL coursework was, likewise, not remediation. Rather, it was language learning—like French, like Italian, like Russian. It was a process that took time. There was simply nothing remedial about ESL, she argued—not really. She was certain that there was nothing "wrong" with her students.

That said, despite Roberta's insistence that ESL Learning Support was not remediation, her students' transcripts indicated something to the contrary. Namely, ESL Learning Support coursework—with one one-credit exception—counted for institutional credit only. Thus, Roberta and her colleagues were unable to will ESL Learning Support into being, at the level of their students' academic records, into something more than what it was.

ROBERTA'S MOFO

Rare was the day in ESOL 0099 that Roberta did not reference the English professors—what their expectations were; how they would come down hard on certain errors on the exit essay; and what students might expect of English 1101. Handing back their first attempts at a simulated exit essay, Roberta (Mrs. Ware) explained to the class her not completely accurate motivation for grading their papers so rigorously:

> I don't want you to think about this as Mrs. Ware is grading my paper because she hates me and she's giving me poor grades because of this. Think of it this way, when I exit this class, my paper will be graded by at least two English professors, not Mrs. Ware. And Mrs. Ware is grading me according to how she believes the English professors will grade my paper. So here's what I need to do to improve for my next paper. I want you to look at it that way.

Actually, in some instances, Mrs. Ware did grade the essays. The first two readers were either (1) a combination of two English professors, or (2) an English professor and an ESL faculty member other than the one who had taught the student whose essay was being scored. The first two readers assigned a score of Pass, Fail, or Borderline. With one Fail the student failed. In the event of a Pass and Borderline or two Borderlines a third reader's score was taken into consideration. That third reader was always the ESL instructor whose student's performance was under review. Thus, Roberta's score did count, occasionally.

Yet, she recognized that however much lip service her mainstream colleagues paid to the importance of the writing process, a five-paragraph essay could not—above all—contain a comma-splice, a run-on, a fragment, and/or striking features of non-native language use. It had to contain a closed thesis statement at the end of the introductory paragraph, each paragraph had to contain a minimum of six sentences, and examples had to be concrete.

"You Need to Write This Down"

Hoping to instill a "healthy" dose of fear in her students, Roberta shared with all of her ESL Advanced Grammar and Writing students the rubric she used to score their mock exit essays. The instrument (see Appendix B), developed by the former ESL program coordinator, was an inventory of what the English Department faculty considered the minimum requirements of academic literacy. By this rubric, a trio of Sweet Water faculty would "blindly" score the ESL students' exit essays, and it was by this rubric that a score would be defended should a challenge arise. For whatever reasons, for now, her ESL students weren't in English 1101. It was therefore, she explained to her students in class one morning, essential that she and they stick to the rubric:

> I have *seen nearly* perfect papers—and when I say that, you know the content is pretty good the organization is pretty good there, with very few mistakes, grammar mistakes in the paper—fail that exit essay because of four or five comma splices. And I'm, *I am* upset when I see what I think is a paper that should be passing fail because of four or five comma splices or maybe four fragments or maybe missing commas after introductory adverbial clause. . . . it is—it is a heartbreaker when somebody deserves to pass and they don't because of something that's *so* significant but while you're reading your essay maybe it's insignificant to you—or you don't catch on right away to those commas. That is a real disappointment to me, and it's also a heartbreaker for the person who *writes* a wonderful essay. . . . I don't want that to be *you* at the end of the semester.

Despite Roberta's strong commitment to helping her students pass the final exit essay, she occasionally did express frustration with the college's fixation on the grammar and mechanics of writing, as explained in the next section.

"Grammar, Grammar, and More Grammar"

The "superficiality" of the five-paragraph essay and the time crunch to get her students prepared for the assessment cycle didn't allow her students to "truly" write, as Roberta explained during an interview:

> I have to really focus on grammar, grammar, and more grammar—just so that they can write a superficial paper and then get through that standardized test. And I lose time then to focus on critical thinking—on logic—on the things that I really want to focus on—and, and what any English professor also would really expect from them at the higher level. "Don't just spit back"—you know—"examples to me. Really think about what you're writing." And it doesn't allow us enough time to delve into that.

However, Roberta knew that even after English 1101, high-stakes standardized testing would not be over. There would still be the Georgia Regents' Test—a system-wide assessment consisting of a multiple-choice reading comprehension test and the ubiquitous five-paragraph essay written on a choice of topics (See Appendix A).

By breaking writing down into discrete units and by teaching how those units worked together, Roberta hoped to sensitize her students to a litany of stigmatizing errors that would fail them on the exit essay and hurt their scores on the COMPASS, which measured various grammar, usage, and style points. Around the fifth week of the course, a shift would take place—one marked by Roberta's first mention of the "closed thesis statement" and its distinction from an open thesis statement as exemplified in this fieldnote:

> Let's stop right here. This is my million-dollar question—write this down. I don't see a lot of you writing. You need to write this down. This is called a closed thesis statement. Now in their grading guide, they give this 30 points. Therefore, if you don't have the closed thesis statement you've just failed the essay.

For the remainder of the semester, Roberta asked her students to look at and try out the sorts of five-paragraph essays they might be asked to write for the exit essay—an argument, a description, a comparison/contrast, etc.—recycling questions from previous exit exams as practice prompts, for example, "Describe your perfect Thanksgiving." Roberta did not explicitly "correct" her students' papers. Rather, she identified errors using a system of symbols that she shared with students. She then asked students to make the appropriate corrections/revisions using the symbols to guide them.

In addition to the weekly timed writings, Roberta and her colleagues presented models of other types of essays the test takers might encounter such as "Comparison Contrast Writing." Specific grammar and writing issues that had come up in students' mock exit essays also received focused practice—for example, the punctuation of restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses in sentences such as: "Kuwait, which is a small country in the Middle East, is rich in oil"; "A medical computer is a machine that analyzes the results of laboratory tests"; etc.

It was odd, Roberta commented, that although her students were computer-savvy, they were still being asked to hand write the exit essay: no spell check, no grammar check, no nothing. Students were changing. Perhaps, she speculated, Sweet Water would have to change one day too. When or if that would happen, she was not sure. For now, her hands were tied. Sixteen weeks went by quickly. She and her colleagues had to get their students ready for the tests.

TOUGH LOVE

In an audiotaped interview in fall 2005, Roberta elaborated on her self-styled bad-ass-ness:

> If I grade at an easy level they might get a B out of my class. Yet, the English professors will grade that final exit essay and perhaps give it a Failure. So I think it's really important for me to keep my grading scale as difficult and hard as it is—very close to what the English professors' rubric or guide is. Another reason maybe for the strictness in my class is that I have *a lot* to do in one semester. And, obviously it can't always be done. But, I'm trying to take the majority of the students through this class. And to do it successfully I need them to be on their best behavior every time I hold a class. And that might be another reason why I feel like I have to be very disciplined—and have them disciplined in my class.

Importantly, the course design of ESL Advanced Grammar and Writing had not been imposed on Roberta or her two colleagues who also taught the course. Rather, the "back-to-basics"/"practice-makes-perfect" pedagogical paradigm was one to which they all seemed to adhere. Or, as the program coordinator explained to me, getting students to understand dependent clauses, independent clauses, compound sentences, complex sentences, compound/complex sentences, etc., and moving them through a sequence from sentence to paragraph to essay to types of essays were standard two-year college L2 writing fare in Georgia. That was how it was done.

For Roberta, a trio of other considerations—her own previous experience as a student in a two-year college, the politics of immigration in North Georgia, and the rules surrounding merit-based student financial aid—reinforced her boot-camp approach to ESL Advanced Grammar and Writing.

Roberta's Two-Year College Experience

Roberta, herself, had gone to a two-year college. She was immensely proud of the education she had received there, and how well it prepared her for the four-year university she went to afterwards. Furthermore, she believed that if four-year colleges were to take their two-year counterparts seriously, Sweet Water faculty had to work hard and make their students work hard:

> I attended a community college myself because I could not afford to go to a four-year university. I then transferred to a private four-year university—after my community college experience. And I think one of the first things I noticed was that I was considered a really good writer at the four-year university. And I think that community college experience I had—I think that those professors I had really pushed high standards in their English classes—maybe out of a feeling of—not inferiority necessarily—but out of a feeling of—you know even though we're a community college we have high standards too. And I performed really well at the private four-year university.

Roberta wanted her students—whether they went on to a four-year program or not—to feel as good about their community college experience as she had and did still. Would they remember her name as she remembered those of the two-year college teachers who had taught her so well? Would they talk about her the way she talked about those two-year college teachers that she had known? Would Sweet Water be a point of reference for them as her own two-year college experience had become for her? These things she wanted very much.

The Shadow of Stone Mountain

Roberta speculated that the locals tended to think of all immigrants as illegal—and that, she considered, was sad. Sweet Water was just a Sunday drive from Stone Mountain, the site of the founding of the second Ku Klux Klan in 1915 (MacLean). Under the gaze of the Confederate leaders carved into the granite mountainside, white supremacists were still active in the region. Local and regional newspapers reported heinous incidents of racial violence and xenophobia of which immigrants, especially Latinos, were increasingly the victims (Moser).

It was difficult, she recognized, if not impossible for some to understand the intense and constant pressure she felt to prove herself worthy of anything she had ever achieved. White guys, even her husband, just did not get it:

> I had—I'll just go ahead and tell you some more about my husband [laughing]. I had a conversation with my husband—not a fight—a long conversation where at the end of the conversation he finally

> admitted he didn't get it. And he kept on saying that I had perceptions—I had perceptions and they weren't real. And I said, "You won't ever know." And I think some people won't ever know. . . . Everybody else will tell you—you know—"Those are just your perceptions, those feelings aren't really happening." But they don't know it because they aren't you.

Roberta's awareness of local attitudes toward immigrants helps to explain her firm belief that making things easier for her students would only make it harder for them in the end. They had to toughen up as she did when she was still mistaken for a student when she went to make photocopies in the faculty lounge; as she had when, driving up from Tampa, a cashier at a back-road gas station had refused to hand back her credit card—throwing it at her across a counter. Passing the exit essay, the Compass Exam, her course—all these things would make them stronger for Sweet Water mainstream coursework and, even, for life. There would be no handouts for them.

Keeping Hope Alive

The relationship between students' GPAs and their financial aid packages was yet another facet of the tough-love rationale Roberta and her colleagues adhered to in teaching Advanced ESL Grammar and Writing. Through monies raised by the state's lottery, the HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) Scholarship Program provided graduates of Georgia high schools with tuition, mandatory fees, and a book allowance to attend any of the state's public colleges, universities, or technical colleges. It seemed that in nearly every ESL class I visited during my five semesters at Sweet Water, there was always one or more students on a HOPE scholarship. However, to keep these scholarships, students needed to maintain a 3.0 GPA. Students who had been ineligible for HOPE as entering freshmen could apply for the program after attempting 30, 60, or 90 semester hours—but, again, only with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0. Hence, Roberta made the case that if ESL students prematurely entered the mainstream, their GPAs would suffer, and their current or future financial aid would be jeopardized. ESL Learning Support was really a sort of GPA safe house, she argued, that potentially benefited her students economically.

HONORS DAY

In the spring of 2006, I attended "Honors Day" at Sweet Water—a yearly celebration to recognize students' academic achievement. The faculty wore their caps and gowns. Under the proud gaze of their families, students filed in to the strains of "Pomp and Circumstance." From the podium, Sweet Water's president officially opened the celebration with a metaphor:

> With the dogwoods, azaleas, and other flowers in bloom, the campus is like a large garden. The college provides the "soil" that students need to grow. Faculty and staff are the sunshine and the rain. The college is truly a wonderful nurturing environment. . . . There's a country song that goes, "I'm a wildflower that blooms wherever I land." But we're glad you chose our garden.

Applause reverberated across the basketball courts-cum-auditorium as the president asked the audience sitting on folding metal chairs and bleachers to recognize the "gardeners" of the college: Sweet Water's faculty.

In their Sunday best, former and current ESL students were among the prizewinners that afternoon: Most Improved ESL Student; Students for a Progressive Society Leadership Award; President's Art Award; Latino Student Association's Most Active Member; Phi Theta Kappa (international honor society for two-year college students); Outstanding Chemistry Student; Outstanding Physics Student; and more. Nine current or former ESL students won an array of honors.

The *pièce de résistance*, however, was when Jacinto, a former student of Roberta's, received the College's most prestigious academic prize: the Mass Prize. He had been an ESL student; he had been hers. That afternoon, the choices Roberta had made about what sort of teacher to be made perfect sense to her. All was right at Sweet Water.

Kudos?

Ecstatic, Roberta sent an e-mail to the Chair of the Division of Learning Support, naming her current and former students and their awards. The next day, the Chair forwarded Roberta's note to the faculty listserv:

> Good Morning,
> I thought that you would like to see how many former ESL students received honors yesterday. I don't think that most people realize that these students began in Learning Support/ESL. Roberta Ware compiled this list. It's impressive that nine of these students earned all types of awards, including the Mass Prize. I'm proud of these students and their ESL instructors who helped them begin their pathways to college success.

The Chair's e-mail received only one short response:

> The Chair and anyone who cares to know:
> Of course! Most of these students I presume are international students and they tend to work harder (and perhaps have better academic foundation to begin with) than most of our native students. Once they get the language down, they usually do well. I happened to have two of them in my MATH 2650 Linear Algebra class so I can attest to that too. Kudos to everyone who helps to nurture these students.

The math professor's assumption—that most of the prizewinners were internationals—was mistaken. Jacinto, the Mass Prize winner, was a homegrown product of the U.S. K-12 system. Curiously, none of the Sweet Water faculty publicly responded to the insinuation that the Latino locals were lazy and ill-prepared, or that if ESL students had succeeded it was because as internationals they had received a sound education before enrolling at Sweet Water—unlike their peers in public high schools in Georgia. Deep down, perhaps everyone agreed. Or perhaps it wasn't worth fighting over this time. ESL Learning Support students had done well. Maybe that was kudos enough for Roberta.

DISCUSSION: GATEKEEPING AS ADVOCACY

Advocacy as/in Context

As research on second-language teaching and learning has slowly come to challenge the notion of a best practice or method (Kumaravadivelu), it is perhaps time to rethink the often unequivocal ways in which professionals such as Roberta and their teaching are categorized and to look more closely

at the sense teachers make of themselves—how they understand themselves professionally, and how they are understood. The ambiguities of teaching ESL Basic Writing at a two-year college in North Georgia were such that Roberta understood herself as a good teacher, bad teacher, bad-ass teacher, and something or some things other along the way. She was a teacher; she contained multitudes.

Admittedly, Roberta shared a degree of complicity in the marginalization of English learners at Sweet Water, where the sort of high-stakes assessment practices might even appear to constitute a far too convenient way of denying immigrant students full entry into institutions of higher education. High school diplomas in hand, an increasing number of Sweet Water's so-called "Generation 1.5" students found themselves sort of enrolled in college. Such students were accepted to the two-year college on the condition that they complete a cycle of institutionally mandated, non-degree credit-bearing coursework. All this was, in Roberta's view, because the English professors simply didn't feel they had the time to "waste" on English learners who were coming out of U.S. high schools—or other institutions—without what they regarded as the requisite academic writing skills. Someone else would have to "deal" with them. It was, therefore, she argued, up to individuals such as herself to teach U.S.-educated English learners and their international peers what it was that the institution into which they were only provisionally admitted would require of them to be mainstreamed. This she did—explicitly—again, and again, and again.

There was also, as I have mentioned, Roberta's understanding of the white supremacism of the region; the insidious deficit understandings of the "preparedness" of U.S.-educated English learners that seemed to prevail among some members of the "mainstream" faculty; the issues surrounding students' GPAs and the maintenance of their HOPE scholarships and other financial aid opportunities; Sweet Water's four-year college aspirations; Roberta's own undergraduate experience—her youth, her gender, her Asianness. Roberta's advocacy was a/in context.

After many semesters of hesitation, I began talking to Roberta about the activist literature on English learners that had motivated this study and the ambiguities of postsecondary remediation. Some scholars argue that such instruction is effective (Merisotis and Phipps) while others maintain that it isn't (Johnson; Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham). Some take a middle ground, saying that sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't (Bettinger and Terry Long), or that no one really can say conclusively to what extent college remedial work

succeeds (Perin). I wanted to know, I told her—point blank—if she thought of herself as a gatekeeper. Roberta explained that she was and she wasn't:

> If our students are not up to standards and they can't succeed at the next level, I'm not going to let them out of my class. This—for example, let's just pick something from my composition class that has to do with grammar: verb tense and verb form and word form. You don't get it, you don't get out. Okay, you have non-English problems; I'm sorry you're staying behind. Is it just spelling problems you're having? Are you French and adding an "e" onto everything or German? Not a problem—we'll let you out. Do you not have any articles in your paper? You're going to stay back in. You know, I *am* a gatekeeper in that sense. If you don't meet the standards and I don't think you can actually go into 1101 with a fighting chance, then I'm not going to let you out of my class.

It was then that I understood that for Roberta there was no contradiction between gatekeeping and advocacy. Gatekeeping was advocacy.

Roberta's "Improvisation"

Roberta worked for an institution called Sweet Water; and was charged with preparing "non-American English" learners to succeed in what the institution considered college-level coursework. Roberta's proven ability to guide students through the labyrinthine assessment cycle of which, admittedly she was a part, and into English 1101 was one of the major references by which she understood herself. It was furthermore the reference whereby she was understood. She was a good teacher. The proof was in the numbers of those who passed every semester. The proof was in Honors Day. The proof was in Jacinto.

But what had most convinced Roberta that tough love was good love was the fact, she told me, that every semester former ESL students—many U.S. high school graduates—returned to thank her. They returned to tell her that English 1101 was a breeze. This, she argued, was her validation; 85% of her students had effectively "climbed up the side of the house" (Holland et al.), thereby reaping an immediate, though perhaps short-term, benefit from Roberta's construction of her teaching subjectivities. Her students' success—her "improvisation" (Holland et al.)—had allowed her to re-construct her teaching self not as gatekeeper but as a bad-ass who could and

did navigate scores of English learners into the Sweet Water mainstream. Roberta did not love the tests. She did love it, however, that 85% of her students passed them.

The Last Day of School

In the figured world of ESL Learning Support at a two-year college in North Georgia, hand writing a five-paragraph essay in two hours with a pen, white-out, and a monolingual dictionary was, perhaps, less about an English language learner's mastery of academic writing, and more about a demonstration of loyalty to that local paradigm of what, at minimum, it meant to be an "educated person" (Levinson, Foley, and Holland).

Whatever the Sweet Water assessment obstacle course was not, it most certainly *was* "literacy" as a powerful contingent at Sweet Water had defined it. Roberta clarified,

> The preparation that we put them through is really our way of almost molding them and not just preparing them but molding them in a certain way to fit the college-student criteria in that sense. These are the things you're going to have to be or do in order to become a mainstreamer in that sense.

A five-paragraph essay was not a five-paragraph essay was not a five-paragraph essay. There was a Sweet Water way to write; there was a Sweet Water way to be.

Although 85% of Roberta's students consistently passed the assessment labyrinth, there were no institutional statistics to support Roberta's fervent belief that those same students did well in their future coursework, or that they ever completed degrees. Over my five semesters at Sweet Water, I had met many of Roberta's students—some of whom I continued to see in the hallways of Academic III and the ACCT lab early in the morning. Others had disappeared. No one seemed to know what had happened to them.

Still, 85% was something to be proud of; and, it was something Roberta *was* proud of. To that end, her understandings of gatekeeping and advocacy were not necessarily contradictions. Rather, gatekeeping as advocacy made sense for her—sometimes. That is, even as Roberta was able to rationalize why one student had failed and another had not, her analyses did not completely relieve her of the pangs of self-doubt that she sometimes articulated in our interviews and conversations.

Having taught the course multiple semesters, she confided that she could pretty much tell by mid-semester which students would probably not pass. That knowledge became all the more poignant at the semester's end, when Roberta had to make the phone calls telling some of the students that they hadn't passed the essay and would have to repeat the course. These were difficult phone calls to make.

Spring 2006 had been a particularly tough semester. Roberta's numbers had faltered. The backlash from a town hall meeting about illegal immigration that the Students for a Progressive Society had organized had been intense. The city's newspaper ran an article about the "often-tense debate" on 7 March and another on 12 March about the "immigration enigma"—again citing the town hall meeting at Sweet Water as an example of the emotional public debate in Georgia over illegal immigration. The same local newspaper reported on 1 April that the forum had not sat well with some [unnamed] members of the state legislature and that the town hall meeting—reportedly—had nearly cost Sweet Water a $5 million addition to its student center. The paper reported that the funds, earmarked for the college, had almost been redirected. It was also whispered to the ESL Program Coordinator who had sponsored the town hall meeting that she might lose her job. Not long after the articles appeared, a drunken caller phoned into the Dean's voice mail the message that "all the faculty—everybody up there—needs to be shot." Roberta and her colleagues were terrified. Students were afraid and upset. They couldn't, she explained, seem to concentrate on their schoolwork. Roberta's pregnancy that semester had also been difficult. For the first time that anyone could remember, Roberta had cancelled classes. To further complicate the situation, students who shouldn't have been in Advanced ESL Grammar and Writing had been placed in Roberta's course and stayed there, unwilling to go down a level. There was only so much you could do in 16 weeks.

On the last day of fieldwork, I met Roberta in her office. We chatted in her yellow cinderblock cubicle in Academic III, and I remembered the many conversations we had had before. But, this time, the fragility of Roberta's construction of her professional self was painfully evident. Her bravado was spent. I asked her how she felt about the semester. She paused. Then, she told me how one of her own students had not passed the course, the exit essay, or the COMPASS. As much as she wanted to be the "professional," as much as she wanted to distance herself from a student's failure, she could not. She told me that in the back of her mind she wondered if she had succeeded or if she too had failed. Roberta told me that she was no longer so

sure. She wanted to be sure. She wanted to be a professional. This was the ambiguity of teaching ESL Advanced Grammar and Writing: Roberta's love hurt. It hurt like a motherfucker.

Notes

1. Roberta, Sweet Water, and other names used in this article are pseudonyms.

2. Words that were emphasized by speakers in interviews are printed in italics.

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APPENDIX A

EXITING ESL LEARNING SUPPORT

Students at Sweet Water must successfully complete all of the following to exit ESL Learning Support and enter credit-bearing English courses:

(1) Pass the capstone ESL Advanced Grammar and Writing course. This course is described in detail in the article.

(2) Pass the English Department's exit essay. The exit essay is a three-day affair at the end of each semester. On day one, students write a five-paragraph essay in two hours, choosing from a slate of five questions. On day two, they return to write another five-paragraph essay from a different slate of questions. On day three, they have approximately one hour to choose the stronger of their two essays, edit it, and submit it for scoring by English and/or ESL professors.

(3) Pass the COMPASS Writing Skills Exam. The COMPASS Writing Skills Exam, a pre-packaged computerized assessment developed by the ACT and in use across the University System of Georgia, simulates the editing process by presenting several 200-word readings and requiring students to locate and correct grammar, usage, and style errors. Additionally, the test presents one or two multiple-choice questions focused on the strategy, organization, and style of the reading passage. To pass the COMPASS, students must score 61 or higher. If they don't attain this score, they have to repeat the course, the exit essay, and the COMPASS exam in a subsequent term.

THE TESTING CONTINUES . . .

The Georgia Regents' Test. After successfully completing the freshman English sequence, all students at Sweet Water face another high-stakes standardized test—the Georgia Regents' Test. This system-wide assessment requires students to pass a multiple-choice reading comprehension exam and write a five-paragraph essay on a choice of topics. Passing the Regents' is a requirement for all of Sweet Water's degree programs.

