

Negotiating Textual Authority: Response Cycles for a Personal Statement of a Latina Undergraduate

Marcia Z. Buell

ABSTRACT: This study examines how Bakhtinian notions of response cycles, or interactions between writers and their respondents, shape textual possibilities. Within response cycles, intermediary respondents offer feedback on writing before it is submitted for evaluation, and end readers evaluate the text in some final, often high-stakes way. Through open-ended interviews and textual analysis, this case study explores how intermediary respondents draw on their own understandings of institutional expectations to encourage or inhibit the possible voices and perspectives that basic writers can bring to their texts. Specifically, this case study documents how Lucinda, a Latina undergraduate at a large Midwestern university, muted ethnic and social affinities she hoped to convey in a personal statement for admission to an early education program when she understood her writing center tutor to view such representations as negative in the eyes of the university. Though the negative implications of these affiliations were not noted by another respondent, Lucinda's textual decisions raise questions about how respondent expectations of color-blind discourse impact representations of ethnicity and writer agency. The study also questions how basic writers negotiate their own textual authority in light of the authority they attribute to their intermediary respondents.

KEYWORDS: response cycles; intermediary respondents; color-blind discourse; personal statements; basic writers; ethnicity and writing

Scholarship in basic writing tends to focus on students in writing classrooms or writing centers and on the policies or politics connected to these sites. To some extent, basic writing students are considered those in need of basic writing classes, though this definition is contested. One key argument is that learning to write is not contained once and for all in a class, but occurs with all the writing students do in academic, personal, or professional contexts in college and beyond (Rankins-Robertson, Cahill, Roen, and Glau 56). Writers in the academy produce texts in complex social environments, where they have to learn genre and disciplinary expectations, understand the immediate demands of rhetorical situations, and apply writing strategies developed both in and beyond the writing classroom (Roozen), while negotiating the social context of the larger institution in general (Ybarra,

Marcia Z. Buell is Assistant Professor of English at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. She holds a PhD in English/Writing Studies from the University of Illinois. She has also taught ESL in Japan, China, and Hungary.

“Cultural Dissonance”). For writers of color, these challenges may be exacerbated because the social context of academic writing privileges what are called color-blind discourses, which seek to erase ethnic perspectives in favor of narratives of meritocracy and individual accomplishments (Barron and Grimm 59; Lamos 132; Martinez 585; Ybarra, “Latino Students” 162; Villanueva 6), and require students of color to “to write as though their color didn’t matter” (Barron and Grimm 59).

Because writing occurs within social contexts, writers, whether basic or experienced, develop approaches to textual production through exchanges between readers and other respondents in what may be called response cycles, which occur over time and across multiple participants (Bakhtin). In response cycles, writers draw on feedback and reactions to their texts, both in their present contexts and in reaction to comments they have received in the past, but in ways that cannot always be traced directly (Ede and Lunsford 168; Bakhtin 94). Because respondent perspectives vary, writers must negotiate potentially conflicting interpretations of the writing task and goals. When basic writers are outsiders to institutions of higher education (Rankins-Robertson, Cahill, Roen, and Glau 60), they face special challenges in negotiating competing conceptualizations of discourse offered by respondents, and in determining how their own voices intersect and ideas might be expressed when they differ from the voices of those they deem to be authoritative. Consequently, writer agency is socially constructed, not strictly individually determined, and develops through interactions surrounding texts.

One complicating factor to negotiating with authoritative voices, as Ede and Lunsford argue, is that multiple respondents can play various roles in the shaping of text, so that not all readers exert the same influence on a text. Though the dividing lines are not often clearly delineated, texts can be responded to by *end readers* or by *intermediary respondents*. In formal academic writing, there is often a point where the writing is evaluated, either in the form of grades or through other actions, such as acceptance into a program or awarding of a fellowship. Those who make final judgments can be called end readers. Before texts reach end readers, writers frequently share them with other readers, though these readers may not be directly aligned with educational institutions. Such readers, whether sanctioned by the university or not, can be called intermediary respondents, that is, respondents who work with writers to shape texts but do not pass binding, gatekeeping judgments on the texts or writers. Some intermediary respondents, such as friends or family members, know the writer well and respond through their

shared histories while others, such as writing center tutors, may respond as strangers fulfilling an institutional role. Whether well-known or stranger, intermediary readers interpret text through their own stances, including the evaluative or critical ones often found in academic writing, but also including supportive, advisory, or even adversarial positions (Ede and Lunsford 168). Though their influence is not often directly seen in finalized texts, intermediary respondents are very present in writing processes, as they influence textual construction through articulation of their own understandings of institutional expectations and through their interpretations of, or alignments with, institutional documents and doctrines (Prior). In ideal contexts, the intermediary respondents can correctly anticipate what end readers will want in a text, but because departments and programs privilege their own ways of knowing and expressing in local contexts (Casanave), intermediary readers must use their own imperfect knowledge of academic expectations when responding to a writer's text.