APPENDIX B

ROBERTA'S RUBRIC FOR THE EXIT ESSAY

+	**CONTENT—Add**	-	**MECHANICS—Subtract**
10	Introduction—Minimum 3 sentences; no details; progression from general to specific; connections logical and interesting	10	Fragment
10	Thesis Statement—Closed (If you do not use a closed thesis, you will lose 30 points.)	10	Comma Splice
15	Topic Sentence for each body paragraph (5 pts. each sentence)	10	Run-on Sentence
30	Development—Paragraphs of 6 to 8 sentences (minimum); points supported by examples. (10 pts. each paragraph)	5	Verb Tense/Time
10	Conclusion—Connected to content of introduction and body; does not repeat statements previously made.	30	Verb Form
5	Logical Connectors—Used when appropriate and necessary	10	Agreement—Subject- Verb/ Pronoun- Noun/ Noun-Adjective
10	Paragraphs—Structured properly	3 each	Word Form/Word Order/Spelling/ Articles/Punctuation
10	Logical Thought Progression	10	Missing Comma/ Introductory Adverbial Clauses

Service Learning in a Basic Writing Class: A Best Case Scenario

Nancy Pine

ABSTRACT: This article explores the particular challenges and possibilities of service learning pedagogy for basic writers. Because a number of scholars of service learning and basic writing (Adler-Kassner, Arca, and Kraemer) are concerned primarily with developing underprepared students' academic literacies, I investigated how the students in a service learning basic writing class situated their service experience—represented that "text" rhetorically—in their major academic research essay for the course. The article draws on one student's experience of making connections among the "rich mix" of course texts, including personal experience, as a best case. From this example, I argue for strategies of service learning pedagogy that could better help basic writers achieve their goals for academic writing.

KEYWORDS: service learning; personal narrative; academic literacies; ethnography

> *With time, the struggle for social justice will be met with more people trying to make sure that it becomes more fair to urban schools, and I am willing to be part of that, what say you?*
>
> —William, English 100S student

> *Whatever the impact of community service learning on the students themselves, I, as basic skills teacher, must necessarily consider its effects on their writing.*
>
> —Rosemary L. Arca (139-40)

Service learning pedagogy presents particular challenges and possibilities for basic writing courses. Responding to Bruce Herzberg's article, "Community Service and Critical Teaching," Linda Adler-Kassner points out that Herzberg's experiences using service learning pedagogy with business students at Bentley College—students who, as Adler-Kassner describes, "believed that they earned their place in the meritocracy that Mike Rose discusses in *Lives on the Boundary*" (553)—contrast markedly with the experiences of her own students at General College, the University of Minnesota's open admission unit. Adler-Kassner describes working with students who "*were*

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the underserved, underprepared excluded students around whom Rose's critiques of the American educational system were based" (553). While the primary focus of Herzberg's service learning courses was for his students to achieve critical and cultural consciousness and learn to see social problems as systemic, the goal for Adler-Kassner's students—who she claims already brought to the course a critical consciousness from having been "given the shaft" by the system—was to "articulate whatever consciousness they had in a way that was acceptable to the academy" (555). Adler-Kassner argues that service learning composition courses for underprepared students should provide students opportunities for critical and cultural analysis, but they should do so while practicing academic discourse, especially as they include "explor[ing] the role of writing in different contexts" (555).

More recently, other scholars of basic writing echo Adler-Kassner's concerns for service learning pedagogy focusing on issues of authority. Sharing Adler-Kassner's emphasis on teaching underprepared students the skills of academic writing through service learning, Rosemary Arca asks, "Isn't true 'authority'—that sense of potency as a writer who not only has something important to say but also has the skills to say it well—what we want our basic writers to realize?" (141). Don J. Kraemer, critical of some forms of service learning in composition, argues further that certain writing-for-the-community service learning projects work to diminish basic writers' sense of authority "because rather than inquire into the complexity of making leadership collaborative, they advance the process of making student servitude seem inevitable" (93). The "product-based, performance-centered moment mandated" by writing-for projects contradicts the "process-oriented, learning-centered pedagogy commonly associated with basic writing" (92).

According to Adler-Kassner, Arca, and Kraemer, one key challenge for using service learning pedagogy in basic writing courses is to facilitate students' critical and cultural critique of social issues while practicing the conventions of academic discourse. In a service learning course themed literacy and education—like Herzberg's—basic writing students may critically reflect on ways in which the community they are serving, as well as perhaps they themselves, have been shafted by the U.S. educational system. At the same time they must learn to write themselves into this system, crafting such critiques in a form appropriate for the academy.

To what extent does service learning pedagogy better enable such a tall order for basic writers, or does it further complicate students' acquisition of academic literacies? Various scholars have documented and critiqued the ways in which process pedagogy (Delpit), tracking (Rose), and dominant

cultural classroom expectations (Heath), among other practices of the U.S. education system, extend the challenge of underprepared students to write in the approved and standard discourses of the academy. Add to this the point by David Bartholomae that even in his or her first year of college a student must try on—establish authority within—a number of particular academic discourses before acquiring the disciplinary knowledge that would make the practice more than a set of mere rules. Proficiency follows upon student confidence and community-discourse membership. Therefore, is service learning pedagogy appropriate for all basic writers, some of whom against the odds have struggled through unjust systems and navigated them somewhat successfully to pursue their dream of a college education? How and why should they be taught to critique that dream while trying to live it?

Intrigued by the possibilities of service learning, yet troubled by its increasing adoption in composition courses despite the lack of qualitative research on this pedagogy, I conducted an ethnography of a service learning basic writing class to situate and contextualize the social justice claims made about the theory and practice of service learning pedagogy and to note its effects on student writing. In the service learning basic writing class I studied, students combined intensive reading and writing about literacy, language, community, and culture with service in a particular community setting. One out of their four weekly class meetings, every Thursday for an hour and twenty minutes, students and their instructor at State University convened at Elm Elementary, a school located in the low-income university district, to tutor first graders in reading and writing. Course writing assignments asked students to analyze literacy in multiple contexts of primary and secondary sources, including past personal experience, hands-on experience at the elementary school, as well as public and academic texts. I attended all class meetings on campus and at Elm as a participant-observer.

William, the student discussed in this article, is a "best case." He represents a possibility, a goal to work toward in service learning basic writing classes. As a student who self-selected this course because he was already an after-school mentor at Elm, William pushed the boundaries of his formula for "good" writing by situating his service "text" among other personal and academic sources in his academic essay. I argue that key to William's success for the academic research essay for this class was his engagement with what Arca calls a "rich mix of sources," which included, in addition to secondary sources, first-hand observations from his community service experience. Challenged to integrate new experience and information from multiple perspectives, William relearned prior notions of "good writing,"

as he had understood it to be taught to him in high school. Similar to the course Adler-Kassner describes, this service learning basic writing class focused on attaining academic literacy. Yet, while Adler-Kassner, Arca, and Kraemer discuss a student population that is underprepared, the students placed into this particular basic writing course were, in a sense, overprepared, according to placement lore in the basic writing program at State University. Specifically, students who place into English 100S are underprepared for college-level writing at State University because they are overprepared in a particular form of writing—the five-paragraph theme—which may have served them well in high school and on standardized tests, but will not do for college. Unlike Adler-Kassner's, Arca's, and Kraemer's students who arrive in class with a diminished sense of authority as writers, these basic writers have met state standards and are good at writing in accordance with those standards. Therefore, the instructor of this course is in the difficult position of acknowledging students' authority as writers while simultaneously disrupting that sense in order to authorize students to write in other ways. As the course instructor, Mary (the names of all participants in the study have been changed), explained to me in her second interview, these particular basic writers "need to be shaken up somehow." She saw her basic writing course as disrupting students' formulaic ways of writing, reading, and thinking. The community service portion of the class was designed as one way to help students realize, among other things, that the college classroom isn't the only place where learning occurs and that literacy criteria shift depending upon context.

A Service Learning Partnership with Elm Elementary

The theme for English 100S was "literacy," but students were encouraged to explore additional issues about the broader topic of education. While Mary created the assignments and chose the readings for this class, and also borrowed from her colleagues, she did not exclusively choose the theme or design the course. The goals and curriculum for service learning stem from the basic writing program.[1] Like other 100S sections, the assignment sequence moved from personal to academic to public discourse. Students drafted and revised a literacy autobiography essay, an academic research paper about topics related to literacy or education, and collaboratively they wrote a children's book in addition to a reflective essay on their process and rhetorical choices in creating this book. Students concluded

the course with a take-home exam reflecting on their writing process across all assignments.

This particular service learning class represents, from Thomas Deans' taxonomy, both writing-*for* and writing-*about* the community. According to Deans, in the writing-*for* model, students compose documents for community organizations; the very act of composing these documents is the community service. In the writing-*about* model, students perform some kind of community service—in this class, tutoring—and then write about this experience, often in community-based research projects. The community service provides another text for course content—a hands-on experience in exploration of the course theme. In this class, students created books *for* the needs of the Elm community and wrote *about* the context of their service to this community (tutoring) in assignments focused on literacy and education. According to Deans, "[T]he writing-*about*-the-community and writing-*for*-the-community strands of such courses, while complementary, value distinctly different literacies, engage distinctly different learning processes, require distinctly different rhetorical practices, and result in distinctly different kinds of texts" (19; emphasis in original). Thus, the formal writing assignments in this course, in combination with the community service of tutoring first graders, were designed to meet the English100S curricular goals of examining how literacy and "good" writing change in different contexts.

Personal and Academic Writing

In addition to thinking about literacy and education through a variety of means, including tutoring, books, articles, video, and their own essay writing, students wrote journal responses on their readings, their visits to Elm, and other topics. Mary provided the reading journal prompts, while she helped the class generate their own prompts for the weekly "Elm Observation Journals." Students predominately reflected on their community service experience—tutoring—as a practicum. They related personally to their first grade partners, pointing out tutoring problems while brainstorming strategies. According to Chris Anson, such journal writing should not merely document or log service experiences, but also provide a means for the "critical examination of ideas, or the sort of consciousness-raising reflection, that is the mark of highly successful learning" (169).

Throughout the semester, the students in this class were prompted by the instructor to make connections among multiple course texts, pre-

dominately through class discussion, personal narrative assignments, and informal writing. The journals were also a means for students to reflect on their personal experiences with literacy and education. Having them write a journal entry about a memorable grade-school experience, for example, might lead students to compare their experiences with those of their Elm first grade literacy partners. The journal was thereby an ongoing prompt for students to enrich their perspectives by way of personal experience, past or present.

However, as Adler-Kassner, Arca, and Kraemer are concerned with basic writers' academic writing, I was interested to see how the students situated their service experience—represented that text rhetorically—in their major research essay for the course, the investigation essay. The investigation essay was the second formal writing assignment, preceded by the literacy autobiography. I chose to focus on the investigation essay because it seemed most explicitly to ask students to demonstrate the kinds of skills demanded in the academy. The assignment required students to conduct research, using secondary and primary sources, and sustain an argument about an issue related to the course theme. Certainly there can be a number of assignments in service learning courses, whether writing-for or writing-about, that help students practice academic discourse. While most of the students did discuss their experiences at Elm with other course "texts" in their final exam, I wanted to see how students would situate their personal service/tutoring experiences in the context of making an academic argument about a larger social issue.

In "Argument and Evidence in the Case of the Personal," Candace Spigelman describes the multiple configurations of "the personal" in writing instruction. She explains that many writing instructors have interpreted the writing of expressivist pedagogy as "writing-as-self-expression" or "writing-for-self-discovery" (70). To counter "semester-long composition programs that call for writing as personal confession, the cathartic soul-searching narrative of trauma or enlightenment associated with expressivism taken to the extreme," hard-core advocates of academic discourse banished all forms of personal writing (70). Still Spigelman asserts that "narratives of personal experience can operate at a sophisticated level of argument" (71). Narrative can have its own logic. Arguing for the use of personal narrative in academic writing, Spigelman claims that "the telling of stories can actually serve the same purposes as academic writing and that narratives of personal experience can accomplish serious scholarly work" (64). Drawing on Aristotle's discussions of narration and example, she explores "the efficacy of narrative

argument in academic writing" (64), and makes claims about "the personal as scholarly evidence" (75). Certainly, qualitative research methodologies such as ethnography demonstrate how personal stories can provide examples from which theories may be generalized. Thus, I wanted to examine how students used their personal tutoring experiences at Elm "not [as] a confessional essay of personal angst or therapeutic rehabilitation, but an analytic argument, in which personal experience is used evidentially to illustrate and prove a particular position" (77).

In the investigation essay, it was not a requirement to use Elm as a source, and only one student, William, actually did so, trying to contextualize his service/tutoring experience in that academic essay. The other students might not have used Elm as a source because they chose topics that were to varying degrees less directly related to issues at Elm. Although Arca describes reading "a wide range of interesting and locally focused topics" in her students' papers (140), I found that few students chose "locally focused topics" that related to their service experience in this class. Yet, William, perhaps fueled by critically reflecting on his service/tutoring experience and developing tutoring strategies accordingly, voluntarily made the connections among the "rich mix" of course texts—and other sources—in his academic essay.

William's (Personal) Academic Connections

An eighteen-year-old first-year student, William identifies as "mixed" racially and checked off both the "African-American or Black" and "Asian American or Pacific Islander" categories on a background survey I had distributed. Although he is from the east side of the city in which State University is located, he lives in the dorms. He is a pre-business major who hopes to specialize in marketing (students at State University have to apply to the business school to become majors), and in his second interview he discussed his aspirations of attending graduate school, "possibly for a Ph.D. in business." He was also one of the few students who indicated on the background survey that he works part-time; he works twenty hours a week as an office assistant at his dorm and was on an academic scholarship for the 2004-2005 academic year. William has very short dark hair and dark eyes, which peer through glasses that look almost invisible (small rectangular unframed lenses rest on thin silver "arms" that attach to his ears). He generally wears baggy pants and over-sized T-shirts and hoodies to class and to Elm, and his outfits usually appear well coordinated, even with his tennis

shoes (of which he had several pairs). For example, to his second interview, which was before class, he wore dark, crisp-new jeans with a bright white T-shirt and a matching hooded sweatshirt with gleaming white unscuffed tennis shoes, tongues up with no laces.

As I will soon make clear, William perhaps most exemplified, as Mary described, the need to be "shaken up" in the way he approached writing, but as a student he enjoyed shaking up the class. Oftentimes, he provided comic relief by joking with the instructor, other students, and me. Perhaps because of his jokes, at the beginning of the term Mary expressed concern about how William would do in the course. In her first interview, Mary explained that while William is "sharp and witty," he is not as "in touch with the analytical" side of his own or his literacy partner's experiences, although she admitted this may not have been much different from other students in the class.

Like many of the other students placed in this class, William adhered to a specific formula for describing his own and his partner's experiences in writing. His writing process consistently included creating a handwritten outline before drafting each formal essay, which would often be organized by five Roman numerals. Other "good writing" formulas that he had articulated to his classmates in discussion included drawing on a formal outline, organizing essays into five-paragraph themes and including a "closing sentence" at the end of each body paragraph.

William's signature formula for "good writing," however, was beginning all of his writing assignments for the course—both informal journals and formal essays—by listing two or three questions. For example, all three drafts of William's literacy autobiography, the first formal writing assignment of the course, began with the same two questions: "What literacy experience have you learned the most from? What did it mean to you and how did it affect your literacy ability?" As he explained at the end of the term to his small group, which was working on the collaborative book-writing project, beginning with questions (from an assignment prompt or of his own creation) is "my thing." When another member of his collaborative writing group challenged him on this rhetorical choice, he was hesitant to compromise and had a difficult time brainstorming other ways to begin the essay. So far in his educational career, beginning any kind of writing with questions had been effective; therefore, he had internalized that this is a strategy for good writing—it is the right way to write.

The remainder of the introductory paragraph to the final draft of William's literacy autobiography essay highlights one of the main challenges

he faced with writing: making connections across ideas—from these opening questions—which means, of course, moving beyond the five-paragraph theme:

> The most significant literacy experience I've had was being *Hooked on Phonics* from the first to the third grade. This was an in school program that really helped make reading, writing, and speaking properly interesting. It promoted learning in multi-leveled steps that built on my existing skills. Being *Hooked on Phonics* wasn't just a program though, it allowed me to really develop my literacy skills and become more used to the process of learning.

From this introduction it seems the essay would provide examples of how, as not "just a program," *Hooked on Phonics* shaped William's emergent literacy development, and each example would explore some aspect of William's experience with the program. Instead the essay lists a wide range of ideas—one for each paragraph and in an arbitrary order— of interesting possibilities for the program's significance, yet none is examined in depth. There is no unifying theme clearly being developed to connect each idea, each point. For example, the end of the first body paragraph presents William's earliest memories of the *Hooked on Phonics* book:

> You couldn't take my workbook from me though. That's probably because it contained a lot of illustrations with animals and people. I even remember one time I stood on a chair (when the teacher was gone) and yelled, "I'm *Hooked on Phonics*!" I got some laughs, but quickly returned to my seat when I thought I heard the teacher coming. I remember using those workbooks as a guide and took it step-by-step as the teacher assigned us sections. The class would do spelling, grammar, and speaking assignments independently, with a small group, and even with the whole class.

Mary, in a marginal comment on this final draft, questioned the significance of the detail about the illustrations. She wrote, "[a]nd you liked these—they kept you engaged or entertained while you were working?" Her comment reveals the way in this paragraph—and throughout the essay—detailed evidence is used randomly (listed) rather than in support of a theme or claim about a larger idea. This arbitrariness to the text is especially evident in the transition from this paragraph to the next. The following is the topic sen-

tence for the second body paragraph: "The illustrations with animals and people weren't the only reason why I liked *Hooked on Phonics* though. I think it was also how everyone else in my writing class was doing it, which showed that we were all in the same boat." In this transition the illustrations example is pulled out as the most significant, purposeful point in the paragraph, yet it is never developed. And the second part of the transition—about being in "the same boat"—is not clearly connected to ideas in the previous paragraph or, therefore, any broader theme or claim.

The entire essay is filled with these very interesting ideas and details about practical strategies for learning phonics and social qualities of the program (being part of a group and developing self-confidence). Yet, typical of five-paragraph themes, none of the ideas is developed fully, and their connections are left up to reader interpretation; their meaning and significance are not clearly explained.

Getting to know William throughout the term I wondered to what extent this service learning basic writing course would "shake him up." When writing about his experiences tutoring his first grade literacy partner, would he impose his five-paragraph-opening-with-questions-formula, or would he develop some new rhetorical strategies for representing, and thus complicating, his experiences? Also, when tutoring his literacy partner would he stick to some sort of formula, or would he create multiple kinds of tutoring strategies?

"An Alternate Learning Environment": Critical Reflection on Tutoring

William was one of the few students in the class who registered for the course because it was a service learning section. Unlike most of his classmates, many of whom were unaware they would even be tutoring as part of the course, he actually chose the course because he knew he would be tutoring at the specific elementary school with which he had had experience. Since the beginning of the school year (this study took place during winter term), William had been volunteering at Elm weekly in an after-school tutoring program known as "Power Hour." Although through both programs William saw the children at Elm only once a week, he viewed his work with them as continuous. In other words, rather than simply conducting distinct weekly tutoring sessions, William sought to make a connection with specific children as a mentor.

At a freshman orientation inviting incoming students to get involved in the community, William had readily chosen tutoring. It is possible that

his desire was partially rooted in the absence of a person to fulfill that role for him when he was a child. In his literacy autobiography, he writes, "As a child I looked up to anyone who was a positive role-model since there weren't many in my family. It would have been nice to have a mentor, but I didn't need one that bad since I had positive influences like a teacher and peers." William seems committed to the idea of mentoring a child to be the "positive role-model" that he did not have. Also unlike many of his classmates, William instinctively, perhaps because of his own background, does not separate the experience of tutoring a child in reading and writing from the more personal aspects of mentoring that child. In his second interview, he discussed what he believes the purpose of such State University outreach programs is for Elm:

> **William**: To provide an alternative learning environment or system to students who just otherwise have their parents and teachers. An alternate tutoring source.
> **Nancy**: And what do you mean by alternate? Alternate to what?
> **William:** Besides the teachers and parents.
> **Nancy:** And how would such an alternate be different from what the teachers and parents can provide?
> **William:** Someone that's more close to their age. Someone that's trying to do well. They're in college and they're helping you. Someone to look up to.

William's broader understanding of his tutoring role as similar to that of a mentor also may be why he is troubled by, and feels the need to discuss, what he learns about his partner.

The first grader with whom Mary paired William was Michael, who, as William described during class to his small group, is "also mixed" racially. As Michael's mentor, William sought to make a connection with his literacy partner. It was especially crucial that William connect with Michael in some way because Michael was, as William described him, "a difficult one" who was reading below grade level. During their tutoring sessions together, William began connecting with Michael by using stickers as a reward system. By guaranteeing Michael stickers for going over flashcards or reading a book, William was able to motivate Michael to make productive use of their forty-five minutes a week together. Yet, just when William thought his tutorials with Michael were going better, he had another difficult session and was disturbed by what he learned about Michael's home life.

In his sixth observation journal, William describes a "difficult" tutoring session in which Michael was "unaffected" and "uninterested." William explains that Michael told him he was up late the night before playing video games. William writes, "I'm a little disturbed that [Michael's] dad is letting him play 'mature' games with blood and violence as a first grader. I just hope this doesn't negatively affect [Michael] in the long run although for some odd reason I think it will." Ann E. Green argues that it is necessary to tell such "difficult stories," specifically about race and class, in service learning classrooms and scholarship in order to "more effectively negotiate the divide between the university and the community and work toward social change" (276). She adds that such stories "are both partial and contradictory" and "absolutely necessary if service learning will lead to social change" (278) to help "open the door for more complex theorizing about the relationship between those who serve and those who are served" (277). Certainly, William's difficult tutoring session with Michael is framed by other "both partial and contradictory" difficult stories about the Elm community as revealed by the school principal and Michael's teacher. When I interviewed the Elm Elementary school principal, Mr. Smith, about the struggles of the Elm community as a whole, he said, "That's easy. If we have a 90% poverty rate—our [rate of] free and reduced [lunches] is around 90%—then you have those issues you're dealing with in the community. Poverty. That has its own issues that you have to deal with." Michael's teacher, Ms. Jackson, provided a brief portrait of her perception of the home lives of many of the children at Elm in her first interview. She said, "If you ask them what they do at home, they watch TV. Maybe somebody talks to them. They get fed, if they're lucky—that's the sad part." William's reflections on the "difficult" tutoring session alluded to the social issues within which his tutoring of Michael took place.

Although William was "disturbed" by the information he learned about his partner's home environment, he did not let it keep him from trying to connect with Michael while tutoring him. In his journal about his second-to-last tutorial with Michael, William explains the strategy he developed of creating note cards with Michael of words and phrases from the video games and gaming systems Michael plays to get Michael to read and write. William writes, "To my surprise, this 'new' strategy of using [Michael's] interests as a teaching tool really worked. I luckily made enough note cards to last for the whole period and [Michael] was actually anxious to read the next one." Although in this journal entry William writes optimistically of using Michael's personal interests as a bridge to academic lessons, in his

second interview he reflected more critically on the pedagogical strategy he developed:

> **William**: So, that's kind of like how I encompassed what his interests were. . . It kind of makes me scared too because I'm kind of promoting it by teaching him the terms. But at the same time I'm teaching him new words, all different words like "PlayStation 2." And I spell out "two"; I don't just put the number "2." And then the company that makes them, which is Sony. But I'm teaching him some new stuff, but I don't know if I'm also promoting just him getting used to video game terms.
>
> **Nancy:** Well, maybe it's like a bridge from what he's familiar with to then these new things—
>
> **William:** Cuz then, I started to put in new terms like Internet, Broadband, and Dial-Up. And he was like, "What's this? These aren't video game names." I'm like, "Yes, but these are what video games can use." And then I start from there and go to other stuff. I kind of try to sneak in some other terms he hasn't seen before. But he reads them anyway. He keeps grabbing for more. I don't have enough note cards to show him, keep writing them down. I have probably like twenty note cards back and front. It took almost the whole time to do them.

Even though William avoided violent words and phrases, he was "scared" that he was promoting Michael's use of violent video games by teaching him to read and write terms related to the games. The observation journals are designed for such critical reflection, yet William chose to represent his tutoring experience in a less critical and uncomplicated way. In his journal, William's only reflection was that this tutoring strategy "really worked," but in his interview with me he questioned the implications of this strategy. He realized that while using terms related to Michael's interest in video games might help this first grader with reading and writing (and, therefore, make tutoring sessions go more smoothly), this strategy, by possibly promoting late-night gaming, could reinforce a hobby that might, in the long run, interfere with Michael's academic achievement.

William adopted strategies trying to better meet his literacy partner's needs, as opposed to uncritically and unreflectively imposing a formula or script on his tutoring. When Michael "shook up" William's expectations, William adapted and created a new pedagogical strategy. William's tutor-

ing effectiveness even overcame Mary's initial doubts. Around mid-term, while observing a tutoring session, Mary smiled as she watched William and Michael together and leaned over to me and said, "William is doing a good job with Michael." She added that William had asked her for books that contain only one line on a page. Then, together we watched William pointing underneath each word on each page of a book, asking Michael to sound it out. William seemed to work through this evolution in the tutoring process in his observation journals—an informal writing assignment. But what about his academic writing? Could he break from his use of formula and develop some new rhetorical strategies for representing, and thus complicating, his experiences?

"Seeing the Bigger Picture": Critical Engagement with Sources

As it came time for the second formal writing assignment, the investigation essay, the fervent desire of William and his classmates to be "told what to write" bore out the basic writing program's lore about this student population's penchant for writing instructions and formulas. In his first interview, William said that one of the things he disliked about the class was that Mary was not "more specific on papers." He expressed particular concern about this second paper, as it must include research. He said he was "not sure about the topic" and that he "could've had a head start" if Mary would have "been specific." He added, "For something that long, we have to know." Later in the interview, in response to a question about his opinion of the writing assignments in the course, he added that "ideas and specific details might be a problem with this paper." He said, "Without a topic first, it's hard to find specific details." This interview was conducted right before the class period in which Mary led the students in a "topic review" meant to help students choose their areas of interest. Each student went around the room offering the topic they were considering. (Some students did change their topics before the first draft was due the following week). This was Friday, and they would have to commit to their investigation topics on that Monday, so the students had a few days to fret over their topics first—clearly all part of the process.

For the first draft of the investigation essay, Mary did provide some written instructions. Her prompt read: "Once you have settled on a general topic, I'd like you to write an exploratory draft presenting what you already know about the topic and introducing the questions you would like to explore." Even prior to doing the exploratory draft, William wrote a hand-

written outline, as he did for each formal writing assignment. It contained three roman numerals, which were labeled "Introduction," "Main Body," and "Conclusion," denoting three sections of the paper. The second or "Main Body" section was broken down into four sub-sections: "Beginning," "Middle," "Middle (2)," and "Middle (3)." In its level of detail, the outline represented a nearly sentence-by-sentence plan. For example, in Section I, next to the letter A, William wrote, "Opening sentence" and below it, next to the letter B, he added, "Thesis statement (Our education system today)," under which he listed four questions or issues about this broad topic. The sub-sections seemed to indicate the different paragraphs within the "Main Body" section, although each topic warranted its own separate paper. For example, listed under "Middle (3)" were letters A-F, each with sub-sub-topics such as "sports," "school supplies," and "property value." Listed under each capital letter were numbers and also, for some entries, lower-case letters. Although his topic was quite broad, the outline represented a complex process for teasing out various issues and ideas which William could research. Yet, as indicated by the checkmarks he placed next to most sections and sub-sections as he wrote, reminding himself that he had covered that part, William used the outline as a formula or roadmap for drafting his essay.

In the typed, double-spaced, two-page "exploratory draft" of the essay, it is clear that William followed his outline exactly, although he ended up only drafting material from the first half of the outline. Nothing from "Middle (3)" onward appears in that first draft, and some of this information does not appear in any of the three subsequent drafts, although William did add most of it in later drafts. The "exploratory draft" begins, like all of William's writings for this class, with questions: "What is our education system in the United States like today? How well is the quality of education being provided and what issues are there with the teachers and students?" Then, in the subsequent four paragraphs of the draft, William treats each of his sources—which in this exploratory, "what-you-know" draft are some of the class "texts"—separately. These class texts include *Holler If You Hear Me* by Gregory Michie, a teacher's narrative about teaching in inner-city Chicago public schools, and the how-to tutoring guide *Help America Read*. In his first body paragraph he discusses how he used strategies from *Help* to tutor his Elm literacy partner; in the second he describes *Holler*'s author's "ongoing struggle for social justice for Latino and African American students"; and the final paragraph presents what he has learned from working with his literacy partner. Because of this draft's focus on sources rather than ideas from these sources, the second and final paragraphs are nearly identical. In both, he

discusses strategies and "techniques" he learned from *Help America Read* and how he used them with his partner. Furthermore, as could be expected in this preliminary, writer-based draft, particularly in his discussions of tutoring his partner, the essay reads more like a personal narrative about what William learned rather than a more academic essay in which William makes an argument to an audience. For example, William writes, "The book *Help America Read* has really aided in educating me on the strategies to use in the classroom of my first grader. I like that the theme is helping kids to become more literate. This makes me feel like I'm accomplishing something. . . ." In the subsequent three drafts of this assignment, William drew on feedback from Mary, his peers, and me (as participant-observer, I conducted in-class peer response on two drafts) to focus more on ideas than sources and present his arguments for an academic audience.[2] Drafting and revising this assignment involved difficult and complicated tasks, specifically for William, synthesizing "a rich mix of sources" and learning to use them as evidence to support claims.

Drawing on feedback, William conducted major revisions from his preliminary two-page draft to the nine-page final version. A comparison of the four drafts illustrates that on each one William not only added further information and sources, but also re-organized paragraphs and ideas within paragraphs. Each draft except the final one, which contained only Mary's comments, was replete with handwritten comments from Mary, his peers, and me in addition to revising and editing ideas William had jotted down. As William sat down to revise each draft, his task was to consolidate all of this feedback and translate it into new words on the page.

Evident in the revisions he made in the subsequent three drafts, William demonstrated a number of general rhetorical features of academic writing**,** which include defining and applying (testing) a theory, synthesizing sources, and using evidence from sources to support claims. The theory William explored in this assignment was about social justice, specifically the theme of teaching for social justice. Through our comments, Mary and I helped pull out William's theory of teaching for social justice as a theme and focus because William's early drafts were guided more by individual sources rather than a controlling idea. The focus of this analysis, however, was on William's progress testing this theory by synthesizing sources and using evidence from sources to support claims—in short, his ability to use what Arca calls a "rich mix of sources." Most interesting were the connections William made among all of these sources in his exploration of teaching for

social justice, including not only secondary book sources, but also primary evidence from tutoring at Elm.

In addition to applying a theory by using evidence from sources, through his revisions William demonstrated that he could make connections between—synthesize—different kinds of sources. Because his preliminary drafts were organized by sources rather than ideas from sources to support a thesis, he was consistently encouraged to make connections among his sources. For example, on his second draft one classmate wrote during peer response, "Pretty good essay. Be careful to stay focused though. There are so many subtopics in this essay (not a bad thing) but always make sure you get back to your main topic." On that same draft, noting two sentences in the conclusion, Mary asks in the margin, "Is this what ties all your points together?" On his third draft, in an end comment I wrote, "I like the rich variety of sources you're using. I hope I offer you [in the margins] some suggestions for tying all of this great info together." Mary and I both offered marginal comments next to several paragraphs that asked William to make connections between specific sources.

In his fourth and final draft, William finally began making connections among his sources, synthesizing them. These explicit connections are important not only in that they allow William to show academic readers how evidence from source information is related in support of his focus or central argument, but also to enable him to generalize from examples and explain the reasoning behind his claims. In our comments on his third draft, Mary and I asked him to interpret evidence from source material. For example, Mary wrote in the margin of a paragraph that was filled with statistics, "This [paragraph symbol] includes a lot of statistical info—what do you want readers to learn from it?" Next to a quote William used from one of his sources, I wrote, "Such a powerful and complex quote! What do you think the author means by it?" Mary also asked him to generalize from specific examples in his source information. For example, she wrote, "How is what Michie [source author] learned applicable to education systems in general?" Comments and questions prompted him to use his sources more actively in support of claims.

By his final (fourth) draft, William revised to draw clearer connections among his sources—even by re-arranging some paragraphs to more effectively organize his ideas and make such connections more explicit. Yet, what I found to be the most impressive, active example of his making connections among his "rich mix of sources" (Arca 140) was that he included his tutoring experience at Elm as a source. The third draft of

his essay presented the opportunity to query William on the connection between his tutoring and what had emerged as a focus on social justice. A paragraph in which he describes his strategies for tutoring Michael seemed to resonate the strategies of Michie's *Holler If You Hear Me,* prompting Mary to comment, "Is your goal, like Michie's to prevent drop-outs? Are there other ways to approach [Michael]—more closely related to Michie's work?" Although William had transitioned from the previous paragraph to this one invoking a connection between Michie's experience and his—"Many of the principles Michie learned as a teacher are what I wanted to adopt as a mentor to my first grader at [Elm] Elementary"—he left this connection unexplored. In this draft the two paragraphs about his tutoring experience read like an observation journal in that, although William reflected on his tutoring process and what the experience meant to him, it was exclusively personal. It was reflection for its own sake (and for him personally) rather than a use of personal experience as evidence with connections to other forms of evidence in support of claims in an academic argument. By his final draft, however, William made this experience "academic":

> [end of paragraph] Many of the principles Michie learned as a teacher are what I wanted to adopt as a mentor to my first grader at [Elm] Elementary.
>
> Like Michie, I also wanted to make a difference in a child's life by showing that I cared and was willing to listen to my partner in order to provide a fair educational experience to him. I think teaching for social justice in my case is important because it allows me to work 'for' [my partner] Michael and make sure he's getting the most out of my time with him. The book Help America Read has really aided in educating me on the strategies to use in the classroom of my first grader. I like that the theme is helping kids to become more literate. This makes me feel like I'm accomplishing something when I use note-cards, word-wall words, and the alphabet book to help my partner, Michael, learn (Michie 5-7, 51) [wrong author in citation]. I think it's important to put in a lot of effort even though the teaching process may not go as smoothly as I would like it to. [Mary commented, "as Michie discovered, right?"] An example of this would include Michael wanting to draw instead of read and write. This would frustrate me but I quickly learned that the use of "stickers" as an award for meeting a quota of reading and writing worked out well. I believe the reward system works because it praises a child for

> good behavior which gives them the incentive to be more productive more often. There are other strategies I used that are closely related to Michie's flexible teaching style and even Paulo Freire's concept of authenticity. The "authenticity of my thinking was authenticated" by Michael when I used his love of video games to teach him the vocabulary terms of games, companies, and developers in the industry. I did this with note-cards, a writing assignment, and with verbal guidance. Michie did something similar with his Media class where he used his student's love of TV to teach them about the real meaning behind what they watch everyday (Michie 90). Like Michie, I remained flexible with my teaching style and often changed up my technique if it was not working well.

William continued with another paragraph about his experience of tutoring, which he revised to add another source connecting the tutoring to his reading, and which he ends, "I have enjoyed teaching for social justice so far and I want to continue to learn more about how the education system works in inner city schools by being a mentor next quarter as well."

William does not go so far as to discuss how volunteering as a literacy tutor/mentor in general is the work of social justice—that is, to make explicit connections between the claims in other paragraphs about discrimination and poverty limiting a fair education for students in urban, public schools.He does, however, manage to use this personal tutoring experience as evidence in an academic argument. In discussing how he works "for" Michael, he describes how his video game reading and writing activity compares with the pedagogical strategy employed by one of his sources. This connection between the Michie text and William's tutoring "text" is a difficult one considering the age differences between Michie's students and the Elm first graders (Michie's are older) and the differing roles of teacher and tutor. Furthermore, William even uses a complex partial quotation from Paulo Freire (as "The Banking Concept" from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was another one of their assigned readings for class) to allude to his student-centered tutoring strategy: "authenticity of my thinking was authenticated." This quotation confused William during the class discussion—he read it aloud to the class as a question. Yet, he found a way to use it meaningfully in his writing.

Although the resulting paragraph is dense and in need of better organization, in it William combined his personal tutoring experience with various kinds of academic sources. He represented his tutoring experiences in dialogue with other course texts. One of these texts was the how-to tutoring

guide *Help America Read*, advice William translated in the essay as "note-cards, word-wall words, and the alphabet book to help my partner. . . ." William also referred to the more personal aspects of teaching and connecting with students as narrated by Michie in *Holler*, which William connected to his own experience in the following way:

> The "authenticity of my thinking was authenticated" by Michael when I used his love of video games to teach him the vocabulary terms of games, companies, and developers in the industry. I did this with note-cards, a writing assignment, and with verbal guidance. Michie did something similar with his Media class where he used his student's love of TV to teach them about the real meaning behind what they watch everyday (Michie 90).

For his summary, William cites page 90 of Michie's text, which is the first page of the chapter, although it is on page 92 that Michie explains his pedagogical reasoning for teaching TV. Michie writes, to counter the ways "both teachers and students can become zombified at school," "I had to find ways to engage them. I had to find things for them to do—things that were relevant, things that would interest them, things that could not be accomplished without the one element that sometimes seems most foreign to school classrooms: real, live, unadulterated thinking" (92). Like Michie, William sought to engage his literacy partner Michael with "things that would interest" him. Although William does not quote his secondary sources at length, his writing is intertextual and dialogic as an academic essay should be.

In the final draft of his investigation essay, William demonstrated that he was able to achieve critical distance from a personal experience and situate this "text" among other sophisticated texts. He not only reflected on the experience and thought critically about it, but he also represented such critical thinking rhetorically in accordance with the conventions of an academic essay. William used examples of the reward system and note-card activity from his tutoring as evidence to support claims—gleaned from secondary sources—about teaching practices of care and flexibility for "teaching for social justice." Yet, in this process of academicizing his experience he did not lose his edge. He concludes the essay, "With time, the struggle for social justice will be met with more people trying to make sure that it becomes more fair to urban schools, and I am willing to be part of that, what say you?"

Based on William's final draft, there are certainly aspects of academic writing, in particular, on which he needs continued work. These include complicating and qualifying the thesis, further developing sources, and stylistic and sentence-level issues. Yet, if a main curricular goal of this course is for students to break out of their preconceived formulas for "good writing" and take some risks to grapple with complicated ideas in writing, certainly, William accomplished this goal.

On the whole, through the process of researching, drafting, and revising the second formal writing assignment—the investigation essay—William demonstrated that he had learned a lot about academic writing. He took a new and complex idea (teaching for social justice) and used a variety of sources (statistics, personal experience with education, testimony/stories in texts, tutoring experience) to make an argument about urban public education, even though he still had some, as Mary wrote on his final draft, "smoothing out" to do in his use of academic discourse. Furthermore, rather than adhering to a preconceived formula for "good" academic essay writing, he moved beyond a five-paragraph theme and learned to use feedback to revise for an audience and conventions of a particular genre. Also admirable, when he revised, he really revised. Although his fourth, and final, draft spilled onto the tenth page (the assignment did not dictate page requirements), which illustrated that he was reluctant to cut anything from previous drafts (a tall and painful order for novice and experienced writers alike), he was not afraid to move paragraphs around, entirely re-write paragraphs, and add more effective transitions between each idea.

It was also remarkable that William was able to reflect on his writing process and academic literacy at the meta-level. Discussing his thoughts on the investigation essay in his second interview, he said, "I think for me it's kind of like trial and error, but I'm learning from my mistakes and trying to make it the best paper I have. I rely highly on the feedback from the students, you, and Mary because you guys will see things that I don't. So, I rely highly on that feedback." Although he retains the idea that there is a right and a wrong way to write—that his mistakes are to be fixed—he comes to view audience feedback as an integral part of his writing process. Also in his second interview, he describes what he believes to be his struggles as a writer, which are "trying to look at the bigger picture of writing when I write, like building on my theme and topic sentence and closing sentence, citing sources—just trying to get the bigger picture and do it well." William's idea of the "bigger picture of writing" nicely captures his progress from the first to the final draft of the investigation essay in which he moved from using

each paragraph as a separate topic and source to all parts of the paper working together to develop a theme.

Conclusion

William represents a best case for the possibilities of service learning for this particular population of basic writers. His five-paragraph-theme formula for "good" writing was "shaken up" in that primarily he demonstrated he could revise for an audience (based on peer and instructor feedback) as well as draw on a combination of primary (personal tutoring experience) and secondary sources as evidence to support an academic argument. Of course, what distinguishes William from his peers is that he self-selected this particular service learning course because he was already an after-school mentor at the same school. Most students in the class did not know it was a service learning section, and those who did had no stake in the participating elementary school. Furthermore, William chose to be a mentor at Elm based on some issues in his background, specifically his desire for "a positive role model." William was, therefore, already invested in the idea of this particular form of community service. I believe that this personal investment was key to William's attempts in his investigation essay to make connections between his personal tutoring experience and secondary sources, which led to more complex and less formulaic writing. In short, the community *service* contributed to his *learning* academic literacies.

In service learning classes it is crucial that students place the service in a larger social context by reflecting on social issues and working toward "critical consciousness." Otherwise, the service is simply a practicum or internship, in this case a practicum for an education course in tutoring. Without the social context, the keeping of observation journals is just reflection on tutoring practices, and there is little connection to social justice aims. But as this course is also a basic writing course, the primary goal must be to help these students become better prepared college writers. A way to combine these goals in the curriculum is to make mandatory what William did voluntarily, which is to use the service/tutoring experience as a "text"/source in an academic essay assignment. In this case, Elm Elementary and its faculty and students would become a site of inquiry for academic research.

Yet, should instructors make such academicizing of students' service/tutoring experience a mandatory part of an academic essay? William had what he perceived to be a positive tutoring experience, a tutoring success story, which, it could be argued, is in some ways "easier" to write about.

What about some of the other students who participated in this study and discussed negative experiences, feeling unsuccessful as tutors? Sometimes there are just poor matches of a college student with a child to tutor. The benefit of doing what Mary did—allowing students to choose their own research topics related to the theme of "education"—is that (1) students are possibly more invested in the topic and, therefore, want to research and write about it, and (2) they can choose a topic they can find sources on in the few weeks they have to complete the assignment. The drawback to this freedom of choice is that students do not necessarily have the experience of making the service experience academic as William did. They do not have the opportunity to achieve critical distance and contextualize their service work among other sources/scholars as evidence for an academic argument. Furthermore, they do not have to engage in the social issues surrounding their specific service experience in writing an academic essay.

Still, students who have less than ideal service experiences, even negative ones, can academicize this work in their research writing for class. These students are perhaps even better positioned to achieve critical distance from their service work and better prepared to use this "personal" experience in support of an academic argument, even if the argument is a critique of such service. Instructors employing service learning pedagogy should engage in inquiry with students, continually interrogating the contested meanings—and ethics—of terms such as *service, community,* and *social justice.* Furthermore, in examining the social issues inherent to the service component of the course, students and instructor, working together, have an opportunity to analyze the nature of that service work—its theories and practices—candidly exposing benefits and consequences. For example, as discussed earlier, it was interesting that William shared with me in an interview—and not in his writing or in class discussion—a critical reflection of his service/tutoring practice of appealing to his partner's interest in video games as a literacy lesson. He said he was "scared" that through this practice he was encouraging what he perceived to be a hobby that was detrimental to his partner's school achievement (staying up late and experiencing violence in the games). Because William shared this only with me, it was not part of the larger class "text." If William had written about this—or even raised the issue in a class discussion—it would have been a real opportunity to be critical of the limitations of such service, while not diminishing this work. How many other students who subscribe to such service "success story" scripts are withholding critical insights that could actually broaden perceptions of service work? Students, regardless of their kinds of service experiences, can

successfully and ethically academicize this work in their research and writing by being taught academically acceptable methods for doing so.

Perhaps one way for students to both practice academic literacies and work toward "critical consciousness" in service learning writing courses is to conduct ethnographic research of their community service experience. Ellen Cushman argues that through such work students and teachers can engage in inquiry together on service learning projects.[3] She claims, "Case studies, teacher-research, or ethnographies (in which literacy artifacts, taped dialogues, interview transcripts, transcripts from class discussions, and survey results are collected) are methodologies that readily lend themselves to service learning" in addition to postmodern research methodologies (47). Students could also be taught to draw on these methods to represent their "personal" experience in academic essays as evidence (Spigelman) as William did. The textbook *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research* by Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater and Bonnie Sunstein is especially useful in preparing students to conduct such community-based fieldwork and grapple with such ethical issues as reciprocity and representation—crucial to both service learning pedagogy and qualitative research methodologies such as ethnography. An approach to students' and instructors' roles in service learning classes as both servers and fieldworkers could also help engage students who, unlike William, do not come to the course already with an interest and commitment to the service aspect of the course. Beyond the more typical "observation" journal writing, ethnographic methods—such as collecting data from fieldnotes, interviews, and artifacts and conducting analysis for themes—provide students with the tools to make academic their "personal" service experience and achieve critical distance for their research and writing. There is a fine line, however, between inquiry and making the community members in this partnership "research subjects." For example, in this particular program, one ethical question that arises relates to how much students should know about their first grade literacy partners. Moreover, because the students do not necessarily know in advance that their English class is a service learning section, I do not believe it would be fair to make studying the community site mandatory. For this reason, I support Mary's decision to give her students freedom of choice regarding their research topics.

William's case also demonstrates a particular challenge for using writing-about service learning courses, like this one, in first-year writing courses in which the goal is to expand students' academic literacies. As discussed at the start of this article, in writing-about courses, students engage in academic writing about social issues related to the service, as opposed to writing-for, in

which the writing is the service (e.g., producing brochures, newsletters, grant proposals) for non-profits, though certainly they may do academic writing for class as well. In writing-for service learning composition courses, the writing is still the course content/focus; therefore, it is easier for students to connect the service to course content. In this writing-about class, the tutoring is the service, and while this service is closely connected to the course theme of literacy and education, students need to make more of a leap to connect tutoring first graders to their own emergent academic literacies. For example, in a content course like geology, it is pretty easy to connect service to content—a class geological study for a particular community with classroom study of geology. In writing-about composition courses the service is about some other content—the course theme. In this case, that theme was the broad "literacy and education," which would more logically fit either an upper-division course in literacy or an education course about tutoring as opposed to a basic writing class. Therefore, in writing-about composition service learning classes, it is crucial that connections between the service and course content be made explicit by and for students in multiple forms of writing and speaking. And it is the instructor who needs to structure opportunities for students to make these connections for themselves. Students could be asked continually to contextualize the "texts" of their service work in relation to other class texts. Discussion questions or assignment prompts could be derived from particularly complex quotations from readings or films related to, for example, literacy or teaching for social justice. Class activities could ask students to examine their roles as servers/tutors. Designing ways to use service learning pedagogy effectively in basic writing classes involves a lot of hard work. And for students to process their service *and* learning in the course, the students and instructor need to be committed to both.

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Notes

1. According to Cady, the basic writing program director, a small group of instructors in the program, including Mary, who consistently taught the service learning courses developed procedures that would keep classes consistent enough so that the schools would be assigned teachers and students similarly focused on both practical and social dimensions of tutoring from semester to semester. Yet procedures allowed flexibility for instructors to design their own syllabi.

2. This is an analysis of written feedback only. On each draft students not only received Mary's and peers' feedback, but they also conferenced with Mary at least once for each formal assignment.

3. It is important to note that Cushman does not support the use of service learning in first-year courses; rather, the focus of her work is in upper-division courses. Rosemary Arca indicates that service learning projects in her classes are optional.

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The Role of Talk in Small Writing Groups: Building Declarative and Procedural Knowledge for Basic Writers

Sonja Launspach

ABSTRACT: Through the use of a case study, this article explores the role of talk in underprepared students' acquisition of academic discourse. Conversation analysis as a linguistic framework is used to examine the interactions of students participating in a small writing group. Tracing the progress of one student's paper, I explore how students' participation in small writing groups allows them, in Faerch and Kasper's terms, to build declarative knowledge and negotiate strategies they can apply to their procedural knowledge of writing. The small writing groups, led by a teaching assistant, provide underprepared students with exposure to the practices and values of the academic discourse community. A systematic look at how students' talk is structured and what topics they focus on offers important insights to instructors into aspects of student writers' learning processes and suggests additional pedagogical approaches.

KEYWORDS: academic discourse; declarative knowledge; procedural knowledge; writing groups; communities of practice

Like many composition teachers, I have struggled with finding ways to help my students, especially underprepared students, acquire the language of the academy. Since talk is key to the acquisition of academic discourse and the pragmatic strategies necessary for academic writing, modeling the discourse within appropriate situational contexts becomes a primary means by which to assist students' learning. Discourse, like language, is complex, especially for learners new to a particular discourse. Is it possible to observe their learning process as a first step toward unraveling the complexity of the discourse for them? The systematic analysis of the talk of our students using conversation or discourse analysis as a linguistic framework is one method by which to help instructors gain a better understanding of how discourse acquisition takes place and facilitate the process for basic writing students in multiple contexts.

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This study examines the talk of writing students in peer groups led by a teaching assistant in order to explore how conversational interaction facilitates the acquisition of discourse. Since learning is socially negotiated, proficiency in a new discourse community, Lave and Wenger claim, may be acquired through limited peripheral participation which they define as a way to gain access—to learn gradually through ever-growing involvement (37). Situated learning, or "learning-in-practice," takes place by interacting with experienced members of the community through talk, observation, and practice (Lave and Wenger 101). As talk is a central socio-cultural practice, learning to talk about writing in mediated social interactions allows composition students to negotiate the meanings of the new discourse such that conversation becomes the "matrix" for their acquisition process (Levinson 284).