Because perceptions of desirability in writing can vary subtly across contexts, (see for instance Joan Graham's account of competing evaluations of essays written in a psychology class) and because intermediary respondents cannot know all the permutations of desirable writing features, generalized writing guides, such as handbooks or "how to" manuals, might be used to articulate perceived norms of textual production. Such documents articulate generalized expectations of how texts should appear and what can or cannot be included. If intermediary respondents have little experience with the ways end readers evaluate or interpret particular texts, they might draw on these generalized concepts as doctrine. This allows for standardization of forms of writing but, as arguments about standardization contend, while some ways of knowing and expressing are supported, others might be suppressed (Gunther 68), even though such discourses might fulfill the writer's larger purpose or represent bids for agency. For example, available advice on personal statements in the widely used Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) suggests that students write about what they know and put a unique spin on their experience (Brizee and Doran, "Personal Statements"). This advice cues students to position themselves as offering something special to the programs to which they apply. Yet, in the guidelines from Purdue University OWL, color-blind discourse gains prominence because following the suggestion to write from a unique perspective is the prohibition warning students away from discussing "minority status or disadvantaged background unless you have a compelling and unique story that relates to it" (Brizee and Doran). Instructional statements, such as those coming from

OWL, illustrate how agency in explorations of cultural and power positions might be discouraged if intermediary respondents and end readers adhere to “color-blind racist practices that are subtle, structural, and apparently nonracial” (Martinez 588).

With personal statements, which fall within what John Swales calls “occluded genres,” writers know little about how these texts are received by end readers, and intermediary respondents might not be privy to genuine evaluation processes of personal statements either. Consequently, writers might shy away from writing about their experiences of race or class because they are not sure how to frame their discussion within a “compelling” narrative, even if there is evidence from departments or programs that such discussion would be welcome. Furthermore, writers might feel compelled to insert statements that they do not accept, or to omit or understate ideas they feel are important, because of fear of how the texts will be read and evaluated (Ivanic 230). In this way, basic writers, lacking confidence in their own authority on the page, might be especially inclined to write texts they ultimately disown or only partially own (see, for example, Suresh Canagarajah on accommodation strategies).

This case study examines how cycles of response, textual negotiations, and conflicting interpretations of welcome for minority students impacted the writing of a personal statement for Lucinda,¹ a Mexican-American student who was applying for admission to an Early Education program at a large Midwestern university. Welcome can be defined as a sense that diverse perspectives and experiences will be entertained as valid points of inquiry and ways of knowing, and that interest in minority students would play out to more than just a concern about enrollments. At the time this study took place, the university had an undergraduate enrollment of about 30,000 students. According to university records, about 6% of the students claimed a Hispanic or Latino/a ethnicity, compared to about 60% Caucasian enrollment. In the College of Education to which Lucinda was applying, Latinas also represented about 6% of the students, whereas Caucasian students represented about 70% of the students.

Lucinda wrote her application to position herself as a Latina deeply invested in improving the education of Latino children. When she started writing the application, Lucinda saw her career goal of becoming an educator of Latino youth as inextricably tied to her own identity as a Latina.² In other words, she did not see herself as becoming an educator for the population at large, but saw herself as specifically working for a disadvantaged segment of the wider Latino community. Nevertheless, Lucinda shifted away from

representing the deep ethnic connection of her goals and moved toward a more superficial representation because she understood a writing center tutor to say that her stance on Latino/a educational concerns was too negative and possibly too militant to be acceptable to reviewers in the College of Education. This interpretation of what the College of Education was looking for contrasted sharply with Lucinda's own views, which she had formulated through seeing the departmental statements, web pages, and advertisements promoting diversity. For example, she had seen posters recruiting teachers of color by illustrating how relatively few teachers looked the same as their students, had noted that diversity was central to class titles for some of the required courses, and had seen that the application for admission included questions addressing diversity. Nevertheless, she moderated her stance after consulting with a writing center tutor, coming to believe that writing from a strongly Latina perspective would diminish her chances of acceptance into a mainstream program. This illustrated the contradictory sense of welcome Lucinda encountered in her process of applying to the College of Education, where the desire for increased minority numbers was clear but a larger institutional openness to minority perspectives was not.