The work presented in this article is part of a larger research project on interactional strategies and the acquisition of academic discourse. For that project, I videotaped freshman composition students in small writing groups that were a component of the Freshman Composition Program at a large southeastern university, a program implemented to replace the university's remedial composition courses and set up to work in tandem with the freshman composition course, English 101. The students in each group are all enrolled in English 101 and attend a writing group session led by a teaching assistant once a week in addition to their regular composition class.

Through the use of a case study, I trace the progress of one paper from the student's first attempts at understanding the assignment to the writing of her first through final drafts. I argue that the small writing group functions as a means of socialization into a new community of practice used to build both procedural and declarative knowledge about writing. Specifically, I show how the students use talk to develop declarative knowledge and try out different strategies, building procedural knowledge, to bridge the gaps between knowing *what* to do and *how* to do it. In addition, I consider the role of the teaching assistant as an experienced community member in creating a social setting wherein students practice new proficiencies in academic writing.

Frameworks of Discourse Acquisition

As a composition instructor, I have often observed a significant gap or mismatch between the knowledge and abilities that my students bring to the classroom. This gap can be seen when students are clearly able to speak about

the changes they need to make in revising their draft, yet the essay that gets turned in does not match the students' plans. In other words, they are not yet able to carry over that verbal understanding of the process into their actual writing. What causes this gap between knowledge and ability—between the ability to define a rhetorical term, like pathos, and the inability to write a rhetorical analysis? For successful essays, composition students need to control different levels of language competence. Like all language users, they function linguistically on two basic levels: competence and performance. A speaker has many different underlying, or subconscious, competences including grammatical, communicative, pragmatic, and discursive. The second level, that of performance or "the actual use of language in concrete situations" (Chomsky 4), is often an imperfect reflection of underlying language competences. This is especially true when speakers learn new languages or enter new discourse communities, as do our freshman writers.

Frameworks for looking at levels of competence and performance from the field of second language acquisition provide composition instructors with alternative insights for understanding the learning processes of beginning college writers. One valuable perspective, first proposed in 1986 by Faerch and Kasper, claims that students employ two types of knowledge: declarative and procedural. Drawing on the research of cognitive science, they define declarative knowledge as an understanding of the "what" or knowing "that" of something, and procedural knowledge as "knowing how." In this framework, declarative knowledge consists of linguistic, pragmatic, discourse, and socio-interactional knowledge (8), knowledge which the speaker or learner internalizes. Both levels of language, structural and social, interact with each other to create an individual's language competences. In order to become competent speakers of the discourse, newcomers must learn the pragmatic and discourse rules of each community of practice they enter. Therefore in order to be successful writers, composition students must first develop this internal knowledge of the socio-linguistic rules of academic discourse.

Simultaneously, students must also build their procedural knowledge. A parallel concept to performance, procedural knowledge is the use of one's declarative knowledge and consists of a speaker's strategies for accomplishing various language tasks. Drawing on the socio-interactional resources of their declarative knowledge, speakers within a discourse community develop their procedural knowledge, which in turn allows them to regulate the discourse, use language forms in socially appropriate ways, and create coherent texts. According to Faerch and Kasper, part of successfully developing procedural

knowledge requires knowing how to use language appropriately in particular situations in order to accomplish different language tasks. Assessing the context means knowing the appropriate things to say as well the appropriate ways to accomplish tasks. This aspect of acquisition involves developing successful communication strategies, or "strategic competence" (Canale and Swain as qtd. in Faerch and Kasper 11). For it is through the organization of their talk that speakers display the many types of competences necessary to be considered a proficient member of a particular discourse community. Within this framework, composition students need to develop competences in more than one level of language. However, like all language learners, they acquire these types of knowledge at different rates, often engendering a gap between their declarative and procedural knowledge, or between their ability to talk about writing and their ability to write an academic paper.

Thus instructors must help students build strategic competences as a way for them to bridge the gap between their declarative and procedural knowledge. As beginners in the discourse, composition students will move through different stages of development and test hypotheses about the rules of the discourse they are learning. This process of hypothesis formation and testing is shaped by way of several factors: their access to the discourse; selection of input; and modeling of the discourse by experienced community members. First, access to the discourse is critical. In order to acquire declarative knowledge, students must have structured access to academic discourse, which will enable them to revise their internalized language model(s). According to Klein, access consists of two components: the amount of input, or language exposure, a learner receives, and opportunities for communication (44). Furthermore, the process of structured access combines these two components so that the learner's acquisition process is guided by more experienced community members who provide parallel information about both the content and function of discourse features.

Exposure to fluent speakers who can model and clarify the language/discourse is especially vital for the new learner. According to Beaugrande, each student comes to the discourse learning process with "a model of the language, with the limitations and approximations peculiar to that speaker's experiences and abilities. In this sense, learning a language means revising one's model . . . through a succession of stages" (126). Since more than just comprehension of the discourse is necessary to be successful in a new community of practice, new schemas or language models need to be developed for all the language tasks associated with academic writing. Guiding students toward a new or more viable language model is one of the tasks that instruc-

tors, as experienced community members, must undertake since "what gets performed or learned on any one occasion always depends on the learner's current model" (Beaugrande 126). In order to help learners revise their language models, Long and Crookes argue that instructors should design "pedagogic tasks which provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate language samples to learners" (qtd. in Cook 151). Thus through the guided exploration of different genres of writing and speaking, students learn to negotiate both their own writing process and the meaning of writing within the larger academic community. As with second language learners, students enter more fully into academic communities of practice as they "begin to understand the distinct communities that are held together or separated by not only genres and vocabulary, but also practices and values" (Guleff 214).

The Writing Groups (WG)

To help instructors determine which students would benefit from the WG, all students in freshman English 101 courses are given a diagnostic essay the first week of class. These essays are evaluated together with writing samples from high school writing portfolios that all in-coming freshman students are requested to bring with them to class. Students are then recommended to the WG based on the quality of their writing, and/or their attitude toward writing. Some of the writing qualities which suggest that a student could benefit from the WG are a lack of content or development, evidence of dialect differences, and an abundance of mechanical and/or grammatical issues. Emotional responses such as fear or dislike of writing or a negative writing experience are more reasons to recommend a student. Also any student who wishes to volunteer for the WG may do so.

A writing group normally consists of four or five students from several different English 101 classes and a group leader, who is either an experienced teaching assistant (TA) or an English faculty member. All the TAs who work in a WG have taught composition as well as tutored in the writing center. During the semester, they participate in a weekly meeting with the WG director where they can talk through any problems in their groups as well as draw on the expertise of their peers in devising writing strategies for their students.

In a typical session, students meet in the WG room, where they sign in. There is usually some initial social talk, and then the group begins to discuss the essays each student has brought to share. Each student reads her/his essay aloud, and then the other students and group leader comment. If possible,

the group leader tries to build discussion on peer comments. This practice validates the students' comments and encourages greater involvement among participants. However, it is not uncommon for students to bring an assignment without a draft because they don't understand what the assignment requires. In these cases, the group will talk the students through it.

Data Analysis

The data for this article is drawn from videotapes of a writing group that were recorded and transcribed according to conventions established by linguist Gail Jefferson.[1] The excerpts presented are taken from three group sessions over a period of four weeks during a single semester. This particular group includes three students and the group leader. The analytical framework is Conversation Analysis (CA), often used in research pertaining to both ordinary and institutional talk or discourse. Within the CA theoretical framework, it is the job of the researcher to discern the categories—the systematic and orderly properties of the discourse—that are meaningful to the participants and not impose a set of predetermined categories on the data. When examining the talk of composition students, it is therefore important to identify the structural and other elements in the talk that are meaningful to the students themselves, as these also offer clues to pragmatic competence.

The student in the case study is Ricki (all names used are pseudonyms), an African American freshman in her first semester. Like many students who are speakers of vernacular or non-standard language varieties, Ricki starts the process of acquiring academic discourse at a greater distance from the target discourse than students whose middle-class dialect and discourse practices more closely resemble institutionalized school practices (Heath). Thus, for Ricki, like other students in the WG, the differences in her home/primary discourse require that she engage in bridge building—in creating new language models—that negotiate between primary and secondary ("academic") discourses (Gee 156-57). My analysis focuses on Ricki's attempt to understand her instructor's challenging rhetorical assignment as she is supported by her peers and a group leader working in collaboration. Although most of the excerpts presented focus on Ricki's interactions with the group leader, the entire group was present at each session.

Every semester, the instructor of Ricki's English 101 class, a composition and rhetoric graduate student, gives her students a rhetorical analysis assignment, for which the students select an essay from the class reader

and analyze its use of either ethos, pathos, or logos. A list of questions is designed to show them how their author is using the rhetorical strategy they have chosen, and the instructor expects students to use examples from their selected essays to demonstrate the effectiveness of specific rhetorical devices they must identify. The essay that Ricki chose for her paper is "Sexploitation" by Tipper Gore. However, the assignment proved difficult for her, since it required a level of textual analysis generally beyond the experience of writers such as Ricki, as it involved at least two separate analytical tasks. The first task is analysis of pathos, showing how Gore generates an emotional reaction from her audience as determined by textual structure apart from content. The second task is the creation of Ricki's essay. Through the group, she recognizes that she must discuss word choice and textual examples rather than summarizing or criticizing the reading's content—an approach typical of students at this level (Launspach 217).

So while not typical for freshman composition, the assignment functions as a good example of the cognitive gap between declarative and procedural knowledge for beginning college writers as it highlights an assignment which, if done successfully, effectively would situate students within an academic language-oriented community of practice. Yet the entire premise of the assignment is quite challenging to the experience and expectations of Ricki as a beginning college writer. She has no mental representation of pathos as a rhetorical device and must therefore build declarative knowledge before she can devise procedural strategies to write her essay. The data will show how talking through stages of the assignment in the writing group helps Ricki to develop an understanding of the rhetorical terms as well as a sense of the writing process.

The First Session

The first time the assignment is discussed, Ricki is just starting to work on her paper. At this point, she does not have a clear idea of what the assignment is asking her to do. One strategy the group leader, Jean, a teaching assistant, employs is to get Ricki to restate the assignment in her own words. In Excerpt 1, Ricki describes the assignment as she currently understands it.

Excerpt 1

Ricki: Okay, we had like uhm. (2.9) a list of words like, logos ethos and pathos. (4.3) I chose pathos. and I can't think of the meaning right now.
Jean: Uh it would have to do with emotion.
Ricki: Yeah. how da-how da-da feel, yeah how she felt (.) about what she was writing, or what not.

Ricki is vague about the assignment as she is also uncertain about the meaning of the rhetorical terms her instructor has used. In her first turn, she is unsure of what pathos means. In her second turn, having been given a definition, she states how she envisions pathos would be used in an essay. She associates it with the attitude or feelings of writers toward their content rather than as a means to engage the emotions of a reader. It is clear that she does not understand the conventional definition or rhetorical use of pathos. Like most instructors, Ricki's instructor had explained the assignment in class and defined each term. Despite this preparation, there exists a mismatch between the conventional definition and Ricki's understanding of the term.

In Excerpt 2, Jean is aware that Ricki is lost on several levels. She tries to get her to think about how she will approach her paper, pressing for Ricki to connect the terminology and the drafting process.

Excerpt 2

Jean: Now, what an-when-when you do your essay? what are you supposed to do with the pathos?
Ricki: Well? that's something I don't kno(h)w. uh I guess I supposed to write like. (2.5) jus' analyzing (.) how she felt about the sex entertainment. (2.1) without stating my opinion on how I think she was feeling. but jus' write what she really was meaning. I guess.

Ricki recognizes that her paper must analyze how Gore feels about her topic, sex entertainment, but at this point she doesn't understand that she will need to do more than discuss the general topic or Gore's feelings about it. Ricki will need to discuss how Gore touches the emotions of her readers. Initially, Ricki enters into the assignment by focusing on Gore's *what*, not on her *how*. Like other students I have studied, she does not yet realize that

it is possible to analyze the essay's structure separate from its content. One of the group's tasks then is to help Ricki devise successful strategies to write just such an analysis. Jean approaches this in several ways. First she works with Ricki to construct a definition for the rhetorical term, pathos. Second, she stresses that Ricki's paper should be analysis, not summary. She states the point directly: "You know not to just summarize the article/ but to analyze which means to pull out/ just pull out specific pieces and look at them." Later she rephrases the point, "You want to analyze it/and that means that you'll pull out certain/relevant pieces to look at in more detail/does that make sense?" In the same turn, she reminds Ricki not to get involved in the issue, i.e., the content, but to look at how Gore writes about it. Third, Jean solicits peer input from Seth, another student, in order to help Ricki devise some practical writing strategies.

Excerpt 3

Seth: 'Cause we did something. sort of like that, we did a critical analysis my 12th grade year. of a writer. we had to analyze his writing, and how it reflected his background. and I was kinda like tryin' to (.) reflect it towards that.
Jean: Yeah so you were thinkin. (0.9) wh-hearing the analysis. how did you see that analysis being the same, from what you did? and-and what uh Ricki's doing?
Seth: 'Cause we had to like. we had uhm-I had. T.S Eliot. Eliot I believe. and uh (2.4) what did I write. I think I wrote about his ah. I wrote about the poem uh. Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock. and uhm I just pulled out of there, like different lines that showed you, like a lonely man. and stuff like that. that reflected on his background, and that's what he wrote about, and all that other kind of stuff. it's like (.) pulling certain verses, or something like that.
Jean: So it means that you don't tell the whole thing over.
Seth: Yeah.

At the beginning of this excerpt, Seth compares Ricki's assignment to one he did in high school. He has picked up on its analytical aspect. His class was asked to analyze how a writer's background affected his writing. The group leader then encourages Seth to elaborate on his comparisons in her next turn. Seth talks about his essay and emphasizes picking out parts of the text that will support the thesis. He stresses that his analysis used lines that

showed the loneliness of the writer, and compares this process to Ricki's of using examples to show how word choice affects the reader's emotions.

Next Jean and Seth collaborate to give Ricki suggestions for getting started, reemphasizing the main points touched on in earlier parts of the interaction: study the assignment sheet, reread Gore's essay, and look for examples. Seth also suggests that Ricki practice on something easy, to get the hang of it before writing her actual essay.

Thus, the first group session lays important groundwork for Ricki in terms of building both her declarative and procedural knowledge. Ricki has been led to construct an understanding of rhetorical terms and build her declarative knowledge. At the same time, the collaboration between Jean and Seth has modeled for her both the concept of analysis and a strategy for writing her essay. In the discussion of writing strategies, Ricki also progresses toward academic discourse: analysis, and the use of examples to support ideas.

The Second Session

One week later, Ricki's assignment is discussed again. This time she brings the first draft of her paper. Today the group will continue to help her understand the assignment and offer suggestions for revision based on her teacher's comments. Twice Ricki is asked to explain her assignment, once at the beginning and later when the group actually discusses her draft. Excerpt 4 shows her initial restatement.

Excerpt 4

Jean: After we hear what Ricki's doing. Ricki tell us what you're doing.

Ricki: Well. we had to write on our rhetorical analysis. well the subject I chose, was curbing sexploitation industry by Tipper Gore? and I write like about pathos. how she stir-red the audience (.) emotions. (1.3) to uhm limit (.) the sex entertainment. for uh children. (10.0) *{Jean writing notes}*

Jean: Uh how are you going to? how is pathos uh. work in what you are doing. how-how do you see that as important in your assignment?

Ricki: Uhm. (2.7) I see how she's showin' (.) the feeling of a woman. and a parent. how children they imitate stuff they see on TV, like

they imitate violence, so she-she believe that once a child sees the sex. the stuff on TV. or what they hear through lyrics, that they might imitate it, and then it's also how it degrade women. degrading to women. (2.4) so she stro-she trying to strike up feelings. in the female. as well as both parents. as how this affects their child.

Here Ricki is able to give a concise explanation of the assignment. She identifies the important elements of the assignment, that is, to analyze an essay and describe the author's use of pathos. Her new way of thinking is reflected in her switch from pathos as it relates to Gore's feelings or attitudes toward her content to pathos as a means Gore has to touch the emotions of her audience.

Similar to her approach in the first group meeting, Jean works with Ricki on two levels: building her understanding of the rhetorical terms, and relating these terms to writing. We can see this strategy in her turn, where she asks Ricki to apply her new understanding of pathos to the construction of her own text. However, Ricki is still unable to analyze pathos separately from the content of Gore's essay, and so the first part of her turn involves a recounting of some of Gore's content. In the end of her turn, she finally articulates that it is the examples that will "strike up feelings" in the audience.

In Excerpt 5, Jean points out to Ricki her improved understanding of the assignment compared to last week.

Excerpt 5

Jean: Yeah okay. so you made some progress on that haven't you?
Ricki: Not really.
Jean: hahhuh I think you made some progress on thi:nking. on the thinking about it. 'cause you have a sense of, what-of how you're supposed to do the analysis. you have a better sense of it, than you did before. that you're supposed to look at how Tipper Gore. (0.7) uh. (2.1) how pathos acts in what she (.) is writing. it that-does that seem how you are thinking of it?
Ricki: I'm thinkin of it. but I jus' ain't, writing like that. it's kinda hard . 'cause I keep- I don't want to keep quoting her and I cain't summarize it. and I ain't never did no paper like this before. so it's kinda hard for me to try an' do this.

> The group leader notes the progress in Ricki's 'thinking' about the assignment at the same time she recognizes that such meta-awareness is an important aspect of writing. However, Ricki initially denies this progress. Instead she focuses on some of the main difficulties of the assignment: she doesn't want to quote the author; she knows she may not summarize; and more importantly, she has no previous experience with this type of writing. Her ability to articulate these problems further indicates her growing meta-awareness of her own writing process.

These two excerpts from the second session evince the gaps between the student's declarative and emergent procedural knowledge. The group leader focuses on and praises Ricki's growth in her meta-awareness—her ability to articulate her knowledge of the terms of the assignment, while Ricki in contrast focuses on her struggles with drafting—with the translation of her declarative knowledge of the terms to the writing itself. She is not really conscious yet that the meta-awareness she is building will eventually help her to create a successful essay. Neither will Jean ignore Ricki's concerns as the group proceeds to discuss her first draft.

Introducing the First Draft

Ricki passes out copies of her paper, and Jean asks her to again explain her assignment. Ricki reads aloud from the assignment sheet to remind the group of the requirements; she then reads aloud her essay.

One strategy employed by group leaders in these small writing groups is to set up the other students as leaders of the discussion. This strategy encourages students to become active participants in the discussion of each other's papers. Through this type of limited peripheral participation, the students in the WG gradually increase their participation in the different practices of academic writing. These interactional strategies provide a way of gaining access through a growing involvement in a type of "social practice that entails learning as integral constituent" (Lave and Wenger 35). Jean gets the other students to "take over" by asking Ricki to explain the assignment to Seth. Through his questions and comments, he provides the direction of the discussion for the next eight turns. Notably, he asks Ricki, "Is it persuasive writing?" That is, is her essay supposed to persuade her readers that Gore is right in her claim?

Excerpt 6

Seth: or you trying to convince them to go one way or the other? or are you just tryin to get them to think? (.) yeah she's right.
Ricki: Well see, okay for what I'm doing, is-I'm-I'm describing how she striking the feelings up. within another person. like how she feels. toward that uhm that topic. she's also using like different examples. and that's like one way of. like the one example she uses uhm. (2.6) she's talking about she watching a game show one morning. and then they had a preview of a soap opera, with a rape scene in there. so I have to show how's that uhm. how would that-how would that feel towards the audience, you know your child looking at a morning show, and then a rape scene comes up. and your child might try to imitate that, that's what's she's trying to.

In Excerpt 6, Ricki shows that she is now oriented toward the idea of demonstrating pathos and showing how an audience would react to Gore's examples. But she is still not quite certain about her intentions for the paper. She knows that her essay should describe how Gore "strikes up feelings" through the use of different examples, and that she must explain to her own readers the intended effect of Gore's examples on the audience, which Ricki has identified as parents with children. Of course Gore's essay is intended to be persuasive. However, Ricki does not give Seth a definite answer as to whether her own essay should be persuasive, which was probably the intent of his question. Rather she interprets it as relating to Gore's text. In subsequent turns, Jean responds to Ricki's confusion as she tries to reinforce the difference between the two papers: Gore's paper is persuasive, while Ricki's should be analytical.

The First Draft

Like many beginning or inexperienced writers, Ricki writes like she talks. According to Beaugrande, the differences in the conditions of talk vs. writing produce "manifestations of interference when experienced talkers must act as inexperienced writers." (129). However, the transfer of dialect features is not a simple one-to-one proposition and many students, like Ricki, exhibit an intralect in their writing which contains features not found in either their vernacular dialect or standard written English.[2] As we will soon judge by way of her final draft, the more Ricki is engaged in using talk as a

means to acquiring the language of the academy, the greater the impact will be on such intralectical features of her writing as can be identified here.

Ricki's First Draft

Curbing the Sexploitation Industry Tipper Gore

Tipper Gore purpose towards the parents is to convince them on limiting sexual messages that children acquire through television, radio and other entertainment. Also open eyes to the degrading of women. Throughout the essay there is great concern of the welfare of the children. Children mimics what they see on T.V. as for example a five-year old boy from Boston got up from watching a teen-slasher film and stabbed a two-year girl with a butcher knife. The same as a child might mimic a preview of a rape scene of a soap opera that interrupts during a morning show. Gore states that "we cannot control what our children watch, but we can let the industry know we're angry." She also is stating that children is going to watch whatever they like, but we can cut down on most of the advertisement of different sexual acts. She continues her pathos view by portraying another "teen-slasher" film which depicts the killing, torture and sexual mutilation of women in sickening detail. This is an example of degrading women in such that it is intolerable and despicable towards the nature of a woman. She is opening eyes to our environment as a woman and a woman with children it is time to limit this sex entertainment. Gore is also describing how the industry is poisoning our children mind with pornography.

The group's discussion of Ricki's draft centers around several main points. One aspect they discuss is Ricki's concern about not using too many quotes, something she has stated earlier (Excerpt 5). Another is the group's attempts to get Ricki to focus on Gore's use of language as the means to affect the emotions of her audience. The group tries to work this idea out with Ricki by suggesting the use of concrete examples—either from the essay or by way of comparisons drawn from experience. Through the process of discussing her essay, Ricki realizes that what she has done is mainly summary.

The group advises her to look at the words that Gore uses to affect parents. Jean asks her, "Can you find some quotes in there/that you would use/have you picked out some uhm quotes/ some words/images/passages

where you would say she's using pathos." Seth points out several words that seem strong to him as possible examples she might use, "mutilation and all that kinda stuff/it-it's not like the usual words that float through/it jus sorta like pops out at you/it's like you don't every day read the newspaper." In addition, they also recommend that she try to imagine herself as Gore when she was writing her essay—to try to figure out why Gore made the choices she did. Seth says, "A good way to put it/you got to think/ what Tipper Gore was thinking/when she wrote the paper." Both Seth and Jean stress to Ricki that her paper should be an analysis of Gore's. Jean says, "So it's like/it's a-it's a double thing isn't it/it's layered/Tipper Gore has written about sexploitation/and you're not to write about that/but you're to write about how Tipper Gore writes about it." Later Seth states, "So you're not writing about the sexploitation/she's writing about what Tipper Gore wrote about."

While Ricki has made progress in building her declarative knowledge of the rhetorical terms from one group meeting to the next, her paper tells a different story. At this second group meeting, Ricki has demonstrated from her discussions that she understands that pathos relates to the emotions of the reader and that she needs to talk about the effect of pathos on Gore's readers. She can make that distinction when *talking* about her paper—however, the text itself does not yet reflect her new meta-knowledge about the definition of pathos and its role in an essay.

For instance, Ricki states in her check-in for this session that she needs to demonstrate how Gore shows the feeling of a woman (Excerpt 4). While she focuses on the content, that children will imitate what they see and how such content is degrading to women, she fails to show the feelings that Gore wants to produce from the use of these examples in her own essay, even though she is very clear that Gore is trying to strike up feelings in parents, especially women. Later in Excerpt 6, she again is able to articulate that she needs to describe how Gore strikes up feelings and later show how an audience would feel or react to Gore's example. However, when she writes about the rape scene used to advertise a soap opera, she does not make the leap in her own text to demonstrating how Gore uses this example to provoke a reaction from her audience.