In looking at negotiations and responses around Lucinda's personal statement, this study questions textual interactions that occur outside of the classroom, but touches upon salient classroom writing concerns, such as how basic writers learn to reconcile the authority of institutional voices with their own goals, needs, and emerging understandings of institutional discourse. It argues that even if students learn to affirm a perspective of color in basic writing or college composition courses, color-blind discourses, which close off exploration of minority experience, might be reinforced, albeit inadvertently, through intermediary respondents engaged in writing instruction across the university. In exploring misinterpretations due to privileging of color-blind discourse, this study will suggest how basic writing instructors and administrators can help students negotiate competing and sometimes conflicting definitions of welcome for minority students, and suggest ways for intermediary respondents to understand the impact of their responses on agency and representation of non-mainstream identities.

Methodology

As part of a larger study, this case study initially sought to explore the impact of response on the shaping of text for non-mainstream students. Though we often define response pedagogically as peer-response, Bahk-

tinian notions of textual production show that response manifests itself in many forms across time. I was particularly interested in exploring how non-mainstream writers represented cultural and ethnic identities as they engaged in cycles of response for the texts they produced. Lucinda joined the study at the suggestion of Dr. Flores, who served as her advisor in the Minority Student Office.

For the larger study, Dr. Flores had suggested six students from Latino/a backgrounds whom he knew from the Minority Student Office. Lucinda and one other student responded to the initial recruitment letter asking students to participate in an ethnographic study about their writing practices. I met individually with participants and asked them to bring in texts they had worked with recently or were currently working on. I primarily used open-ended interviews; after supplying initial questions, further discussion depended on the topics and concerns participants nominated. I also used text-based interviews, during which themes from previous interviews were revisited over time with texts as prompts to discussion (see Prior 305).

Lucinda and I met for interviews about once a week for nine months. To understand her writing contexts, I also observed her in classes and meetings with a professor for a research project. She shared text from all these contexts and we discussed how what she wrote related to class contexts and how she felt about what she was writing. Initially, I had sought to gain a broad picture of her response networks to see if she used them the same ways across settings. The focus of the study moved to her personal statements when, early on in our interviews, I asked her to tell me about important writing she had done recently and Lucinda brought up her experience with her personal statement for application to the College of Education. Though ultimately she succeeded in gaining admission to their Early Education program and was doing quite well at the time of the interviews, the process of writing the personal statement remained salient for her. The account of her application essays also stood out for me in that it showed how complicated textual negotiations can be in high-stakes writing where personal, ethnic, and institutional perspectives of writers and respondents push up against each other.

Since I had intended to explore response as a multi-faceted concept, with Lucinda's permission, I also sought perspectives from people who had read her text or had experience evaluating application essays. She noted that she had shown a draft to Dr. Flores a couple of weeks prior to taking it to the writing center, as she found him very accessible and easy to talk to about her concerns at the university. Because Dr. Flores was a native Spanish speaker, Lucinda felt he had a good understanding of differences between English and

Spanish ways of expressing ideas, and could therefore understand what she was trying to say if she expressed it with Spanish inflections. In writing the essays, she felt she had important things to say about how she, as an educator, would try to help impoverished Latino children overcome devastating social problems and critically interrogate their social status. However, she did not feel she was expressing her ideas effectively, and so had taken the essay to Dr. Flores because she admired the way that he could find sophisticated phrasing, stating that “he gave [her] the words” but kept her ideas intact.

I had hoped to also talk with her writing center tutor, but Lucinda did not recall the name of her tutor. Though I made several inquiries, I could not locate her tutor from the writing center because records from sessions were confidential. In the end, I relied on Lucinda’s repeated recall and interpretation of the interaction to examine the textual moves she made based on her understanding of those interactions. It is possible that her tutor would have provided different representations of the advice she gave and may not have meant what Lucinda heard her to say. Writing center research indicates that visitors to writing centers do not always have a clear sense of the goals and approaches that a tutor employs in a given session (Clark 38-39), and that especially where discussions of race and ethnicity are at play, there may be miscommunications about how discourse expectations encourage or inhibit student voice (Grimm; Bokser 53). This analysis is not meant as a critique of the writing center tutor’s advice, but as an exploration of Lucinda’s understanding and uptake of that advice in articulating an ethnic perspective within a mainstream university context.

Following an active interview format, Lucinda’s experiences and analyses were co-constructed through our interactions, thereby becoming “a history in-the-making, complexly unfolding in relation to what had taken place in the past, to what is currently being made of the past, and to immediate prospects for the future” (Holstein and Gubrium 32). The telling and retelling of her story shaped our interpretations in ways that may not have been realized before she participated in the study and may not remain if she continues to reflect on her past writing practices and develops future ones.