In her writing, we see a difference between Ricki's new declarative knowledge and her performance abilities, or her procedural knowledge—the set of skills that will allow her to "perform" a rhetorical analysis. From the WG discussions, Ricki has absorbed the importance of using examples; she mentions several, but does not articulate how they function to create certain types of feelings in the reader. Her primary focus in this draft is still on

Gore's content—on the information that Gore is giving readers rather than the techniques, or "the pathos view," that Gore uses to persuade her readers. But while this draft contains a lot of summary, restating the examples that Gore uses, it is not entirely summary. Ricki writes about two purposes that she believes Gore has—opening the reader's eyes to this problem and limiting the sexual messages that children are exposed to. She implies that Gore's target audience is women, especially ones with children. In this way, her draft shows some limited evidence of analysis. In addition, Ricki's draft gives evidence that she is able to perceive genres. She understands that Gore's essay is a persuasive essay, when she states Gore's "purpose towards the parents is to convince them."

Despite the flaws in the draft, Ricki is making progress in her apprenticeship process. Through the guided talk in the WG, she has made important steps in the development of her understanding of several key rhetorical concepts: pathos, analysis, summary. Within the safety of the group, she has been able to negotiate through her participation, the academic meaning of pathos and make initial strides toward a workable textual structure. Still she has moved only so far toward participation in her new community of practice.

The Next Draft

At the third and last session in which this paper is discussed, Ricki is asked again to restate the assignment as a preface to reading her new draft aloud. The following excerpt presents her restatement.

Excerpt 7

Jean: tell us-tell us what you were supposed to do in this paper
Ricki: okay what I supposed to have done was uh tell how and why that she reaches out to her audience evokes feelings which is uhm pathos and I jus' use some of the words
and how it might affect a parent which was her audience it suppose like limit the sexploitation in the industry like get some of that uhm sex entertainment off the TVs or like rock groups or what not that's what I was supposed to done
Jean: okay okay let's see if she did it

In her turn, Ricki is now better able to summarize the main points of the assignment. One further improvement that Ricki has made in her understanding of the assignment is the connection between Gore's word choices and evoking pathos. This realization marks an important step in her verbal understanding—she is moving from what the term means, a definition of pathos, to being able to perceive what resources an author might use to create pathos.

The draft that Ricki has brought is one that has been returned to her with the teacher's comments. Like her earlier draft, it also contains African American English features, intralect features, and standard written English usage. The draft is now two-pages typed (half a page longer than previously), and organized in only two paragraphs: introduction and a single body paragraph. In the introduction, she states her main points; in the body, she uses quotes and examples from Gore's essay.

Excerpt 1 from Ricki's Final Draft

"Sentiment of Gore towards Sexploitation"

> Tipper Gore uses pathos in her essay, "Curbing the Sexploitation Industry" to reach out to the women and parents with children under the age of fifteen. She is letting her audience know of the deep need to limit the children to sex entertainment. As to back her argument she shows examples how easily influence the children are by what they watch before they hit adolescence.
>
> Gore has a great concern for the welfare of the children and women reputation. She evokes a suddenness of protection and at the same time anger combine together at these entertainers The crucial words as sadomasochism, brutality, mutilation and titillate gives harsh images of what a child might be seeing done to the women.

Overall this paper is more organized and contains less summary than the first version. Ricki has selected four different words that she feels Gores uses to evoke a response in the reader. For each of the words she has chosen, Ricki uses examples from Gore's essay that illustrate their use. The following excerpt is one example of this strategy. Here she starts with *mutilation* and connects it through the example to the next word—*titillate*.

Excerpt 2 from Ricki's Final Draft

> Which lets me go to the next crucial word she uses mutilation. The example used by Gore is:"teen slasher' film, and it typically depicts the killing, torture and sexual mutilation of women ins sickening detail." That is despicable showing how one can remove a necessary part of a woman and then show it to the children. Which only increase their curiosity (Titillate) of what would happen next.

The excerpt that follows is from later in the essay: here she has chosen the word *brutality*, but unlike in the earlier excerpt, she doesn't present her reader with any of Gore's examples to demonstrate brutality. Instead she comments on the emotional impact she feels the word would have on Gore's readers.

Excerpt 3 from Ricki's Final Draft

> The word brutality hits close to the heart of majority of women. This is another one of crucial words that she uses to throw pain in her audience heart, because of the fact that they been in the situation once or twice.

Evincing analysis, these excerpts make it possible to observe Ricki implementing the advice she has been given in the WG; she is trying to connect the emotions of the reader to the words used by Gore. We can see the beginning of her new procedural knowledge.

Despite this progress, the conclusion of the paper returns to what Ricki feels is Gore's main message rather than focusing on the emotional impact of Gore's essay.

Excerpt 4 from Ricki's Final Draft

> Gore conclusing statement, "The fate of the family, the dignity of women, the mental health of children—These concerns belong to everyone.", make you think that everybody suppose to come together and put an end to this sexploitation. Lets her audience come into an agreement that the family should stick together on the issue of anybodies child state of being.

While the teacher's comments on the draft emphasize a need to work on the organization, she praises Ricki's progress with the assignment, and gives the impression that overall she is pleased with Ricki's draft. Ricki, on the other hand, lets the group know that while happy with her grade, she is not pleased with what she views as her mistakes. Firstly, she doesn't think that she did the best job she could have since she got hung up on the idea of the paper being hard. She states that she needed to get beyond the idea of it being hard and just convince herself that she could do it. Secondly, she is aware of the mechanical errors in the paper: spelling errors, skipped information, and problems with sentence structure. She feels it falls short of the requirements of the assignment as she has now come to understand them.

Discussion

As this study shows, for basic or inexperienced writers, access to talk in peer groups enables students to construct meaning in social interaction through collaborative learning, facilitating their participation in the larger academic conversation. As evidence of socially situated learning, the data in this study is useful to composition instructors as we trace Ricki's process of development over the course of four weeks, watching her grapple with acquiring new declarative knowledge and struggle with translating that new knowledge into actual writing strategies. Excerpts of conversation with a supportive peer group show that she is able to move from having no understanding of pathos as a rhetorical term, to associating pathos with the writers' feeling toward their content, to understanding pathos as a means to touch the reader's emotions. Thus, the talk in the Writing Group serves as an "institutionalized" guide for Ricki, providing essential discourse input for her and highlighting important aspects of academic discourse and practices.

Writing is a multiple step process. We have to know "what" to do as well as "how" to do it, and beginning academic writers, like Ricki, often struggle with more than one type of knowledge gap when confronted with writing in the academy. Their acquisition process needs to take place on both cognitive and pragmatic levels, affecting declarative and procedural knowledge. The small writing group provides Ricki with a "safe" forum to negotiate the meaning of new rhetorical terms as well as an apprenticeship-like setting, a place for guided participation in the academic writing process.

In addition, the Writing Group provides what Faerch and Kasper refer to as accessibility (14). They explain, "To become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity,

old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation" (Lave and Wenger 100-101). Conversational interactions in the Writing Group make available to basic writers, like Ricki, important linguistic and discourse resources, that are not usually overtly articulated for students during a composition course. It is a place where, for example, rhetorical terms are not only defined, but modeled by the group leader as well as by peers.

Moreover, like other speakers of vernacular dialects, Ricki also experiences a difference between her home and academic discourses. She must find a way to bridge that gap, to negotiate the differences, without losing her voice. Rather than forcing such students to abandon all of their discourse norms, one way to enhance their acquisition of academic discourse is to build on their expertise in their home discourses. Smitherman advocates using the oral language resources that African American students possess to help them promote learning through social interaction. Thus instructors might use what students already know to "move them to what they need to know" (219). Like Smitherman, Perez holds that use of linguistic knowledge from students' home discourse can ease the transition and provide scaffolding for learning new discourse norms. Thus, instructors can draw on the linguistic resources that students bring with them as a way of providing students structured access to academic discourse in order to facilitate their acquisition process.

As a writer, Ricki is still working out the appropriate relationships between herself and her audience (her peers and instructor), and the assigned topic (a rhetorical analysis). What is the best way for her to negotiate these different elements? As the number of options for instruction of basic writers has widened in the field, the use of small groups may fit a variety of basic writing contexts: basic writing courses, groups run out of a writing center, or pull-out workshops such as the one described in this study. Writing groups could be implemented in writing programs, either by individual instructors within a classroom setting using a teaching assistant, or by a program as a whole. Both the methods and results of this study advocate for such small group or studio arrangements as productive places of discourse development for basic writers.

Through the discussions in the Writing Group, Ricki is able to increase her declarative knowledge, allowing her to shift from writing a summary of Gore's essay to the beginnings of an analysis of Gore's use of pathos. The Writing Group's discussions assist her in coming up with strategies for writing her paper such as selecting, connecting, and analyzing words she

feels that Gore used to invoke responses in her reader. It is a sound strategy. However, we can see in her draft that Ricki's inexperience as a writer, her lack of procedural knowledge, does not allow her to translate this new approach into a well organized paper. While she has gained through the Writing Group interactions a strategy to approach a rhetorical analysis of a text, she is struggling with other aspects of expository writing. She is still working on building the strategic competences that will improve her actual writing skills. At this point in her acquisition process, Ricki's declarative knowledge has out-stripped her performance ability.

A primary advantage that Ricki has is access to an experienced community member, the teaching assistant, Jean, who models the discourse and provides links between the discourse and creating texts for Ricki and her peers. The TA uses a series of interactional strategies: restating the assignment, using focus questions,[3] advice giving, and soliciting focused input from Ricki's peers. This last strategy provides Ricki with advice and suggestions that are framed in language that she can relate to and at the same time builds the linguistic competence of her peers. Further, the group leader's language use models for students' suitable responses, allowing them to reframe their talk in ways that come to match more and more accepted discourse practices. This type of structured access to the discourse is especially beneficial to basic writers like Ricki, who start farther from the target discourse than other students who may have had some exposure to it in other contexts. All language learners need sufficient exposure to the target discourse: the more meaningful the language input they receive, the faster their acquisition process will become.

Other studies also show that there are additional benefits for composition students when an experienced language user, such as a peer group leader, an instructor, or a teaching assistant is present in a writing group. For example, Grobman, in her research, found that peer group leaders can function to "build bridges between basic writers and academic writers" by making academic discourses "visible" (45). Similarly, Brooke, O'Conner, and Mirtz also found that students, in peer groups with an experienced leader who modeled discussion about writing as well as genres of writing, made more relevant connections between talk about writing and the act of writing itself than did students in peer groups without a group leader. Those students had a harder time connecting their talk and their writing process (83). Thus, students in writing groups with an experienced group leader have more structured access to the discourse and can negotiate meanings

related to the composition process more productively than those in peer groups alone.

Like our students, we can also benefit from collaboration and talk about writing. This study demonstrates that we, as teachers and researchers, can gain important insights into our students' acquisition of writing when we examine the talk that goes into the creation of a draft—as well as examining the draft itself. Despite some of the problems with adapting research methods from other fields, Mortensen acknowledges that examining the talk of writing students can make more visible the process by which texts are constructed. In his critique of analyzing talk about writing, he states that "theoretically, then, analyzing talk about writing gives us a way of studying how texts are socially constructed. As a method, it offers a frame in which to arrange and interpret observations about the writing experience" (Mortensen, 120-21). He further observes that talk about writing is situated at the boundaries of text and individual perception. This intersection of text and consciousness leaves "traces" that can be recorded and utilized to further our understanding of a particular student's writing process. One way these traces can be seen is when we examine how talk about a text shapes the text itself. The intersection between talk and text is a meeting place of oral and written, between Ricki's talk about her draft, her draft, and prior drafts like it.

So what do the data imply about the relationship between Ricki's talk about her paper and her paper? Are there specific features/characteristics we can point to and use in other situations and with other writers? One aspect of the talk we can observe is the effect of repetition. Over the course of a month, Ricki is asked to restate her assignment at the beginning of the group session and right before her paper is discussed later in the same session. Guided by the TA and her peers, she is able to construct an understanding of the assignment through this process of stating and restating. How else can we view the shaping effect of talk on Ricki's essay? Organizationally, the emphasis of analysis over summary and advice to use examples given to Ricki from the first session onward support her effort to move from summary to analysis to incorporating examples in both her drafts. In the first draft, she uses examples taken from Gore's content, and in the second draft, she uses examples of words that express pathos. Phrases such as "degrading to women," "feelings of a parent," "pathos view," "children imitating TV" appear in the talk and reappear in the text. As a basic writer, she is relying heavily on others to provide her with the phrasal building blocks for her text.

These types of psychological, social, and discourse perspectives on writing gained from the analysis of talk are valuable to researchers and instructors. A systematic look at how students' talk is structured and what topics they focus on offers important insights into basic writers: the gaps in their knowledge, their learning process, and their view of the writing process. As a result, a deeper understanding of the discourse acquisition process and the way talk shapes texts could lead to changes in teaching methods and the way talk is framed in peer groups. In addition, as Smitherman, Heath, and others have claimed, the greater the awareness and understanding that instructors have of the distances that many students—minority, working class, first generation, and basic writers—have between their home discourses and the target discourse, the better they will be able to design curriculum that places those discourse modes more at the center of the students' learning experience.

Furthermore, our students benefit when we can take what they show us in their talk and transform it into ways they can improve their writing processes and acquire academic discourse more effectively. When we can go beyond analysis and integrate the insights gained from talk back into peer groups and the classroom, we help out students enter a new community of practice. As Mortensen tells us, "Studying talk about writing allows for the discovery of unexpected openings situated among people, ideas and discourse. And it allows us to see how these openings permit both the consensus and conflict that rhetorically, make and break the bonds of community" (124). It can create change by allowing new voices into the academic discourse community.

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Notes

1. Conversation is not organized the same way as written texts, and it can appear fragmented in comparison with writing, since speakers/hearers have different resources at their disposal. For example, intonations patterns, stress on words or individual vowels, pauses, repetition, discourse markers, and use of continuers such as "uhm" all serve to signal and create coherence

and meaning within a conversation. In a transcription of a conversation, different symbols are used to indicate vocal cues. Punctuation is used to signal intonation, underlines indicate places of greater stress. Pauses are timed in seconds (the numbers placed in parenthesis), while a slight pause is indicated by just a period inside a parenthesis. Some of the transcription conventions that appear in the excerpts of speech cited in this article: a colon : indicates a lengthened sound, usually a vowel; a period . indicates a stopping fall in tone; a single dash - indicates an abrupt cut off; an underline, e.g., a, indicates emphasis; numbers in parentheses, e.g., (0.1), indicate intervals between utterances, timed in tenths of a second; empty parentheses ( ) indicate that part of the utterance could not be deciphered (see Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson).

2. One stage that learners go through in learning a second language is called interlanguage. Interlanguage features are often different from either the learner's first language or the target/ second language. Scott Cobb makes a parallel claim for non-standard dialect learners of academic writing. They also go through an intermediate stage she calls intralect.

3. The larger research project focused on the types of interactional strategies that the beginning student writers developed over the course of the semester. As part of the analysis, the types and functions of the questions used in the discourse were categorized. (See Launspach. "Interactional Strategies and the Role of Questions in the Acquisition of Academic Discourse." Diss. U of South Carolina, 1998).

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Critiquing the Need to Eliminate Remediation: Lessons from San Francisco State

Sugie Goen-Salter

ABSTRACT: For more than two decades the California State University (CSU) has been trying unsuccessfully to "reduce the need for remediation" on its campuses, primarily through initiatives aimed at high schools. This article examines a basic writing reform project, San Francisco State's Integrated Reading/Writing Program, in the context of the CSU's history of remediation. The success of this project, in light of the CSU's remedial past, provides the grounds to advocate for higher education as the appropriate location for basic writing and reading and to advocate, in turn, for the resources necessary to theorize, develop and sustain a rich variety of approaches to basic writing instruction. The analysis in this article also suggests the need for more graduate programs and faculty development initiatives to help prepare a new generation of basic writing teachers and scholars to meet the needs of the next new generation of basic writing students.

KEYWORDS: *basic writing; reading-writing connection; remediation; institutional history; educational reform*

Ever since the California State University (CSU) first authorized remedial instruction in the mid-1970s, it has been waging an expensive, but losing, battle to eliminate the need for it. In the 1980s, students deemed to be in need of remediation (as determined by a system-wide English Placement Test) numbered somewhere around 42% of the incoming class. This, in turn, caused the California Postsecondary Education Commission to declare that remediation was careening out of control at California's colleges and to call on the California State University and the University of California to prepare comprehensive plans for reducing the amount of remedial instruction at their institutions (California Postsecondary Education Commission, *Promises to Keep*).

The CSU Board of Trustees responded with a set of initiatives aimed chiefly at high schools to reduce the number of incoming first-year students who would need remediation to no more than 12% by 1990. Among other things, the CSU added four years of high school English to its admissions

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criteria, a requirement that at the time was even more stringent than that of the University of California. It also beefed up its teacher education programs with new minimum entry and exit requirements, including maintenance of higher grade-point averages, an "early field experience," and more rigorous assessments of "professional aptitude" (California Postsecondary Education Commission, *Segmental Actions* 6). The plan included a 4.4 million dollar program to improve the clinical supervision of student teachers. And, in the event that this impressive array of high school course requirements and toughened standards for teacher credentialing did not help stem the tide of remediation, the CSU's plan also called for a number of cooperative school-college partnerships to ensure that the high schools clearly understood what would be expected of students when they arrived at college. Among the chief results of these partnerships was the joint publication by the Academic Senates of the California Community Colleges, the CSU, and the University of California of the "Statement on Competencies in English and Mathematics Expected for Entering Freshmen."

To ensure that the "Statement on Competencies" was not simply shipped out in the mail and forgotten, it was featured at a number of statewide and regional articulation gatherings sponsored by the CSU, the University of California, and the California Community Colleges. Also, it became the centerpiece of the High School Diagnostic Testing Program in Writing, sponsored in part by the CSU-funded California Academic Partnership Program. Starting in 1984, the Diagnostic Testing Program focused on 11th-grade students of underrepresented minority backgrounds, inviting them to write a "mock" CSU English Placement Test (or UC Subject A test) on which they would receive a score based on the university rubric as well as comments from university writing program faculty. These students were also invited to attend Saturday workshops on academic writing. CSU and UC faculty and high school teachers collaborated on the reading and scoring of the essays in the hopes that the high school teachers would adopt the university standards in their curriculum.

A story of the obstinacy of remediation emerges from these efforts, for while they were being put into practice, the percentage of CSU incoming students who needed remediation in English (as determined by the English Placement Test) was steadily creeping upward to an all-time high. By 1990, the year the CSU had set as its goal to reduce the need for remediation in English to no more than 12% of the incoming class, 45% were assessed as needing remediation, and that figure was climbing.

Undeterred by this failure, or as Mike Rose put it in "The Language of Exclusion," suffering from the institutional amnesia endemic to higher education when it comes to writing instruction, a new Board of Trustees decided in 1997 to mandate yet another set of initiatives to reduce remediation to no more than 10% of the incoming class by 2007. Following in the footsteps of the City University of New York, which banned remedial instruction from CUNY's four-year colleges and moved it -- as well at the students deemed in need of it – to its two-year community colleges, the CSU plan called first for a one-year limit on remedial instruction in English and mathematics available to any given student. Students who failed to complete their remedial course work during their first year were subject to disenrollment from the university. Disenrolled students would be able to return to the university only after completing their remedial course work at a community college. The second, more ambitious, part of the plan called for a ten percent reduction each year in the number of students entering the CSU who were in need of remediation, putting the State University system finally on track for eventually eliminating remediation from its campuses.

I open with this brief history because, as Mary Soliday argues in *The Politics of Remediation*, basic writing suffers from a lack of historical consciousness that renders it vulnerable to efforts to eliminate it. This is especially dangerous because "proponents of downsizing often rely upon a particular version of the remedial past to bolster their arguments in the present" (10). Far too often, concerns about curriculum, pedagogy, and basic writing theory are left out of administrative policy discussions about remediation, Just as often, however, scholars and teachers in the field of basic writing are content to ask questions only about curriculum and pedagogy while ignoring basic writing's complex history and the ways it interacts with vested institutional, economic, and political interests. In the remainder of this article, I provide an update on San Francisco State University's Integrated Reading/Writing (IRW) program. By locating the IRW reform project in the context of the California State University's history of remediation, I am better able to question these vested interests, most notably the institutional need to claim that remediation is being eliminated.

THE INTEGRATED READING/WRITING PROGRAM

As Helen Gillotte-Tropp and I first reported in our 2003 article in the *Journal of Basic Writing* (Goen and Gillotte-Tropp, "Integrating Reading and Writing"), San Francisco State's Integrated Reading/Writing program devel-

oped in response to two concerns directly related to the CSU's latest attempt to reduce the need for remediation. The first was that substantive reductions to the population of students who test into remediation would threaten CSU access and equity goals.[1] The second was that efforts to eliminate remediation are implicitly linked to a persistent tendency in literacy education to treat reading and writing as distinct and separate processes. Postsecondary institutions have stubbornly enacted policies based on the belief that learning to read should have been accomplished by third grade, and learning to write by twelfth. Accordingly, there remains a prevailing attitude at many institutions that any postsecondary instruction in reading and writing is *de facto* "remedial," and, thus, vulnerable to political and educational forces aimed at its removal.

Even if we hadn't faced these remedial policy imperatives, we had good reasons to want to integrate instruction in reading and writing. Informed by lessons from the past, we knew that students were systematically placed into basic writing classes disproportionately on the basis of the reading portion of the CSU's English Placement Test, regardless of the fact that these courses may offer little or no instruction in reading. We were also convinced by empirical research demonstrating the crucial connection between learning to read and learning to write. Sandra Stotsky summarized this research as follows: better writers tend to be better readers, better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and better readers tend to produce more mature prose than poorer readers (16). We knew that particular kinds of reading experiences, for example, Mariolina Salvatori's "introspective reading" (446), have a stimulating and generative effect on writing, and, as Vivian Zamel notes, the corollary is also true: particular writing experiences teach students to be more effective readers (470).

We took seriously as well Kathleen McCormick's warning that when reading and writing are taught as separate subjects, these beneficial effects are all but lost (99). Since reading instruction has historically had no place in the postsecondary curriculum—and basic writing instruction a rapidly diminishing place—we could only wonder how at-risk students were to successfully negotiate the literacy tasks that await them in college. And, while some of the research findings on the reading-writing connection have informed instructional practice, Nancy Nelson and Robert Calfee remind us that instruction itself is still far from integrated, but is rather "a collection of separate components, each with its own traditions, theoretical underpinnings and terminology" (36). By way of example, they cite the "integrated language arts" teacher who teaches students about "main ideas" when teach-

ing reading, but refers to "topic sentences" when teaching writing without pointing out, or perhaps even noticing, any overlap (35-36).

Our reasoning in designing the IRW program was fairly straightforward: if the link between instruction in reading and writing is as crucial as we hypothesized, then it follows that students would reap demonstrably greater benefits from an approach that integrates the two. And if this hypothesis proved true, we wondered if students deemed least prepared for college-level reading and writing could also achieve these benefits effectively and swiftly enough to enable them to move into the academic mainstream in less time than the one-year institutional limit on remedial instruction. Could we, in other words, eliminate the "need for remediation" by providing students with an enriched literacy experience during their first, crucial year of college?

The IRW program provides an alternative to San Francisco State's traditional approach to English remediation. Students who scored in the lowest quartile on the English Placement Test (two levels below first-year composition) used to complete a full year of developmental-level course work. In their first semester, they took a 3-unit basic writing course concurrently with a 1-unit reading course. In their second semester, they took another 3-unit basic writing course concurrently with another 1-unit reading course. To meet this remedial English requirement, students had two different writing instructors, two different reading instructors, and four different groups of classmates by the time they entered their first-year composition course in their third semester of enrollment. The curriculum of the reading and writing courses was mostly separate. The texts students read in the reading course, and the strategies they learned to guide their reading, were rarely used in the writing course. Similarly, the topics students wrote about in the writing class and their growing understanding of the writing process and of discourse structures were not explicitly used to help students decide how and what to read in the reading course.

Rather than requiring students to complete two basic writing classes concurrent with two reading classes before becoming eligible for first-year composition, the IRW program (like Arizona State's *Stretch Program* [see Glau]) enrolls them in a single year-long course; students who successfully complete this course will have met not only the CSU remediation requirement, but also the first-year college composition requirement, in effect completing in one year what would ordinarily have taken three semesters to accomplish.

In 1999, Helen Gillotte-Tropp and I began working with five instructors to develop an integrated curriculum (for more specific information on the

IRW course, see Goen and Gillotte-Tropp; Baldwin, Gillotte-Tropp, Goen-Salter, and Wong). During our deliberations and planning, we realized that in order for our course to be truly integrated, it could not be a course in which reading always precedes writing, reducing writing to something that is done after the reading is complete as a way to check comprehension rather than a way to work through, analyze and arrive at an understanding of a text. Neither could it be a course that reduces reading to a supporting role, one that provides information and lends authority to bolster the writing.

Accordingly, a primary goal of the IRW course is to provide students with an explicit understanding of the complex ways that reading and writing intersect, to make visible to them the choices they make as readers, and how those choices inform the decisions they make when writing, and vice versa. At some point in the reading of any text, students are asked to examine the text not just for what meaning they derived from it, but for how the author constructed the text and the effect of those formal decisions on how students made sense of the text. In short, the course tries to break down the barrier between text reception and text production, by inviting students to look at a text they read for clues to its production, and a text they produce for clues to how it might be received.

Helping students attain awareness and knowledge of their own mental processes such that they can monitor, regulate, and direct themselves to a desired end are key components in the IRW curriculum. The course accomplishes this through a variety of self-reflective activities. For example, at various junctures, students write a modified version of Mariolina Salvatori's difficulty paper. In the IRW version of the difficulty paper, students are asked to explore in writing their surprises, hunches, puzzlements, and difficulties with a reading, to articulate an action plan for how to address those difficulties, and then put that action plan to work. In the final part of the assignment, students reflect on any new insights they gained, or new questions that arose, as a result of putting into action their strategic plan. They also reflect on the efficacy of their plan, how well it worked to guide them to a different, perhaps more satisfying, experience with the text. Finally, students consider how their experiences as readers, as recorded in the difficulty paper, might inform decisions they make as writers. We have found that the difficulty paper teaches students to become conscious of their mental moves and to revise or complicate those moves as they become aware of what those moves did or did not make possible, thereby encouraging recursion and self-monitoring in both reading and writing. Perhaps most importantly, this assignment makes "difficulty" a generative force in student learning,

something to be critically engaged rather than avoided or ignored. And we have discovered it helps create important bridges between academic learning and students' lived experience in the world beyond school as they discover that their experience with reading is shaped not only by the formal properties of a text or the their comprehension and interpretive skills, but also by the their social and cultural location.

Our intent in designing the IRW curriculum was not to radically alter the content of either the basic writing or reading course, but to re-design the curriculum so that what students learned about reading would function as an explicit scaffold for learning about writing, and vice versa. By necessity, we created some new writing topics to correspond to texts assigned in the reading class, and we added some new readings to help students think through topics assigned in the writing class. Otherwise, our emphasis was not on curricular change so much as it was on strategic double-duty—using what had traditionally been considered reading heuristics to aid students in the act of writing, and using writing strategies to help students better understand their roles as readers.

One example of a strategy that we use extensively is K-W-L+. It represents a four-step procedure that begins by accessing students' prior knowledge, explicitly attaching new learning onto what students already know (K). We then invite students to ask questions. Given what they know, what would they like to know (W)? What curiosities do they have or what puzzlements would they like to explore? Teachers then introduce a learning activity, which can be anything from reading a text, watching a film, listening to music, looking at visual stimuli, to analyzing data collected as a class. The next step is to gather what they've learned (L) from the activity. Which of their questions got answered? How has this new learning amplified or modified what they knew before? In the final stage, students pose new questions (+). Given what they knew, and what they have now learned, what new questions do they have or what new avenues of inquiry would they like to explore? While K-W-L+ has traditionally been considered a reading strategy only, we have found it to also be an excellent idea-generating strategy for writing essays. Students brainstorm and generate categories for ideas (K), develop interests and curiosities by asking questions (W), write on what has been learned (L), and use this as a guide for additional reading and inquiry (+), which can then form the seeds of a new writing project. As used in the IRW program, K-W-L+ is a strategy that students can use to not only comprehend a text, but to shape and organize ideas for a written product, and finally, use in peer response groups to give or receive feedback

(what do I know about my peer's essay? what do I want to know about my peer's essay? what did I learn from reading my peer's essay? what do I still want to know now that I've read my peer's essay?). Through instruction and experience in using strategies such as K-W-L+, the IRW program instills in students a sense that reading and writing are complementary processes of meaning making—whether meaning comes from their transaction with text or their production of text.

Bolstered by their direct experience with the reading-writing connection, students are encouraged through a series of reflective activities to consider how reading and writing work reciprocally to help them discover meaning, not only in the IRW course, but in courses across the college curriculum, and in their own lives. And, we added a powerful incentive: Students who successfully complete the IRW course have met not only the CSU remediation requirement, but also San Francisco State's first-year college composition requirement, in effect completing in their first year what would ordinarily have taken them three semesters to accomplish.

We began by piloting 5 experimental sections of the IRW course. Then in 2001, with a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), we expanded to 10 sections and an enrollment of 169 students. In 2002-2003, we offered 11 sections with 190 students, and in 2003-2004, we again offered 11 sections and enrolled 193 students. At the conclusion of the grant, the program expanded to include over 30 sections enrolling more than 500 students.

PROJECT RESULTS

To measure how well the IRW program was meeting its goal to provide students with an enriched literacy experience that would facilitate their entry into mainstream college courses, we used a number of outcome measures to compare students enrolled in the IRW program to a control group enrolled in the traditional sequence of separate reading and writing courses. In our 2003 article (Goen and Gillotte-Tropp), we published results on the first year the program was funded by FIPSE. These first-year results showed that students in the IRW group had higher retention rates, completed the remediation requirement sooner and in greater numbers, scored similarly to or higher on measures of reading comprehension and critical reasoning, received higher ratings on their writing portfolios, and exited the program better able to pass the next composition course in the required sequence. More importantly, the IRW group was able to accomplish these goals in one

semester less of instruction than students in the control group. We noted at the time that while these first-year findings painted "a promising portrait of literacy development, the extent to which the integrated program can prove to be a viable response . . . will be more fully determined by corroborating data from the second and third years" (109). As described below, the results from the first year held steady over the next two years.

Retention Rates

Many students enrolled in the IRW program work full or part time, come from families with low incomes, and/or have family responsibilities caring for younger siblings or their own children. In designing their "Enrichment" program at CUNY,[2] Mary Soliday and Barbara Gleason noted that "forming communities is vitally important" for under-prepared students (66). The IRW program, with its year-long cohort structure, provides a place on a large urban commuter campus for students to form a community of peers and provides vital skills and strategies to help students negotiate this crucial first year. Students enrolled in the IRW program had retention rates of 88% in the first year, compared to 83% for students in the traditional sequence. In the second year, IRW retention had increased to 90%. By the third year, the IRW retention rates improved to 94%, while the rate for the traditional sequence remained relatively stable at around 85% over this same two-year period.

Remediation Pass Rates

Across all three years of FIPSE funding, the IRW students passed the integrated course at a higher rate than students in the traditional two-semester sequence of remediation. These higher pass rates have significant consequences in the context of the CSU's one-year limit on remediation. The penalty for not passing the remediation requirement in the first year is dis-enrollment from the university. Each year between 1997, when the remediation rule went into effect, and 2007, the CSU as a whole had on average dis-enrolled 11% of its first-year students. In the first three years of the remediation rule, San Francisco State dis-enrolled 16%; after the IRW program was implemented, that percentage decreased to an average of slightly more than 12%. In the third year of the IRW program, 99% of students in the IRW course passed (and thereby met the CSU remediation requirement). By comparison, 89% of the students in the traditional sequence passed, leaving 11%

subject to dis-enrollment under the CSU policy. Table 1 shows a comparison of remediation pass rates across all three years. See Table 1.

Table 1
Comparison of Remediation Pass Rates, IRW v. Control

Year	IRW	Control Group (n=221)	Percent Difference
2001-2002	**97%** (N=136, n=132)	**84%** (N=204, n=173)	**+13%**
2002-2003	**97%** (N=171, n=166)	**87%** (N=212, n=184)	**+10%**
2003-2004	**99%** (N=181, n=179)	**89%** (N=221, n=201)	**+10%**

Reading Comprehension and Critical Reasoning

To assess reading outcomes, we used the Descriptive Test of Language Skills. The DTLS is a widely used and reliable measure of reading comprehension and critical reasoning. Scores from the DTLS are normed against those of an ethnically diverse sample of students enrolled in regular and developmental courses, including a proportionate number of ESL students, from 11 two-year colleges and 24 four-year colleges across the U. S. As shown in Table 2, between 2001 and 2004, students in the IRW courses performed similarly or showed significantly higher gains on both the reading comprehension and critical reasoning measures. At least as important, the IRW students achieved these gains after one semester of instruction, compared to the control group whose gains were assessed after one year. See Table 2.

Essay Portfolios

We collected essay portfolios from both groups of students. The portfolios contained essays from students in the IRW group collected during the first semester (one essay from early in the first semester, one from the mid-point, and one towards the end of the semester). These portfolios were labeled "Developmental-level" and compared to portfolios from the control group (one essay collected early, one at mid-point, and one near the end of the year of the traditional two-semester sequence of developmental courses).

Table 2
Summary of DTLS Posttest Results, IRW v. Control

		IRW Group	Control Group	Difference Between Groups	Significance of Difference
Reading Comprehension Mean Score	Year 1: 2001-02	29.20	27.0	2.20	**0.005**
	Year 2: 2002-03	28.78	27.57	1.21	**0.038**
	Year 3: 2003-04	28.43	28.73	-.30*	**ns**
Critical Reasoning Mean Score	Year 1: 2001-02	20.2	18.6	1.6	**0.002**
	Year 2: 2002-03	19.41	18.62	0.79	**ns**
	Year 3: 2003-04	18.90	19.85	-0.95*	**ns**

* These inverse figures for Year 3 are not entirely surprising. By the third year, the traditional reading course had come under heavy influence of the IRW program. In fact, most of these traditional courses were taught by instructors who readily conceded that they approached their traditional courses in much the same way as they approached their IRW courses.

We also collected three essays from the IRW group during the second semester of the integrated course. These portfolios were labeled "First-Year Composition (FYC)-level." These portfolios were compared to those collected from the control group during their third semester, when they were enrolled in the first-year written composition course.

The portfolios were assessed in blind and normed scoring sessions using two independent raters (any discrepant scores were resolved by a third independent reader). Experienced external readers assessed each portfolio using a modified version of the checklist used by Soliday and Gleason in their "Enrichment" program ("From Remediation to Enrichment"). Portfolios were assessed on a four-point scale across six subcategories, and were given an overall rating (see Appendix). Over the three years, students in the

IRW group consistently outperformed the control group, but with varying levels of statistical significance. In the interest of space, Tables 3 and 4 below summarize the comparative results for the first and third years only. See Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3
Year 1 (2001-2002) Student Essay Portfolios, IRW v. Control

	Measure	IRW Group	Control Group	Difference Between Groups	Significance of Difference
Developmental-Level Mean Score	1. R/W Integration	2.71	2.68	0.03	**ns**
	2. Thesis	2.69	2.58	0.11	**ns**
	3. Org	2.65	2.59	0.06	**ns**
	4. Syntax	2.67	2.50	0.17	**0.05**
	5. Mechanics	2.47	2.30	0.17	**0.05**
	6. Audience*	n/a	n/a	n/a	**n/a**
	7. Overall	2.71	2.51	0.20	**0.01**
First-Year Comp Level Mean Score	1. R/W Integration	3.05	2.8	0.03	**0.025**
	2. Thesis	2.82	2.65	0.11	**ns**
	3. Org	2.8	2.76	0.06	**ns**
	4. Syntax	2.69	2.57	0.17	**ns**
	5. Mechanics	2.48	2.50	-0.02	**ns**
	6. Audience*	n/a	n/a	n/a	**n/a**
	7. Overall	2.83	2.59	0.24	**0.044**

* In Year 1, we used an evaluation checklist with only six measures. The checklist was modified in Years 2 and 3 to include the measure "Audience Awareness."

Table 4
Year 3 (2003-2004) Student Essay Portfolios, IRW v. Control

	Measure	IRW Group	Control Group	Difference Between Groups	Significance of Difference
Developmental Level Mean Score	1. R/W Integration	2.73	2.64	0.09	**ns**
	2. Thesis	2.75	2.51	0.24	**0.0045**
	3. Organiz.	2.66	2.47	0.19	**0.042**
	4. Syntax	2.52	2.26	0.26	**0.005**
	5. Mechanics	2.82	2.50	0.32	**0.0011**
	6. Audience	2.82	2.74	0.08	**ns**
	7. Overall	2.74	2.46	0.28	**0.0011**
First-Year Comp Level Mean Score	1. R/W Integration	2.7	2.5	0.2	**ns**
	2. Thesis	2.8	2.6	0.2	**ns**
	3. Org	2.6	2.6	0	**ns**
	4. Syntax	2.5	2.5	0	**ns**
	5. Mechanics	2.9	2.7	0.2	**ns**
	6. Audience	2.9	2.8	0.1	**ns**
	7. Overall	2.8	2.6	0.2	**ns**

Second-Year Composition Pass Rates

Students who successfully complete the year-long IRW course have met two of San Francisco State's written English proficiency requirements. They have not only complied with the one-year remediation rule, but also have met the first-year composition requirement and are now eligible to enroll in the mandatory second-year composition course. Since students coming out

of the IRW program arrive in this second-year course a full semester earlier than of students in the control group, we were especially interested to see how the IRW students fared in this second-year course. As Table 5 shows, across all three years, students who arrived in the second-year course via IRW passed the course at consistently higher rates than students who arrived by other pathways. See Table 5.

Table 5
Comparison of Pass Rates in Second-Year Composition*

	Year 1: 2001-2002		**Year 2: 2002-2003**		**Year 3: 2003-2004**	
Pass Rates of Students Eligible via IRW	N=76	**97%** (n=74)	N= 124	**93%** (n= 115)	N= 181	**95%** (n=172)
Pass Rates of Students Eligible via Tradi-tional Pathways	N= 1967	**90%** (n=1740)	N= 1964	**88%** (n =1728)	N= 1883	**92%** (n=1732)

* We compared pass rates in second-year composition of students from the IRW program to aggregate pass rates of students who arrived in second-year composition by a) testing directly into it; b) testing into and completing first-year composition; c) testing into and completing the traditional remedial sequence followed by successful completion of first-year composition; or d) transferring in coursework equivalent to first-year composition from a community college.

Taken as a whole, the evidence seems clear. The IRW program allows students deemed most at-risk for not succeeding and/or dropping out, who begin San Francisco State with a full year of high-stakes remediation as their welcome mat, to enter the academic mainstream during the crucial first year and to move on to more advanced composition courses—in short, to thrive as college students.

ELIMINATING THE NEED FOR REMEDIATION

During the time that the IRW program was being implemented, the clock was steadily ticking on the CSU's policy to reduce the need for remedia-

tion to no more than 10% of the incoming class by the year 2007. In 1997, when the reduction plan went into effect, 47% of all incoming first-year students were assessed as needing remediation in English. Not unlike the initiatives in the 1980's, this new plan called for comprehensive strategies, most of which were aimed at creating joint partnerships between the CSU and public schools to strengthen the preparation of high school graduates. One strategy introduced in 1999 was the Collaborative Academic Preparation Initiative (CAPI), a partnership between various CSU campuses and local high schools, whose purpose was to strengthen the mathematics and English preparation of college-bound high school students. When the CSU eliminated funding for this program, it was replaced in 2003 with a new flagship initiative, the Early Assessment Program (EAP). Jointly administered by the State Board of Education, the California Department of Education, and the California State University, the Early Assessment Program's goal is to identify students not yet proficient in English before they arrive at a California State University campus.[3] The aim is to identify these students by the end of their high school junior year, and then provide them with an amplified course of instruction in their senior year, thus relieving the CSU of the need to remediate these students in their first year of college. Since it was first put into practice, the number of high school students volunteering to take the EAP has grown to more than 300,000 in 2007 alone.

Two primary initiatives accompany the EAP plan. The first is an 80-hour course of study for high school teachers called Reading Institutes for Academic Preparation (RIAP). The stated goal of these reading institutes is to help teachers "learn the expectations for college-level work in English . . . and practice specific strategies for building academic reading competency . . . including content-specific reading demands, critical thinking, and academic reading/writing connections" ("Pilot Study" 6). More than two thousand high school teachers have participated in these reading institutes since their inception.

The second initiative is the twelfth grade Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC). Developed in collaboration with CSU faculty and high school teachers, it consists of fourteen assignment modules. Each module contains a sequence of "integrated reading and writing experiences" that take between two to three weeks to teach (7). High school teachers are offered four days of professional development led by CSU faculty, high school teachers, and county office of education language arts specialists. Since the introduction of the ERWC in 2004, more than 2,200 teachers have partici-

pated in these workshops and adopted the ERWC modules for students in their schools.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that these efforts are doing much good, that many students are finding higher education accessible as a direct result of the collaborative efforts of dedicated university and high school teachers. And I would argue that increased collaboration between high school and university faculty is having a beneficial effect on both, providing a forum for a rich exchange of ideas, expertise, and resources, not to mention professional support and encouragement. But offered as a comprehensive plan to reduce the need for remediation, these strategies belie the historical record. In implementing this expensive EAP initiative, the CSU is operating from a persistent but flawed belief that if it only sets its standards high enough, and articulates them clearly to the secondary schools, the result will be fewer under-prepared students seeking admission and, eventually, complete elimination of the need for remedial courses at the university level. Despite these well-intentioned and well-implemented programs in the high schools, in 2007—the target year for reducing the number of new students needing remediation to 10%—the remediation figures for that year remained at the recalcitrant rate of 46.2%.

In light of these disappointing results, the CSU has looked for alternative ways to reduce educational spending on remedial programs, most directly by declaring that as of 2007 there would be no more general funding for remediation. Campuses across the CSU were in a tough bind: they would receive no more general funding to support basic writing, yet they would be admitting just as many students as ever in need of these programs. Initially, the San Francisco State administration was considering two options in lieu of continuing to fund the almost $700,000 annually to provide remedial instruction in English. The first option was to remand all remediation to the College of Extended Learning (where SFSU houses its program of adult continuing education courses); the second was to outsource remedial instruction to the community colleges. Of these two plans, the San Francisco State administration preferred the former, despite the prohibitive premium students would have to pay to register for these courses through Extended Learning ($220 per unit compared to regular full-time tuition of $127 per unit); some other CSU campuses have opted for the latter option—sending students in need of remediation to the community colleges.

Around the time of these budget deliberations, the IRW program began to receive national and statewide attention[4] for its documented success and its cost effectiveness,[5] and the San Francisco State administration saw

a solution to its problem. Gone were the extended learning and outsourcing plans, and in their place the IRW program became fully adopted and was approved as a first-year composition equivalent course, permanently replacing the traditional sequence of separate developmental-level reading and writing courses. As of 2006, all incoming first-time students who score at the remedial level on the English Placement Test (approximately 1,100 each year) enroll in a credit-bearing integrated reading/writing course in a vastly expanded IRW program.

HISTORY LESSONS

We can take many lessons from this story. The most obvious one is that despite institutional efforts to say it isn't so, many students will continue to arrive on college campuses deemed under-prepared to engage in the various literacy practices of the university.[6] I'd like to argue for a different lesson though, one that more directly calls into question the institutional need to claim that remediation is being eliminated. If we accept this need as a realistic one, we subscribe to the amnesiac logic that better efforts might eventually yield the as-yet elusive result of a high school graduating class in which all students are adequately prepared for college-level reading and writing. Instead, I suggest we read this history to critique the fundamental notion that college remediation is a problem in need of a solution.

On the homepage of the California State University website, the CSU describes itself in bold letters as "a leader" in both accessible and high-quality education. Obscured in this claim is the fact that remediation sits at the intersection of these twin goals, between the democratic ideal of equal educational opportunity on the one hand, and high academic standards on the other. In my search through two decades worth of policy documents, I saw repeated instances where higher education in California has tried to have it both ways, to authorize remedial programs in the name of equal educational opportunity even as it calls for elimination in order to preserve high standards. As institutions of higher education perform this delicate balancing act, expensive efforts to reduce remediation, however unsuccessful they might be, serve the institutional need to convince state legislatures and the tax-paying public that democratic ideals are being met, while reassuring them that their dollars are not being wasted teaching students what they should have learned in high school. As long as remediation sits at this intersection, institutions like the CSU will need initiatives such as the Early

Assessment Program. While they may fail to reduce the need for remediation, as public policy they succeed perfectly.

In a certain sense, the success of the IRW program embodies this dilemma. On the one hand, the insoluble problem of how to curtail remediation created the opportunity that gave rise to the IRW program. On the other hand, the IRW program offered a face-saving solution to the dismal results of the CSU's latest efforts to reduce remediation. The IRW program maintains access for students who would otherwise be sent elsewhere, and it helps them successfully negotiate the literacy values and practices of the university while mitigating the risk of dis-enrollment. It does so without any obvious erosion of academic standards, as measured by comparative pass rates in the second-year composition course, and it does so in a cost effective way. But it also suggests that if we cease to think of remediation as a problem to be solved, and think of it as an opportunity to practice what Soliday refers to as "translation pedagogy"—if we envision first-year courses where students can negotiate the discourses they bring with them to college and those they will encounter across the university curriculum—then the problem of remediation goes away (17).

NEW POSSIBILITIES

Imagine what could happen if the CSU embraced this reading of its remedial past. No longer would it have to invest millions of dollars trying to get high schools to perform a function that is, by necessity, rooted in the college experience. To perform its democratic function, basic writing sits not at the point of exit from high school, but at the *entry* point to higher education. Historically, basic writing has served to initiate students to the discourses of the academic community, which may be far distant from and even alien to those of their home communities.[8] But basic writing doesn't just initiate students to a more privileged language; it also offers them the opportunity and instructional practice to critically reflect on a variety of discourses, of home, school, work and the more specific public discourses of the media, the law, the health care system, and even of the college writing classroom itself. By reading its history this way, the CSU could stop playing the elimination game and argue instead for its campuses as the appropriate location for basic writing instruction. If the CSU ceased having to claim that it can reduce remediation in order to justify the existence of its basic writing programs, it might also be persuaded to dedicate sorely needed funding for faculty development and two- and four-year college partner-

ships commensurate to what it currently earmarks for programs like the EAP. Without doubt, one of the biggest challenges basic writing faces is a woeful lack of graduate programs to help prepare new generations of basic writing faculty. California has 109 community college campuses, serving some 2.5 million students. The University of California stopped offering remedial instruction in English back in the 1990s, and now with more CSU campuses following suit, these community colleges have already become the primary site for basic writing instruction. A majority of the thousands of basic writing classes offered on community college campuses in California are taught by instructors who receive their graduate degrees from a CSU campus. In California, a discipline-appropriate master's degree is the minimum qualification to teach at a community college. According to the American Association of Community Colleges, more than 70% of full-time community college faculty nationwide have terminal master's degrees. Given that there are so few master's programs in composition and/or programs that focus on teaching basic writing, it's safe to presume that these instructors most likely have degrees in English or related fields, but not necessarily in composition, let alone basic writing. Noting a study indicating that only "20% of institutions nationwide reported requiring full-time faculty to possess specific training in developmental education before teaching remedial courses," the California Community Colleges are developing strategic plans to recruit and hire faculty who are both "knowledgeable and enthusiastic" about teaching basic writing and who "choose to teach remedial classes as opposed to being assigned to them." They even went so far as to cite a study recommending that any instructor who teaches a remedial-level course should possess a terminal degree in a discipline relevant to developmental education (Center for Student Success 20).

This faculty recruitment goal, however laudable, is sure to be hamstrung, for even though an important mission of CSU graduate programs is to prepare California community college teachers, only a handful of the 23 CSU campuses (3 by my latest count) offer a true MA degree in composition (or comp/rhetoric), and an equally small number offer graduate coursework, in teaching basic writing. Even fewer of these already-too-few graduate courses offer any preparation in teaching postsecondary reading.