A Skilled but Hesitant Writer

In response to questions about her background during our first interview, Lucinda discussed how her family had emigrated from Mexico when she was ten years old. Her parents did not finish high school, had a poor command of English, and wound up working in factories or restaurants.

Later, her father became disabled and was unable to work outside the home. Lucinda, the oldest child in her family, saw higher education as a way of breaking out of the cycle of low wage work and of encouraging her siblings to further their own educations.

On many levels, Lucinda was actually quite adept at writing applications. As a high school student, she had been a Golden Apple scholar and in exchange for her volunteer teaching had received a four-year college scholarship to pursue a career in teaching underserved minority students. What is more, the Golden Apple Scholarship was just one of several scholarships she had applied for and received. In the end, Lucinda completed four years of college without having to use any of her parents' money and was even able to help pay family expenses while attending college on scholarship. All of the scholarships and internships she had received had required written applications. In this sense, she had experience in and success with the genre that she was attempting; still, she did not view herself as a skilled application writer, nor as a skilled writer in general. Despite her success in obtaining scholarships, Lucinda downplayed her abilities, attributing her successes to a felicitous alignment of her goals to become an educator in Latino communities and the objectives of the scholarship programs. This downplaying of her own writing strengths reflects Raul Ybarra's observation that Latino/a students tend to blame themselves for struggles with writing and not to take credit for their accomplishments ("Latino Students" 165).

Because she was interested specifically in serving Latino/a communities, Lucinda had been attracted to the Elementary Education program of the university. Course titles, brochures, and fliers posted in College of Education indicated that the program was actively recruiting minority students interested in serving minority populations. She also understood more broadly that since Spanish speakers represented one of the fastest growing populations in the country, schools would have a need for devoted bilingual and bicultural educators. Nevertheless, despite her sense that she fit a category of student that the College of Education was actively seeking, Lucinda felt nervous about her application. She believed she met the minimum GPA and test score requirements, but saw those scores as being fairly low given the competition for space in the program. Thus, she believed that her application essay needed to be very well crafted to help ensure her admission. Moreover, she, like many minority students, did not want to be accepted merely as an "affirmative action" case. She sought a way to make her experiences and sense of commitment speak to her abilities to become a good teacher for a specific population in need of dedicated educators.

As Lucinda attached high stakes to enrolling in the program, even after Dr. Flores had read the early draft, she wanted to edit for grammatical errors, problematic phrases, and points that needed clarification. She therefore decided to take her personal statement to the campus writing center. At this writing center, generally tutors ask what a writer wants to work on during the session and they try to limit comments to that request. However, sometimes they will point out what they notice, or when faced with broad requests such as help with grammar or wording, make suggestions that cover other aspects. In Lucinda's case, she had hoped to get specific language-based feedback, but the tutor directed the conversation toward how the essay seemed to elicit pity and how application essays should emphasize positive achievements. The tutor's comments mirrored the center's documents, which drew on the advice from Purdue University OWL to be upbeat, emphasize positive achievements, and only address race or ethnicity if there was a clear reason for doing so (Brizee and Doran). Below, I will discuss in detail how this expectation of a positive, mainstream voice impacted Lucinda's self-representation; here, I will only note that she made significant changes to her responses to the essay questions as she tried to make them more upbeat and positive and, consequently, she presented a less critical view of her observations and experience.

To an extent, because of Lucinda's previous success in writing applications, her understanding of how to write and seek response on multiple drafts, and her awareness about using campus resources, she can be viewed as an experienced, not basic, writer. Nevertheless, her lack of skill in negotiating feedback marks a different kind of basic position, defined by Roz Ivanic as lacking authority to have a voice (26). Initially, Lucinda understood the tutor to imply that her stand on Latino issues had been "militant," which was the term Lucinda used when first discussing the tutor's response, though in later interviews, she changed the description to "bitter" and "negative." Although the tutor was not associated with the education program, Lucinda interpreted her comments as reflective of a view that might be found in the College of Education, which primarily served white suburban middle-class students. In meeting with the tutor, Lucinda lost sight of her initial perception that the College of Education was actively recruiting minority students and instead began to doubt if perspectives like hers would be welcome in the program. Because her visit to the writing center came about a week before the application due date, and despite the intensive work she had done on the essay until that point, she changed the content of several portions of her personal statement within the span of a few days, and she submitted it

to the College of Education with minimal editing or other outside input on the revisions. Ironically then, her submitted version masks the adept writing moves of seeking additional readers and writing several drafts that Lucinda made in the process of writing the application.