With FIPSE funds, the IRW program intended, albeit modestly, to help fill this gap through a series of regularly scheduled workshops to prepare San Francisco State and local community college faculty to teach IRW courses. We also videotaped the workshops for use with new teachers in San Francisco State's graduate teacher education program. While these workshops provided

a venue to exchange ideas, we quickly learned that teaching integrated reading/writing is not something that even experienced teachers can absorb in one or two half-day workshops. Accordingly, we made several modifications to our approach to faculty development. To help prepare new faculty to teach integrated reading/writing, my colleague Helen Gillotte-Tropp and I created a year-long graduate seminar ("Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading/Writing") as part of the San Francisco State's MA and graduate teaching certificate programs in Postsecondary Reading and Composition. Since we first began offering this graduate course in 2002, we have seen more than twenty community college instructors, representing some fifteen different campuses, come to our campus to take the course so they could begin to develop integrated reading/writing courses at their home institutions.

While these new efforts are helping to prepare basic writing teachers who live or work in close proximity to the San Francisco State campus, they remain hampered by certain constraints. A typical sabbatical leave for community college teachers is a single semester only, so they cannot feasibly complete a year-long course of instruction. For those not on leave, it is very difficult to take graduate courses while teaching full-time. As such, our efforts have fallen well short of meeting this growing need, even at this very local level. But if the CSU could read its history to legitimize the place of developmental English in the higher education curriculum, it might authorize new and expanded graduate programs to help prepare a new generation of community college faculty "knowledgeable and enthusiastic" about teaching basic writing and reading. Since it's not likely that graduate education alone can meet the challenge of preparing a new generation of faculty or effectively address the needs of already-degreed community college teachers, the CSU might also offer similarly comprehensive faculty development programs and collaborative partnerships between community college and university faculty similar to the ones it currently provides in the Early Assessment Program, perhaps something along the lines of the California Writing Project, but directed towards community college teaching.

My goal in this article is not merely to wish some utopian vision on the California State University. Rather, it is to raise historical consciousness by using the story of San Francisco State's IRW program to critique the particular ways the California State University has institutionalized basic writing. This is a local example, admittedly, but one I hope sheds light on more global challenges facing basic writing. I hope we can find in this story the grounds to advocate for higher education as *the* appropriate location for basic writing and to advocate, in turn, for the resources necessary to theorize, develop, and

sustain a rich variety of approaches to basic writing instruction—instruction that might justifiably focus on reading as well as writing. I hope as well that we use this story to call for more graduate programs and faculty development to help prepare a new generation of basic writing teachers and scholars to meet the new basic writing students who will inevitably continue to arrive on our college campuses.

Notes

1. While not necessarily the case at all institutions, at San Francisco State, basic writing is inextricably linked to ethnic and cultural diversity. As recently as 2007, two-thirds of all African American, Mexican American, and "other Latino" students admitted to the CSU placed into remedial English. Over the last decade, African American students have consistently placed into remedial courses at higher relative percentages than any other group (CSU Division of Analytic Studies).

2. Not coincidentally, the Enrichment program at City College of New York was embedded in its own institution's effort to eliminate remediation. Despite its documented success, the program was fatally compromised when the CUNY Board of Trustees and the New York State Board of Regents voted to eliminate remediation in the system's senior colleges, housing it exclusively on the two-year college campuses as part of a new master plan that created a tiered system, not unlike ours in California. See Gleason for further details.

3. Developed in 2001, the EAP identifies not-yet proficient high school students by their scores on an expanded California Standards Test in English (augmented by the addition of 15 multiple choice items and an essay, both of which are retired items from the CSU English Placement Test).

4. In addition to being awarded the FIPSE grant, the IRW program has also been the recipient of the 2005 Conference on Basic Writing Award for Innovation, and at its Spring 2005 meeting, the California State University English Council passed a resolution designating San Francisco State's IRW program as a model to be used throughout the CSU system. At the January 2008 meeting of the CSU Board of Trustees, the IRW program was cited as an example of "effective practices" that provide an alternative to remediation.

5. Because students who successfully complete the IRW course do not have to take the mandatory first-year composition course, the university can offer as many as 50 fewer sections per year of first-year composition. San Francisco State's traditional three-semester progression from Developmental Writing/Reading through first-year composition carried an annual cost of $672,100. The year-long IRW program reduces that annual expenditure to $286,000, for a net savings of $386,100.

6. One could also question the validity of the English Placement Test. If significant reforms to the high school curriculum appear unable, both historically and currently, to budge the percentage of students placing into English remediation, then perhaps the test is assessing skills that are of an altogether different nature than what even the most rigorous and comprehensive high school courses are teaching. I leave that critique for another day.

7. I make this claim aware that BW's initiation function is a contested one. See for example, Bizzell, Harris, Horner and Lu, and Soliday.

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APPENDIX

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION CHECKLIST

San Francisco State University

Integrated Reading/Writing Program

Portfolio Number____ Reader Number _____

Directions to Readers: Each portfolio contains three essay "sets" written by the same student, one written near the beginning of the term (but not a diagnostic), one written near the mid-term, and one essay written near the end of the semester. Read through each portfolio, then considering the body of work **as a whole**, complete the following checklist. For each category listed below, place a check mark clearly on one point of the 4-point rubric. Based on your evaluation, please also indicate as **"Category Seven"** whether you think the portfolio indicates that the student has met the learning objectives of the course and is eligible to proceed to the next level course. Completing the space for comments on the portfolio as a whole is encouraged, but optional.

Category One: Formulating/Supporting a Thesis

The writer has a clear purpose/controlling idea/thesis that is supported by thoughtful analysis. The complexity of ideas is recognized and the thesis is substantiated through personal insights and appropriate references to assigned or chosen texts.

____ 4	____ 3	____ 2	____ 1
Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor

Category Two: Organization

The writer makes appropriate organizational choices. Paragraphs are coherent internally and the writer uses transitions between paragraphs. Introductions and conclusions function purposefully within the text.

____ 4	____ 3	____ 2	____ 1
Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor

Category Three: Sentences

The writer writes sentences that are both well-focused and employ a variety of syntactic structures such that he/she is able to develop ideas at the level of the sentence, rather than by mere accretion of sentences.

____ 4	____ 3	____ 2	____ 1
Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor

Category Four: Grammar and Mechanics

The essay is well-proofread and mainly free of significant errors in usage, spelling, and mechanics.

____ 4	____ 3	____ 2	____ 1
Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor

Category Five: Reading/Writing Integration

The writer is able to use readings to inform his/her understanding and discussion of the topic. The writer comprehends the texts he/she reads (that is, he/she is able to distinguish between major [gist] and minor [evidentiary] propositions of the texts) but also evaluates and employs textual information to inform his/her own discussions/arguments.

____ 4	____ 3	____ 2	____ 1
Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor

Category Six: Audience Awareness

The writer shows a conscious awareness of the reader's needs. The writer orients the reader by employing word choice and tone appropriate to his/her purpose and audience (for example: providing background information in the introduction and defining or modifying key terms.)

____ 4	____ 3	____ 2	____ 1
Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor

Category Seven: Overall Evaluation

Meets Learning Outcomes _____

Does Not Meet Learning Outcomes _____

Comments:

A New World: Redefining the Legacy of Min-Zhan Lu

Brian Ray

ABSTRACT: This article discusses exchanges between a number of scholars during the 1990s centering on Min-Zhan Lu's controversial essay "Conflict and Struggle: The Enemies or Preconditions of Basic Writing?" In some ways, "Conflict and Struggle" blazed a trail for later work in "hybrid" or "mixed" forms of academic writing while at the same time igniting debate over Mina Shaughnessy's legacy. Rather than take sides, the author considers what perspectives and considerations were left out of this years-long standoff and attempts to reconcile this issue in BW theory through relevant but less talked-about work in linguistics. The concept of linguistic charity, an area of growing interest in composition studies, offers a particularly refreshing new direction for discussion regarding the ambiguous and often controversial role of Standard English in our pedagogies.

KEYWORDS: Mina Shaughnessy; Min-Zhan Lu; linguistic charity; essentialism; grammatical instruction; Standard English

After the publication of Min-Zhan Lu's 1991 *JBW* essay, "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy," a ten-year debate ensued over the needs of BW students that pitted longstanding scholars against those who argued that Shaughnessy's landmark book, *Errors and Expectations*, overlooked cultural and linguistic differences in the nation's increasingly diverse classrooms. Both sides conceded little territory in the articles and commentaries appearing in *College Composition and Communication*, the *Journal of Basic Writing*, and *College English*—and the debate ended in stalemate. While these differences may no longer occupy the pages of journals, writing teachers know that they inhabit departments and thicken the air of BW classrooms. By revisiting the debate, I hope to identify common ground between the two camps. Such ground exists when viewing their differing positions through the linguistic concept of charity, which Kevin Porter outlines in his 2001 *CCC* article "A Pedagogy of Charity: Donald Davidson and the Student-Negotiated Composition Classroom." Language itself is a process of negotiation in which users must adjust to each other's ways of understanding and communicating. Such a view of language permeates the philosophies of Shaughnessy as well as her ostensible critics. Recognizing this relationship should highlight their

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shared heritage. It also shows that to advocate for greater consideration of the tensions between discourse styles, as Lu does, does not mean that she intends to chisel away at the ivory tower of academia with a hammer and sickle. Instead, her approach provides a way to enhance students' education by placing academic discourse next to home discourses and emphasizing the differences between them. By giving students more authority and responsibility to explore and reflect on how their ways of communicating and thinking change via exposure to the academy, Lu seeks to address and utilize ambivalence toward academic writing and Standard English.

A reconsideration of Lu's work also offers an alternative conception of the relationship between basic writing theory and the larger discourse of composition. In her 1998 *JBW* essay, "Iconic Discourse: The Troubling Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy," Jeanne Gunner examines the "number of intra-community ideological conflicts that have surfaced in the past decade," one of which involves exchanges between Lu and those whom Gunner identifies as more traditional BW theorists (25). She concludes that the legacy of Mina Shaughnessy is one of the "constraining discursive rules" that have contributed to the tension between those within BW and those like Lu who have been viewed as outsiders coming from the larger composition community to impose impractical or irrelevant ideas. Gunner also identifies Lu's early work as not only a source of the "first major intra-community conflict" between BW theorists and the broader composition community but also a "real threat to the authority of the icon" of Mina Shaughnessy and the teacher-hero aura surrounding open admissions at CCNY (City College of New York), where Shaughnessy worked (27). Despite how she has been read, however, Lu poses no threat to the underlying premises of such models if seen through the practice of charity. If anything, Lu expands on the project of error analysis by making a case for the students' role in that process. Ultimately, Lu also shares Shaughnessy's ultimate goal of empowering students to choose from multiple forms of discourse for any given occasion.

The First Shots

What would eventually turn into a dead heat issue began with Min-Zhan Lu's first articulation of a pedagogy focused on linguistic conflict in her 1991 *JBW* article "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy." In this essay, Lu critiques the assumption that students can gain confidence and ability with academic discourse "in isolation from . . . the dynamic power struggle within and among diverse discourses" (25). She holds that a separa-

tion of language and meaning—common among linguists in the 1960s and 1970s—prevents *Errors and Expectations* from fully helping students overcome the tension between home and school discourses. If students are taught to separate their ideas from the words used to express those ideas, then they are taught to ignore the possibility that exposure to academic language will change the way they think. As Lu acknowledges, Shaughnessy' s pedagogy aspired to give students the "freedom of deciding how and when and where to deploy different forms of discourse" (27). Lu argues, furthermore, that "some of [Shaughnessy's] own pedagogical advice indicates that an essentialist view of language could impede rather than enhance one's effort to fulfill these tasks" (28). The implication is that Shaughnessy herself would not disagree with this major premise of Lu's work.

As an example, Lu studies Shaughnessy's response to a claim made by a student about the relationship between advancement and college education. The sentence reads as follows:

> In my opinion I believe that you there is no field that cannot be effected some sort of advancement that one maybe need a college degree to make it. (Shaughnessy qtd. in Lu 29)

Lu questions Shaughnessy's original attention to grammatical and stylistic concerns in this sentence. When Shaughnessy suggests the deletion of "fillers" such as "In my opinion," "some sort of advancement," and "maybe," in an effort to improve the sentence's clarity, Lu sees such suggestions as more than mere editing. The removal of these qualifying words not only makes the sentence sound more resolute, it removes any doubt about the claim being asserted. The student may have used these qualifiers to express his own doubts about the necessity of a college education. As Lu puts it, the alleged "fillers" might indicate "his uncertainty or skepticism towards the belief that education entails advancement," and so she concludes that, by "learning 'consolidation'" of his style, "this student is also consolidating his attitude towards that belief" (30). Rather than focus all attention on this student's possible skepticism, however, Lu offers a compromise. "I think the teacher should do both," she says, meaning that a teacher might make stylistic suggestions but also ask the student in question if the revisions hold true to his original intentions (30).

Additionally, Lu takes issue with Shaughnessy's decision to privilege a "formal" rather than "contextual" approach to other conventions of academic discourse, such as "academic vocabulary." In *Errors and Expectations*,

Shaughnessy makes the case that students may see the acquisition of new meanings of familiar words as a threat to their identities. For example, the word "ideal" often functions as an adjective meaning "perfect" in casual conversation, whereas academics sometimes use the word "ideal" to indicate an expectation at odds with reality. A "contextual" approach would highlight conflicts of meaning like this one, whereas a "formal" approach would treat the concept of shifting meanings in a kind of vacuum, focusing on "prefixes and suffixes" of words to illustrate the same basic premise. The "formal" method may minimize students' resistance but, as Lu says, doing so "only circumvents the students' attention to" this issue and merely "delays . . . their need to deal with [the] possibility" of acculturation through language instruction (35). As an alternative, Lu recommends using both "formal" and "contextual" methods of vocabulary building.

The foregrounding of such conflict ultimately serves, in Lu's mind, to reaffirm students' cultural backgrounds—which we otherwise risk devaluing. If BW teachers do not remind students that they are aware of and sensitive to the differences between their own language and that of the university, pressure to conform to the dominant culture of academia will likely lead to polar reactions: on one hand, students may be completely absorbed into the academy, cutting ties to their home language and identity, while, on the other, they may retreat from college due to the anger and frustration resulting from poor grades and low self-esteem.

Despite the first impression that Lu's 1991 article may give, her primary motivation lies much less in a critique of *Errors and Expectations* than in a disruption of the "linguistic innocence" that Shaughnessy herself disclaimed but that nonetheless leaked into her pedagogy. Closing her article, Lu challenges the notions of E. D. Hirsch, Jr., who argues in *Cultural Literacy* that "an essence in the individual . . . exists prior to the act of communication . . . " (Hirsch qtd. in Lu 37). She takes issue with Hirsch for perpetuating the idea of academic discourse as a force that can cultivate and improve on other forms of discourse by demanding a "more thoroughly developed" and "more consciously organized" version of home discourses that by his comparison seem "simplistic" and "unreasoned." Such comparisons make academic discourse a touchstone, Lu says, a standard by which to evaluate all other forms of expression.

The only issue I question here is Lu's ostensible conflation of language planning, which often entails conscious and direct intervention by policy-makers regarding the structure and acquisition of language, and teaching practice—given her stated desire for students to "call into question and

change" the "function of formal English as a timeless linguistic law" (36). Her goal certainly is a tall order for students who in fact possess questionable means, at this stage in their lives, to enact such change. One could disagree with Lu on grounds that such ideals should be argued for in other forums—before faculty senates and government organizations that in fact have the means to institute policies against language discrimination. Indeed, Lu is not often explicit about the specifics of building such a movement among students in the classroom, but a reasonable interpretation would suggest she only means that if teachers help students acquire academic discourse while actively helping them resist acculturation, then these students will eventually be in a better position to fulfill Shaughnessy's hopes of language choice. This assertion becomes the closing call in many of Lu's essays, from "Redefining the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy" to her 2004 *CCC* article "An Essay on the Work of Composition," in which she says,

> It is our responsibility to call attention to the potential desires, capabilities, and needs of all users of English to actively participate in the redesigning of standardized englishes [. . .]. Composition can and should take up such a responsibility. A course in composition is one of the few courses required of a majority of [. . .] future Working Persons, Tourists, Consumers, Teachers, CEOs, Portfolio Men, Consultants, Politicians, Leaders of institutions or life worlds [. . . .] (44)

Such closing calls, of course, become a lightning rod for critics, who accuse Lu's pedagogy of ignoring the real political situation of students for the sake of a misplaced ideology. Granted, such work, as Lu defines it, places a heavy load on composition, let alone basic writing, a load that would be better shouldered by the larger university. Furthermore, Lu's ideas—as presented here—have the added effect of seeming rather insensitive to the material conditions of writing teachers. Such critics find it easy, then, to summarize Lu's position as one that tosses fundamental principles of BW theory out the window. They tend to misread Lu as telling teachers to salute a portrait of Che Guevera before sitting down to hash out plans with their students to, in the course of a semester, eradicate academic discourse. The fear of failing to educate BW students has become an obstacle to the exploration of ways we can utilize Lu's linguistic conflict while navigating the practical necessity of helping students to acquire Standard English. We should neither reject

the political and economic demands placed on writing theory and practice nor bow down to these demands. They exist in dialectic.

Theoretical Crossfire

While many teachers and scholars recognize the unfair power dynamics that have resulted in the devaluation of other forms of English, they hold that a basic writing classroom should not serve as a platform for instituting language change. Doing so would risk limiting the students' acquisition of formal English and, as a result, lower their chances of succeeding in college and beyond. In reality, Lu poses no such threat to students—despite the idealism with which she sometimes writes. The ultimate goal of her project is merely to help students mitigate the sense of betrayal and tension between their public, academic, and private lives—to engage that tension in positive ways rather than ignoring it. Many BW teachers and researchers agree that one of our goals as educators is to inculcate in our students, to use Lillian Bridwell-Bowles' words, "a socially and politically situated view of language and the creation of texts—one that takes into account gender, race, class, sexual preference, and a host of . . . other cultural issues" (349).

Yet Min-Zhan Lu, who in many ways inaugurated the discussion of hybrid discourse in the work of BW students, suffered much scrutiny through her own nuanced articulation of this conception of language. A number of leading composition scholars saw Lu's work as an attack on Shaughnessy, as well as a threat to the enterprise of composition itself. Following the publication of her 1992 *College English* article "Conflict and Struggle: The Enemies or Preconditions of Basic Writing?", a number of such scholars joined to express condemnation. Their opinions comprise the "Symposium on Basic Writing, Conflict and Struggle, and the Legacy of Mina Shaughnessy" (Laurence et al.) in a 1993 issue of *College English*.

The symposium consists of commentary by well-known voices in BW theory: Patricia Laurence, Peter Rondinone, Barbara Gleason, Thomas J. Farrell, and Paul Hunter. The symposium concludes with a response by Lu. Of the five writers, everyone except Hunter (who does not discuss Lu specifically) dismisses Lu's pedagogy as divisive and dangerous to the success of BW students. Patricia Laurence, an early collaborator of Shaughnessy's and, at the time, a chair of CCNY's Writing in the Disciplines Program, opens the symposium with an echo of Fredric Jameson's advice to "Always historicize" (Jameson qtd. in Laurence 880). In her view, a critique of the "linguistic innocence" in *Errors and Expectations* was unjustified given the political

situation at CCNY, namely the outright hostility between open admissions students and the college's faculty.

Laurence also contests Lu's conflict-oriented pedagogy on the grounds that linguistic and cultural conflict is already a "subtext" at City College, which possesses a far more diverse student body than the institutions where Lu has taught (882). "To have employed a vocabulary or metaphor of 'conflict' or 'struggle' (then or now) rather than the language of understanding, caring, exchange, and reciprocity would have been counterproductive, irresponsible, and explosive" (882). Laurence revisits the tensions between those in the 1960s who wanted access to a college education and City College's elitist and resistant faculty, which resulted in riots and physical conflict in 1969, when CCNY's campus was seized by members of the local community.

Peter Rondinone, a former student at CCNY during open admissions and later a professor at LaGuardia Community College, reacts against the "alarm" Lu expresses in "Conflict and Struggle" at his "unequivocal belief" that BW students will find themselves at odds with their families and communities as they pursue higher education (883). "I have hoped to open the classroom to discussions of this possibility," he says, "because I've felt that this issue has long been a dirty little secret" (883). In this sense, he actually echoes Lu's first essay on Shaughnessy, in which she calls for teachers to devote more attention to students' possible acculturation by the academy. However, Rondinone makes a seemingly contradictory move when he interprets Lu's notion of the "mestiza consciousness" as "hovering between two worlds—the uneducated and the educated" (884). Rondinone's home culture, he says, "has little values worth clinging to," which of course may not hold true for many BW students. While the New York Italian-American community he describes had maintained an "anti-intellectual" attitude and punished those who pursued better opportunities, he seems to acknowledge in the symposium that every BW student brings a different set of experiences to the institution.

Barbara Gleason, who was at that time director of composition at City College, states that Lu's poststructuralist view of language is not suited to BW instruction. She also follows Laurence in criticizing Lu's alleged failure to consider Shaughnessy's historical context: "If Shaughnessy and her colleagues had a 'distrust of conflict and struggle,' City College in the early 1970s was not the place for them to be" (887). Their turn toward solidarity and calm reflected practical necessities rather than a decision between formalist and poststructural perspectives on language. Gleason also remarks that to "say that Shaughnessy's pedagogy and research were based on the

premise that form is separate from meaning is to say that Shaughnessy was influenced by some of the most commonly accepted premises and theories of her time" (887).

In his portion of the symposium, Thomas J. Farrell simply says that "Lu's prescriptions for Basic Writing today hardly seem worth pursuing" (891). In their place, he does not advocate any form of grammatical instruction. Instead, he only advises teachers to have students read and write about controversial public issues. His position elides the symposium's central concern about grammar, discourse, and linguistic conflict. Though he does not offer very clear support for his attitude toward Lu, Farrell has throughout his career been a staunch proponent of Standard English and an opponent of CCCC's 1972 resolution (adopted in 1974) on the "Students' Right to Their Own Language," which he says in a 1984 issue of *College English* "encourages students to assume a contumacious attitude towards those educators who would require them to learn Standard English" (Farrell and Reynoso 821). In his mind, "contumacious children may refuse to learn standard English, just as they refuse to learn other things," but "the non-learning of some children is hardly a good reason for abandoning the policy of requiring all children to learn the standard forms of English" (822). He presents a good case against those who, like Wendy Demko Reynoso, writing in the same 1984 issue, were "working to see standard English usage removed as a criterion" for college success (Farrell and Reynoso 821). Regarding Lu, however, Farrell does not distinguish her project of conflict and struggle from those of others who during the 1980s opposed Standard English.

Farrell also omits the fact that, throughout his career, he has advocated for a BW course that does not "attack the dragon error head-on," as does *Errors and Expectations*. He prefers a minimalist approach to grammar, stating for example in a reply to Patricia Laurence's comment on his 1977 *College English* article, "Literacy, the Basics, and all that Jazz," that errors in student papers diminish drastically when students are asked to write about issues they find engaging. "I suggest that concerns for error need to be set aside for a semester," he says in his response to Laurence, "and in that time the students need to write a lot, instead of doing grammar exercises" ("Slaying the Dragon Error" 233). Ultimately, Farrell's flippant dismissal of Lu implies that he sees no difference between her pedagogy and the earlier challenges to Standard English—and thus no possible connection between Lu's pedagogy and his own.

In her response, Lu also misses an opportunity to identify common ground between herself and her peers. Though she successfully defends her

position, her contribution to the symposium does not state a hidden fact: that her pedagogy is not in direct conflict with most approaches regarding the teaching of basic writing. Her response focuses primarily on the accusation that her language polarizes, pointing out that Laurence's allegation itself, rather, polarizes by placing conflict and struggle at odds with a vocabulary of "understanding, caring, exchange, and reciprocity" (Laurence et al. 895). In fact, the kind of conflict Lu desires will take the form of sympathy and understanding toward students (895). Furthermore, she says, her pedagogy is meant to "offer a way of thinking beyond the trap of polarization which seems to have dominated much of the earlier debate over 'the students' right to their own language'" (895). She also admits that "it would be 'naïve and self-serving' to assume that the 'dialogue' and 'resistance' promoted in the kind of classroom I depict can be absolutely free of social and discursive constraints" (900).

Essentially, Lu agrees here with Farrell that one cannot avoid the task of teaching Standard English. In reference to Gleason's accusation that her pedagogy lacks practical application, she says that "It is true . . . that any discussion of how to practice such a pedagogy in the form of a step-by-step teaching manual would contradict the injunction of this pedagogy to attend fully to the specific and dynamic interaction inherent in all discursive practice" (901). Lu agrees that her project requires further work in this regard. Her essays written after the *College English* forum show how teachers can actualize her pedagogy without having their courses descend into linguistic civil wars.

Ceasefire or Attrition?