What follows are discussions of the changes Lucinda made to her text based not only on her possibly incomplete understanding of what her tutor advised, but also on her negotiations of the minefield of contradictions surrounding expectations of color-blind context. As Victor Villanueva points out in his article "Blind: Talking about the New Racism," within a color-blind genre, nominating race or ethnicity as a topic of discussion meets resistance and questions of relevance in that it challenges cultural notions of individuality and meritocracy (3). Nancy Barron and Nancy Grimm note that such resistance might not be intentional, but a factor of trying to help students be academically successful within dominant discourses. In this case though, the perimeters of success are murky, since addressing diversity seemed to be a key interest of the College of Education. While Lucinda may have already understood problems with bringing color-sensitive topics into other contexts, she was not prepared for it to be contentious in a program that appeared to welcome minority students, not to fill a quota, but for what they could bring to the education community.

Such a conflict of ideology may have been more easily resolved for students who were more accustomed to ideological contradictions of academic settings. As a first-generation Latina student who sometimes doubted if she belonged in the university, Lucinda saw her authority as slight in comparison to those who were more enculturated within the academic institution. Since the writing center tutor represented an authoritative institutional voice, Lucinda may have gotten the message, whether intentional or not, that linking experience to ethnicity was not an accepted practice in the academic world (Martinez 586; Villanueva 5) or, more cynically, as pointed out by Theresa Lillis, that experience of ethnicity was sectioned off from inquiry within the academy (63). Lucinda understood the audiences she wrote for in her other applications prior to entering the university, but instead of imagining a similar audience, her interaction with her tutor compelled her to address one perceived as indifferent, if not hostile, to ethnic self-representation. At the same time, admission was crucial to her and if effacing some of her ethnic perspective assured her getting into the program, she was willing to do so, which is not an uncommon move when student writers bid for agency (Ivanic 160; Canagarajah 117). Nevertheless, success for Lucinda raises the question of what was lost in the process (Martinez 585).

Toning Down Cultural Complexity and Critique: Pre and Post Writing Center Drafts

Lucinda's application elicited short essay responses to four questions covering a range of topics related to education. These questions required Lucinda to write about what led her to seek a career in education, to explain experiences with diversity and assess why teachers should value it, and to discuss the roles teachers could play in fostering service to communities. Though writing the essays had been challenging for her, she felt proud of her ideas, stating, "this is what I had been thinking about all my life" (Interview, March 10).³

To illustrate her understanding of the tutor's response, I excerpt the introduction of the draft Lucinda showed to the writing center tutor as well as some reflective comments she made during our interviews. I then present an excerpt from her revised copy, written after consulting with the writing center tutor. After discussing the initial essay in depth, I turn to drafts and submitted sections for two other questions to illustrate how Lucinda acted on what she understood to be advice about toning down an ethnic perspective. Finally, I complicate this response by showing how Dr. Flores interpreted the drafts and submitted essays.

Lucinda wrote this section in response to the following prompt: *Describe personal experiences that led you to pursue a career in education in the specific area to which you applied.*

Draft Version: Introductory Paragraph

Teaching has always been a natural instinct for me. I don't remember ever wanting to have any other occupation. My personal experience of immigrating to the United States to search for "the American Dream" increased my desire to teach and give back to all the wonderful opportunities I have received in this country. I was born in Mexico and lived in a small rural town. When I was ten, my family immigrated to the United States to seek better opportunities. It was very difficult to transition from a small, slow, rural town to the large metropolitan Chicago. In Chicago, we were temporary living at my aunt's apartment, where all five members of my family had to share a room with only one piece of furniture in it, a mattress to sleep on. Immediately, my parents began to work to provide for the family. Even though they were legal residents their salary was still under minimum

wage. Immigrating to the United States gave me a unique insight about the importance of pursuing a career in Elementary Education.

When reflecting on her feelings about this section, Lucinda initially saw her reference to the hardships of immigration as doing what a personal statement ought to do in that it made her stand out from the other applicants. She wanted her readers to infer that she would be empathetic to her future students because she could understand about growing up in an impoverished home. Also, she understood that because of the university demographics, most of the other applicants would be from white, middle class backgrounds and would be anticipating teaching in fairly affluent suburbs. In one interview, Lucinda explained that she had talked about growing up poor because, “In a sense I felt that nobody else had this type of experience, I mean I'm sure, if anything they're gonna be like, oh yes, I volunteered and blah blah blah and through this experience I wanted to be a teacher or something like that, and they're gonna talk about the teacher that *inspired* them. But, I mean, like none of them probably would have had this as a reason, so I definitely wanted to write about that” (Interview, June 4). She knew her immigrant experience would be unique among the student applications and thus could be viewed favorably in the admissions process; however, the response of the writing center tutor caused Lucinda to lose confidence in the approach she had taken.