A consideration of articles and responses to the 1993 symposium show how deeply this encounter resonated with BW teachers and scholars. A 1998 article by Laura Gray-Rosendale, "Inessential Writings: Shaughnessy's Legacy in a Socially Constructed Landscape," responds to Lu and others by using textual evidence from *Errors and Expectations* to dismiss accusations that Shaughnessy's pedagogy wished to simply pacify students who feared academic acculturation. Gray-Rosendale argues that Shaughnessy consistently articulated a perception of language as "dependent upon diverse rhetorical constraints and conditions, many of which rely upon external issues of context and social environment" (56). Shaughnessy's entire attitude toward "error," Gray-Rosendale notes, depends on what was then a revolutionary conception of "language use as context-dependent" (56). For further proof,

she quotes Shaughnessy's statement in *Errors and Expectations* that linguistic decisions are "variously shaped by situations and bound by conventions, none of which is inferior to others but none of which, also can substitute for others. . . . [A student's] errors reflect upon his linguistic situations, not . . . his educability" (Shaughnessy qtd. in Gray-Rosendale 57). Gray-Rosendale makes a strong case. Unfortunately, the article is predicated on the assumption that Lu has accused Shaughnessy and the entirety of *Errors and Expectations* of adhering to an accomodationist pedagogy.

Lu's perception of Shaughnessy takes on a very different tone from what Gray-Rosendale and others describe in "Life Writing as Social Acts," the review of Jane Maher's 1998 biography *Mina P. Shaughnessy: Her Life and Work*, in which Lu and co-author Elizabeth Robertson acknowledge the way Shaughnessy's students saw her, as a teacher "always eager to 'sit you down' to figure out what exactly was going wrong with your writing and 'do absolutely anything to get you to the next step' (Maher qtd. in Lu 125). Here Lu refers to Shaughnessy as a "trailblazer" who "achieved" higher levels of "status [for] composition" (127). She goes on to assert that Shaughnessy's writing "challenged" the view that basic writing was "sub-college-level work involving only teaching and service, never scholarship" (130).

Unfortunately, the comments exchanged in subsequent issues of *College English*, immediately following the 1993 symposium, had by 1999, the time of Lu's review, exacerbated the misunderstanding between these parties nearly beyond hope of clarification. In the first of two comments by Patricia Laurence on the symposium appearing in 1995, Laurence insists that Lu did not adequately historicize her discussion of Shaughnessy, a failure apparent in her "language" that "belies her claim at every turn" ("A Comment on the Symposium on Basic Writing" 104). As an example, Laurence reminds readers of the troubled colonial history and racism connoted by the word "mestiza" and "meztizo," terms used by Spanish settlers to distinguish social classes by skin color. She faults Lu for "plaster[ing]" such a word "onto current educational and cultural discussions in America" (104). She asks, "Why should I, a teacher of English, be complicit in perpetuating a colonial metaphor in America . . .?" (105). Finally, she argues that Lu still resists the language of "dialogue, understanding, caring, exchange, reciprocity, and negotiation" and sees them in opposition to "conflict" and "struggle" (105). Finally, Laurence again states that conflict already exists at CCNY, due to its diverse student body. Lu responds to Laurence, saying only that it "further illustrates the differences between our views" ("Min-Zhan Lu Responds" 106).

Gerald Graff, who is invoked at times in the symposium, comments on Laurence's comment in the October 1995 issue, arguing that while Laurence is right to point out that conflict and "clashing perspectives" have become a growing presence in institutions of higher learning, students still need teachers to help them "grasp . . . what is at stake in the conflicts" (730). He agrees with Lu when he states that "if the institution doesn't think such conflicts are important enough to bother engaging them in front of and with students, then why should students bother about them?" (731). Even when diversity is factored into the student body, as Laurence has observed, it will not be harnessed productively without guidance from teachers. Surprisingly, Laurence responds to Graff in the same issue. She admits that "students [at CCNY] undergo rapid and difficult psychological, educational, and cultural change compressed in the space of one generation," conceding Lu's point to some extent, though she still maintains that Graff's and Lu's notion of bringing conflicts from *outside* the university is not necessary since these conflicts already exist *in* the university ("Patricia Laurence Responds" 731).

All three—Graff, Laurence, and Lu—seem to agree on principles, just not terminology. One calls the pedagogy "conflict," the other "caring," though all would accept that BW teachers must ultimately demonstrate understanding and sympathy to students as they reposition their relationship in regard to subjectivity and language. Of course, linguists such as Geneva Smitherman have long argued that "students need . . . not models of correctness . . . but broader understanding of the intricate connection between one's language and his cultural experience, combined with insight into the political nature and social stratification of American dialects" (Smitherman qtd. in Alim and Baugh 50). A compelling anecdote from Smitherman's 1977 book, *Talkin' and Testifyin'*, tells of a math teacher who abandoned his syllabus to drill students in formal grammar, ignoring their high test scores in the face of the "improper" words and phrases they used to define multiplication and division. Thirty years later, not much has changed at some institutions. While CCNY may run a program that promotes understanding and sympathy, a swath of universities and community colleges have yet to institute portfolio evaluation of BW students, insist on "drill and grill" methods of teaching, and use composition textbooks that fly in the face of *Errors and Expectations*.

In fact, a 1994 survey of "seventy-five preservice teachers from a large urban university" by Robert L. Bowie and Carole L. Bond, appearing in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, revealed that sixty-one percent of teachers they questioned thought that students who wrote or spoke a nonstandard form

of English "operated under a faulty grammar system" (113-16). Such studies only push for greater recognition of marginalized forms of English in order to improve instruction. The entire mission of research, spearheaded by programs and initiatives like the Academic English Mastery Program, strives to improve the quality of education for minority students by "infus[ing] curricula with research-based strategies that facilitate the acquisition of SAE in its oral and written forms, while concomitantly validating the home language and culture of the students" (Alim and Baugh 44). These programs seem to be quite successful, as studies indicate, though public backlash against them has been severe. Strangely, the disagreements centering on the *College English* forum never referred to Smitherman or linguistic perspectives on Standard English. Everyone seemed to resist the injection of further polarization.

A Third-Party Diplomat

What Lu, Shaughnessy, and other theorists share regarding the attention to competing forms of discourse is a concept that Kevin Porter introduces in his 2001 *CCC* essay, "A Pedagogy of Charity." Adapted from Donald Davidson's research in linguistics, the notion of pedagogical "charity" observes that, in order for communication to occur, both interlocutors must "share a world"—both parties must assume the other is a rational being with "mostly true and coherent beliefs" (585).

For Davidson, communication involves guesswork more than anything. Interlocutors must work toward matching up their utterances, expectations, and the effects they have on others. As Stephen Yarbrough states in his discussion of Davidson's work in his 2007 book *Inventive Intercourse*, "If communicative success depended upon 'getting it right' the first time at bat, then seldom would anyone achieve communicative success" (32). In linguistic charity, "What is important from the beginning is not that the interlocutors' 'codes' match, but that the interlocutors share a similar method of adjusting their use of signs when responses don't match anticipations" (32). Lu's approach, too, hinges on teachers and students "adjusting their use of signs" in order to understand one another. Additionally, part of Davidson's project lies in moving beyond a conception of language that enables us to only assume we understand our interlocutors because we think we share a language in common.

In regard to the composition or BW classroom, such a concept requires that we should resist the temptation to think we automatically know how to "correct" a student's paper. We can guess as to what a student really means

when he or she makes a comma splice. But we cannot approach a paper or a student conference as if we were the ones who wrote the paper, just as communication is an illusion if we interpret words only according to our expectations rather than the intentions of the speaker and the truth conditions of the utterance. An unclear phrase or problem in diction becomes an occasion for negotiation—not merely correction.

In his application of Davidson's "charity," Porter argues for a more open classroom, one in which teachers and students negotiate their way through various situations, including error. So often, any opportunity for dialogue is lost when teachers write corrections on student papers or simply slap grades on them without sufficient commentary, and when teachers do offer commentary on papers in introductory courses it often arrives in the form of exhortations. Rather than dictate the need for thesis statements, active voice, or smooth transitions, Porter advocates more "charitable" approaches that seek to understand why, for example, a student neglects to add the letter "s" to the end of certain plural nouns or singular verbs. Above all, charity requires teachers to "accept others as rational beings with mostly true and coherent beliefs," which is a prerequisite if "we wish to communicate with them" (Porter 584-85). Simply writing "I don't understand what you mean here" on a student paper often opens a conversation that allows teachers and students in conference to make greater progress.

This more constructive approach to teacher response to student writing also leads to more constructive peer review sessions as students learn alternative responses to each other's writing, questions like, "How do you see this paragraph connecting to the previous one?" as opposed to mandates in ballpoint or whirlwinds of arrows (Porter 580). It is precisely this charitable spirit that Lu appeals to in her work, but which she forgets in her responses to members of the symposium. Such a linguistic concept, that language is not a system but an act of interpretation, is in keeping with the ideas of Ann Berthoff, who has argued that "meanings are not acquired but hypothesized and tested by developing significances and judging contexts, by acts of the mind which are usually identified as *interpretation*" (216).

Negotiation and interpretation are in fact the cornerstone of another BW scholar who has developed a reputation as a critic of Shaughnessy. In his 1992 *Rhetoric Review* article "Rethinking the Sociality of Error," Bruce Horner argues that original philosophies in BW encourage teachers to "decry their [students'] implication in politics" in order to expedite their acculturation (179). In his view, such teachers fail to consider their students' different "notions of error and editing" (179). Instead, Horner argues, classrooms must

engage in "linguistic contemplations" and make students aware of the way "error" is "socially determined" by a privileged group. His approach "enables a teacher to understand the logic of a student's errors" and asserts that basic writers need much more than instruction in grammar, spelling, and syntax (186). Of course, understanding "the logic of a student's errors" is the main thesis of Shaughnessy's pedagogy. So Horner's position can hardly be said to challenge fundamental principles in BW theory; rather, it seems to build on them.

While seeking the logic behind linguistic choices does not present an altogether new approach, as Horner admits, his notion of negotiation does. "Rethinking the Sociality of Error" provides an extension—a way forward—in how students and teachers interact on the front of linguistic (and social) difference. While Shaughnessy's method instructs teachers to investigate student work and to deduce a student's logic from patterns among ostensibly random errors, her discussion of "error" leaves unsaid a statement about the effect of power relations on BW students. While it is difficult to imagine Shaughnessy bossing around her BW students during individual conferences, it is easy to imagine someone else making false assumptions: "After contemplating *Errors and Expectations*, and a careful reading of your paper, I have discovered the logic of your errors, and now I will explain them to you." Students, however, need to play a more active role in these meetings so that they acquire a deeper understanding of error, rather than simply learning to heed seemingly arbitrary exhortations. "Negotiation is not a matter of one party persuading a second to adopt the position of the first," Horner states. Instead, "*both* writer and reader hold a degree of power and authority" (175).

The parallels between Horner, Lu, Shaughnessy, and others become clearer when viewed through the common denominator of linguistic charity. This basic premise informs most existing BW theory and operates as a kind of essential warrant beneath the work of composition. Therefore, it behooves us to keep this core but often neglected concept in front of us as we read and respond to one another's ideas. Ironically, Davidson also may hold a few lessons for composition scholars to make sure our signs correspond before we attack one another's positions. To further demonstrate that Davidson's linguistic charity circulates throughout these previously opposed pedagogies, I will reconsider Lu's controversial essay that precipitated the 1993 *College English* forum and then move on to project some possibilities for application of her methodology.

Revisiting "Conflict and Struggle"

Lu describes her pedagogy, in her segment of the 1993 symposium, as one that offers "a way of thinking beyond the trap of polarization which seems to have dominated much of the earlier debate over 'the students' right to their own language'" ("Symposium on Basic Writing" 895). An historicized re-reading of Lu's landmark essay, "Conflict and Struggle: The Enemies or Preconditions of Basic Writing?", reveals to what extent this "earlier debate" had polarized discussions about Standard English in the classroom. The political climate of the 1970s and 1980s is at least partially responsible for the level of miscommunication between Lu and other composition scholars. The Reagan era indeed saw a growing rift between educators regarding academic discourse, owing to disagreements over the 1968 Bilingual Education act, CCCC's 1974 resolution "Students' Right to Their own Language," as well as the 1979 Ann Arbor Black English case, in which the U.S. District Court of Eastern Michigan ruled that the educational policy at Martin Luther King Elementary School reinforced a language barrier between a minority population of students and their teachers. The decision mandated teachers and administrators to take immediate steps toward helping these students acquire Standard English through language instruction sensitive to their cultural background.

Reactions to the resolution on the students' right, for example, appear in *CCC* throughout the 1970s and 1980s. President Reagan opened the 1980s on an auspicious public note, in fact, stating in 1981 that cultural and linguistic conflict would prevent non-native speakers from "go[ing] out into the job market and participat[ing]" (Reagan qtd. in Gonzalez, Schott, and Vasquez 28). In the wake of the Bilingual Education Act, the "Students' Right" resolution, and Ann Arbor, groups began sprouting up nationwide to combat a perceived threat against Standard English, which bled over into colleges and universities. Organizations such as US English, whose membership climbed to nearly 300,000 in just four years between 1983 and 1987, continuously sought a constitutional amendment that would make Standard English the official language of the United States (Gonzelez, Schott, and Vasquez 24).

While NCTE published a Resolution in 1986 denouncing any such attempt at a constitutional amendment, composition teachers argued fiercely in the pages of the field's journals over the relationship between these competing discourses. One high school teacher, writing in a 1988 issue of *The English Journal*, argued that Standard English is "the social glue that holds this multicultural country together" (Sundberg 16) and that "no statistics

. . . show that either proficiency in English or the quality of education in the United States has improved as a result of bilingual instruction" (17). The background information here provides only a snapshot of the split dividing those who saw new developments in linguistic theory as relevant to composition theory and those who, like Ann Berthoff, maintained while rebutting CCCC's resolution on the "Students' Right" that "Structural Linguistics has nothing to tell us about composition or the composing process" (216).

Words like "conflict" and "struggle," then, would automatically have had a polarizing effect on readers from the 1980s through the late 1990s, despite Lu's intentions to recuperate these words from their troubled history. Those who dismissed Lu seem to have failed at teasing apart the broader political climate from her work, which was perceived as advocating an extreme position but which in fact called only for greater sympathy and understanding toward students unfamiliar with academic discourse. Lu states that "Open Admissions at CUNY was itself an attempt to deal with immediate, intense, sometimes violent social, political, and racial confrontations. Such a context seemed to provide a logic for shifting students' attention away from conflict and struggle and *towards* calm" ("Conflict" 907). The central point of Lu's essay does not critique Shaughnessy or her legacy so much as highlight the disconnect between developments in linguistic theory since her time (she died in 1978) and the social and political climate of teachers employed in BW programs in the 1990s.

This notion becomes clear when Lu questions Ann Murphy, who in her 1989 *CCC* article "Transference and Resistance" exempts BW students from a poststructural view of language. "Her essay," Lu summarizes, "draws on her knowledge of the Lacanian notion of the decentered and destabilized subject" while maintaining that BW students "may need centering rather than decentering, and cognitive skills rather than self-exploration" (Murphy qtd. in Lu "Conflict" 908). "Murphy's argument demonstrates her desire to eliminate any sense of uncertainty or instability in Basic Writing classrooms" (908). For Lu, it is the "pain" of uncertainty and tension rather than the tension itself that needs elimination (909). Lu does not seek to replace a Shaughnessy-centric pedagogy but instead to extend and "mobilize the authority [Shaughnessy, Bruffee, and others] have gained for the field" (909). Her conclusion makes an explicit call for contemporary BW teachers to "do what [Shaughnessy and her contemporaries] did not or *could* not do" on account of historical circumstances (910, emphasis mine).

Lu spends as much time on Shaughnessy's contemporaries at CUNY during the 1970s as she does on Shaughnessy. Irving Howe becomes a

prominent figure in this essay, as one who rejected the either/or approach to competing discourses and sought to help students achieve "equilibrium" between home languages and those of the university and, as he states in his 1990 *Selected Writings*, to motivate them toward the goal of "*living* with the tension of biculturalism" (Howe qtd. in Lu 897). He stressed that teachers and institutions should demonstrate more understanding and sympathy toward students who are not only repositioning their relationship between home and university now but who will do so for the rest of their lives. Lu praises Howe's philosophy but, as she does with Shaughnessy, shows how certain weaknesses have prevented a fuller realization of his goals. For one, Howe was himself "more convinced of the need to live up to this ideal than certain about how to implement it in the day-to-day life of teaching" (898). Despite these ideals, Howe also worried that opening the gate to nontraditional students would threaten the survival of Western culture (898).

Lu critiques Leonard Kriegel as well for, despite good intentions, assuming that "business in the classroom could go on as usual so long as teachers openly promise students their 'freedom of choice'" (901). Promising "freedom of choice" is not the same as living up to that promise, and it neglects the pressure to accommodate that BW students undoubtedly feel. No doubt, teachers and scholars like Gleason may understand Lu's point but feel extreme skepticism when it comes to the execution of this philosophy. Done poorly or irresponsibly, it can leave students and teachers alike in a polarized state of mind. It can also, as Ann Murphy worries, leave students lost in a maze of linguistic considerations more paralyzing than a poor grade on a paper. However, these fears do not qualify as justified reasons to accuse Lu's pedagogy of naivety or subversion.

A Way of Teaching

Gray-Rosendale and others express fear that the linguistic and cultural ambivalence Lu advocates for "may make it seriously difficult for students to ascertain the conventions of academic discourse, conventions about which they have a fundamental and democratic right to know" (62). Such articulations of fear leave BW teachers unclear about how much "conflict" they might anticipate when applying Lu's method. A salve lies in the examples Lu gives in many of her later essays. When Lu illustrates her pedagogy in her 1994 *CCC* article "Professing Multiculturalism" and her 2004 *CCC* piece "An Essay on the Work of Composition," she asks students to devote their attention to one particular "error" at a time, rather than uprooting all academic

conventions at once. In "Professing Multiculturalism," she spends a large amount of time on a student's marriage of the phrase "can do" to "is able to do" that results in the phrase "can able to."

Lu's exploration of various motives behind the students' choices comprises many pages. I will simply say that Lu demonstrates to her class in this example that the Chinese student who made this "error" actually knows as much about grammar as the others do, but merely has a tendency to write "can able to" because the Chinese translation for "can" and "be able to" is the same (451). Also, a look at ways in which the words "can" and "may" appear in other parts of the student's essay shows grammatical competence, implying that something in the student's attitude toward the interchangeability of these words—"can," "may," and "to be able to"—led to this particular "can able to." Lu suggests that Americans have learned from their native language and experiences that when one can or may do something, then they are also able to, whereas students from some other cultures maintain a distinction. Therefore, "it becomes clear that the revision . . . in these two segments can no longer take place simply at the level of linguistic form" (452). In her 2004 essay, Lu spends pages considering various reasons why a public sign she encounters on a visit to China says "collecting money toilet" rather than simply "public toilet." Lu merely says that, in these situations, we cannot assume the way we as teachers might "fix" certain problems equals the way the student would solve them. Such statements share some basic philosophical insights with Davidson's concept of charity, which indicates that her pedagogy does not pose such a threat to the role of academic discourse in writing classrooms as previously feared.

Keeping Davidson's concept of linguistic charity in mind, these examples that Lu gives converge with the practices of progressive BW teachers, who, as Gleason says, "look at the remedial class as an opportunity for more instruction on invention, revisions, and peer response, rather than for a different kind of instruction, such as skills and drills" (888). Perhaps many BW teachers' reluctance to espouse Lu's pedagogy relates to the knowledge that we will likely not realize every possible error in a student paper as an opportunity for this deep level of exploration. We feel pressure from all angles to quickly prepare students for success in college and on the job market, and we see these immediate duties as superseding the cumbersome work of helping students to resist acculturation by the academy. This problem is precisely why Davidson's "charity" is so important. Because most BW teachers will not stop over every error, we need to ensure that, when we do stop on an

error, we take care not to skim over ostensibly small differences in meaning made by our corrections.

Another persuasive example from Lu's "Conflict and Struggle" narrates W. E. B. DuBois's first writing assignment in a Harvard English class, a paper which received a failing grade because, as DuBois says, "I was bitter, angry and intemperate" at an Alabama senator's recent article attacking African Americans. DuBois's emotions overwhelmed his knowledge of grammar, which led to the teacher's assumption that he simply did not know how to write. Lu reads DuBois's experience as an instance when Standard English and grammar "would have constrained his effort" to express his emotions. The case goes to show that "writing teachers need to become more understanding of the students' racial/political interests" ("Conflict" 903). In this case, Lu does not instruct BW teachers to simply pass such papers. Negotiation becomes the key here—a word that Lu, Horner, and Laurence each use. In schools that emphasize process theory and portfolio evaluation, a student like DuBois would have the opportunity to discuss an angry, ungrammatical paper and determine a course of revision.

Laurence herself professed an approach similar to Lu's three decades ago. In the previously mentioned comment on Farrell's 1977 *College English* article, "Literacy, the Basics, and All That Jazz," she explains her method of conferencing with students early in the semester. She says that "I discuss my impressions of what [the student] has communicated in his first essays, and I make a point of teaching one simple grammatical principle or asking a thought-provoking question about organization or the conventions of writing . . ." ("To Thomas J. Farrell" 231). Such a session shares a great deal with Lu. Applying Lu's theories, a BW teacher would not only introduce the grammatical principle in relation to the student's work, as Laurence does, but also discuss the differences in meaning when that single principle is applied to sections of the paper at hand. Such a practice does not justify Ann Murphy's fear that BW students would be overwhelmed by an allegedly poststructural teaching philosophy. Lu's ideas only become a threat when applied irresponsibly—say, if the teacher attempted to explain a multitude of grammatical rules at once, while simultaneously applying Lu's idea of conflict. Thus, if these pedagogical approaches share certain basic principles in theory and practice then the differences drawn by scholars throughout the 1990s, as I have presented them, need not prevent teachers from exploring ways of applying linguistic conflict in their classrooms and individual work with students. Teachers do not need to pick a side (Lu versus Shaughnessy) before determining how they will approach the relationship between aca-

demic language and other forms of English. The historic battle between the guardians of Shaughnessy's legacy and the new wave of radicals operates largely as a myth. The battle arose from a series of misunderstandings, in a heated socio-political climate that simply was not conducive to calm and reasoned debate about competing forms of English and alternative ways of addressing linguistic and cultural differences in the classroom.

Future Work

Our discussion may suggest some pragmatic ways of helping students eventually achieve the ability to choose among many varieties of discourse in a given rhetorical situation. But further work remains to be done on how teachers may practice such methods when faced with growing course loads and increasing class sizes. It is well understood that labor conditions would strain the best of today's Shaughnessys. Admittedly, the most profound absence in Lu's pedagogy—as in that of many others—lies in her reluctance to address this reality. More "enlightened" pedagogies such as portfolio assessment and contextualized work on grammar offer a place to start. Most importantly, teachers need to resist the temptation to make assumptions when students do not meet our expectations. Many of our students may write what we call "poor" papers because they are experiencing emotions similar to those that DuBois experienced as a freshman at Harvard.

Lu's vision of a "mestiza consciousness" culminates in one's ability to transcend the "'borders' cutting across society and [our] psyches," borders that "'separate' cultures" (Lu qtd. in Gray-Rosendale 63). Gray-Rosendale asks whether or not "cutting across such borders" places "a great burden" on "the student and the teacher" and wonders if it is "a realizable goal for the composition class" (63). If it is not a realizable goal for a single writing course, we need to consider how these goals can be realized in sequences or stretch programs (see Glau) as well as beyond our English and developmental studies departments. Lu challenges composition and BW to assume the duty and responsibility of instilling linguistic sensitivity in our students. However, we should also attempt to instill greater linguistic sensitivity among BW teachers and scholars and across disciplines and programs, not through calls for revolution, but through acts of charity.

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The National Survey of Basic Writing Programs, sponsored by the Conference on Basic Writing, is up and running online at http://comppile.org/cbw/. The survey is intended to gather information nationwide about basic writing programs, policies, teaching practices, demographics, and the effects of state and local legislation on them. The initial survey results will be presented at the CBW workshop at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in San Francisco on Wednesday, March 11, 2009.

By going to this site you can respond to the survey and also see the survey results from other institutions. We urge program administrators to complete the survey for the basic writing program or courses at their institutions and to encourage colleagues at other institutions to do the same. The survey is user friendly. You can fill in part of the survey, save it, and return to complete it at a later date. Even partial completion will contribute to the collection of national data.

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