She reported that her tutor had questioned whether this sort of introduction was meant to elicit pity. Once it was put to her that way, Lucinda could see where outlining her experience could be problematic, explaining:

And in a way I did agree with the lady in the writing center in that it was like ‘Hey, here I am, pity me.’ Like now that I think about it, that was probably what she meant – ‘like I've gone through so much, you have to take me in your program’ - which is the point of course! (We both laugh) You want to get there. But maybe she thought I would have an advantage over everybody else and nobody wants to hear about your personal problems. I don't know (Interview, June 4).

Presenting the conditions she experienced and having that move seen as negative exemplifies how color-blind discourse impacts writing agency. Lucinda wanted to discuss how coming from an impoverished immigrant background helped her to build resilience and empathy for students. To do this, Lucinda had written about her experiences as an immigrant growing

up in a working class neighborhood, and thereby referenced negative aspects in detail to show them as the impetus for her interest in becoming an educator. Consequently, to answer the questions on the application, she had to stray from the genre expectation to be upbeat in order to adhere to another genre expectation to discuss a unique aspect of her background; however, this uniqueness was read through color-blind expectations of the tutor and interpreted negatively, as asking for pity. Lucinda may not have fully linked her experience with an explanation of how she would apply what she had learned to helping her future students, which could be read as a flaw of the essay. Yet, it can be argued that her merits included a passionate concern for furthering educational access, interest, and success for the Latino segment of the population, along with a first-hand understanding of some of the difficulties that Latino immigrant students might encounter. These merits were overshadowed by the call to be more positive, and though she could have been guided in negotiating the tensions between being positive and representing her unique experiences, strategies for such negotiation were not explored in the writing center consultation. Instead, the discourse on being positive dominated other writing possibilities, prohibiting Lucinda from articulating her experience as significant.

When I asked her if she had felt that she was asking for pity or sympathy before visiting the writing center, she commented: "No, not until she said it. I was very proud of it," though she expressed some concern that readers may have thought, "this girl, she thinks too much about her own culture" (Interview, June 4). This is a telling statement about the challenges of writing against color-blind discourse. Lucinda was aware that reference to her culture could be read negatively if overemphasized, but she did not anticipate a problem with the message she hoped to convey. Because she could not convey her underlying purpose to her writing center tutor, upon hearing the perception that she could be asking for pity, Lucinda deleted much of her discussion about immigrating to the United States and focused on text and ideas from her second paragraph, which talked about the importance of having supportive elementary school teachers who understood students from different cultures. This revision contradicted her initial desire to avoid being another applicant who wrote about the teachers who had inspired her. While she could acknowledge the important role of teachers in her schooling and in her desire to go further, she lost the portrayal of what she herself endured in becoming educated. This shift can be seen in the introductory paragraph in her submitted version:

Submitted Version: Introductory Paragraph

When I was ten my family decided to immigrate to the United States to seek better opportunities. It was very difficult to switch from a small rural town to the large metropolitan city. As an elementary school student enrolled in the bilingual program, I noticed the value of having an understanding teacher. My elementary school experience was very rewarding because of my teacher's willingness to help me proficient in the regular classroom. Teacher's readiness to instruct made me realize the desire to learn is the foundation to continue to learn. As an elementary student, I also noticed that there is a significant demand for teachers. Elementary school is the building point of children's educational career and it should be a pleasant experience so students can enjoy attending school for the rest of their lives. Elementary schools need teachers that can not only understand and relate to the students but can create a positive impact, which they can carry with them for the rest of their lives. The care and support I received in elementary school will be very influential in my own strategies in education so that children can emulate it and take it farther in life.

In this version, she de-emphasized the struggle with poverty and material constraints, and by limiting attention to her immigrant experience, she effaced her foundation of empathy for the population she wished to serve. The essay also masked her alignment with the goals of the Education Program to diversify its own student population, because her expression of the immigrant experience and her ensuing resilience were muted.⁴

Lucinda noted that even beyond the first question, she tried to introduce a more positive tone to all of her responses, believing that the tutor had found her to be negative and perhaps militant throughout the essay. Her tutor's response confused Lucinda because the College of Education actively recruited minority students, but she understood her tutor to say that the university was not really interested in minority perspectives. This conflicting sense of welcome she perceived plays out in the changes she made to the second question, which (ironically) asked about views of diversity.

The question read: *Discuss how your experiences or lack thereof have influenced your ideas of cultural/racial/ethnic diversity (language, people with disabilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, etc.).* It should be noted that the question itself embodies conflicts in ways to address diversity at an institutional level. The phrasing of the question could suggest the assumption that

diversity is something a student encounters (or not) as opposed to lives, and especially for students of mainstream backgrounds, issues of diversity may not be discussed at a level that goes deeper than surface reflection (Villanueva, "Blind"). As more than 70% of the students in the Elementary Education program come from the European-American middle class, the question suggests that applicants will likely need to think about diversity from an outsider perspective and begin to imagine how, as teachers, they can work effectively with students whose backgrounds might be different from their own. It does not seem to suggest that applicants should also consider that their classmates would be from varied backgrounds and that understanding of diversity was integral to the college and graduate-level classroom as well as to the elementary school one. Also, though students are requested to link their own experience of diversity to their ideas about how it works in the classroom, they are given the caveat to write about their lack of experience with diverse environments, which can encourage simplistic conceptualizations of how we are all different but how we are the same underneath.

The parenthetical suggestions serve to expand the notion of diversity, suggesting to applicants that they may have experience with diversity that they have not realized, but in expanding the definition, cultural/racial/ethnic diversity becomes conflated with language difference. However, language may not be the only source of difference in multicultural encounters. Applicants who come from non-mainstream ethnic backgrounds may legitimately wonder how welcome their perspectives are with a question that both acknowledges and subdues difference.

In Lucinda's initial draft, she talked about the challenges she faced as a young immigrant and how the understanding of her teachers had helped her find a place in school. She wrote of her early immigrant experience, "At times, I did feel left out and thought that I would never fit in with my classmates. Through time they began to accept my difference consequently facilitating my school career. Immigration gave me an exclusive insight of the importance of cultural and racial diversity." Then she discussed how this taught her to make all students feel valued, and expressed her willingness to incorporate inclusive approaches to her future teaching as a result of the challenges she felt as a student.

However, after her visit to the writing center, Lucinda changed her essay to focus on serving as a Golden Apple Scholar volunteer ESL teacher for a summer program. She noted that she had expected to teach Spanish speakers and had been surprised to find a class of Polish immigrants. Nevertheless, in this class, perhaps because it was an enrichment summer course, cultural

barriers broke down almost immediately and she wrote about acceptance coming about through goodwill and smiles. In her revised essay, fostering appreciation for diversity came across as something easy and pleasant. She wrote that she initially felt uneasy about instructing students who did not speak the same language, but after learning to slow down when she spoke, she was delighted that students accepted her, stating: "I tried to make simple communication through smiles. Later, in lunch the students talked to me and welcomed my differences. The fact that I did not know a word in Polish did not stop us from learning about each other."

Lucinda shifted her representation of herself as a student who had been challenged to gain acceptance into that of a teacher who walked in the door ready to be accepting. Given that she was applying for an education program, in some ways the shift to the perspective of a new teacher was strategic. She could show her teaching philosophy and apply an abstract question to real circumstances. In addition, intentionally or unintentionally, she wrote through institutional color-blind discourse, reaffirming that difference should not matter. In her submitted essay, acceptance of others was easy and mutually desirable among students and teachers. The key difference between the first and submitted drafts, then, was that in the first she referenced difficulty she had experienced as a cultural outsider and extrapolated from that experience a message about a teacher's role in creating a welcoming environment in the classroom. But in the second version, she wrote as a teacher, presenting an easy, pleasant encounter, where respecting difference was almost a game. The submitted version on diversity masked her understanding of how hard teachers have to work to assure that classrooms are inclusive and welcoming.

Her essays on her desire to become a teacher and on diversity illustrate how Lucinda changed her account of her own experiences to accommodate the expectation of color-blind discourse that her intermediary respondent had suggested might work better for the application. For the third question, which elicited her insights and aspirations more than her own experience, she offered pointed critical views of society in the first draft, but toned them down considerably in the submitted version. With the submitted version, she shied away from writing anything that could be considered militant and in turn erased much of the social critique her first draft addressed.

The question itself compounded several potential topics: *Identify and discuss some experiences that influenced your ideas about the importance of developing inquiring and reflective minds, effective application of technology in the schools, and the teacher's role in fostering a commitment to community*

service (social, political and religious organizations, i.e., boy scouts, girl scouts, walkathons, UNICEF collections, etc). Lucinda broke the question into several parts, since she did not see them as connected, but wrote most about the commitment to community service. The question required the applicant to discuss the teacher's role "in fostering a commitment to community service," which Lucinda interpreted as eliciting discussion about how teachers can help their communities, and she focused her answer on the needs of Latino/a communities she knew. This may have been a different interpretation than the one intended by the question, which likely was asking how teachers can help students become involved in community service, but without necessarily requiring teachers to be in any way connected to the community served. Lucinda did not even consider the second interpretation. For her, teaching was equivalent to community service, and both connected to her personal experience of community.

In the first draft, Lucinda discussed how children she had grown up with had made destructive choices of "gangs, drugs, and violence instead of school." She then talked about the potential of education to "secure our future with great minds." Beyond just academic work, she wanted students to critically analyze their social situations, stating, "in the Hispanic communities there is an immense need to teach the future generation of the Latino community to develop their analysis on their social status. Latinos continue to be at the bottom of the social pyramid because of the lack of Hispanic teachers and role models." She portrayed community involvement and connection as essential: "Together as a whole we as Latinos can move up." Additionally, she made a specific plea to help women learn that they do not have to depend on a man to be successful. Lucinda concluded the draft with a clear articulation of her passion in her projected role as a teacher, professing a great hope that, "by seeing that I care for their community, students will maybe see the importance of involvement."

In terms of basic content between the first and revised drafts, Lucinda's responses to questions about community needs and community services were somewhat similar. The most significant change was that, in the submitted draft, because of her concern about sounding militant, negative, or bitter, Lucinda removed critical statements that challenged the social positioning of Latinos. She still mentioned poor choices and limited opportunities for teenage girls, but she also stated, "children fall through the cracks because they lack positive family and moral support." To make up for this lack, she wrote about how she would help her students think about positive and negative choices. Significantly, however, she downplayed the

image of a community working together. She wrote about herself as a savior teacher instead of a community participant, a shift that coincides with the privileging of individualism found in color-blind discourse. She concluded the essay with her taking on the burden of improving society: “if I can create reflective minds I can improve the social status of communities.” Instead of hoping for a “future secure with great minds,” she predicts that “if students use their own learning in the classroom experience and apply it to their everyday life, their future will be more pleasant.” Although she did not remove all references to the tough conditions she knew her students would face, she shifted away from showing “pride in her community,” and omitted hopeful parts about how Latinos/as could work together to elevate their status. The disappearance of the sense of pride and community action highlights the question of how a writer can present ethnic affinity in color-blind discourse without being read as displaying too much pride or being too connected to a sense of community and calls for communal action.

Negotiating Contradictions in Cycles of Response

Given that the College of Education professed a commitment to diversity (albeit potentially a contested one as indicated in the essay questions) and Lucinda had a sense of how she would contribute to that expressed goal of diversifying, it may be hard to understand why she accepted the tutor’s reading that the essay sounded like it was eliciting pity. It is also possible to demonize the writing center tutor or assume that she had responded the way she did because of her own discomfort with expressions of ethnicity. In contrast, as opposed to representing individual discomfort with expressions of ethnicity, the tutor could have been promoting color-blind discourse because it was sanctioned by the writing center materials and presented in guidelines for good writing. For discussing personal statements, the writing center uses Purdue University OWL’s suggestion to avoid talking about a disadvantaged background unless there is a good reason to do so. While it is arguable that Lucinda had a good reason to discuss a disadvantaged background, perhaps this reason was not articulated clearly enough in her tutoring session to counter the perception that discussion of personal hardship was not a desired component of normalized academic discourse.

For Lucinda, the writing center had the institutional sanction of being a place where tutors knew about writing and therefore she attributed institutional authority to what the tutors said. When asked about her discomfort in changing the essay, Lucinda questioned if she herself, as a first generation

undergraduate, had the expertise to challenge the advice she was given by a graduate student who already held at least one academic degree and had been hired by the writing center. Additionally, Lucinda never described her tutor as showing discomfort with displays of ethnicity, but rather portrayed her as genuinely interested in helping Lucinda and knowledgeable about both writing genres and the way the university worked. Lucinda's experience and perceptions coincide with Grimm's (1999) assessment that writing center tutors may not intend to perpetuate dominant discourses, but they do so because being "interpellated" into the institution, they "have internalized the belief that a particular form of discourse is 'right' or 'natural' or 'better,' and that those who depart from this form are 'wrong' or 'not normal'" (69). It is important to note that while expectations of color-blind discourse can permeate academic settings, in this case, Lucinda responded to how her writing center tutor imagined university expectations, or at least how Lucinda had understood her tutor to imagine them, since comments can be misinterpreted during writing center sessions (Clark). Even if she had misunderstood the advice from her tutor, she muted her ethnic affiliation because she saw her tutor as speaking authoritatively and representing the views of the institution.

Though Lucinda encountered conflicts with color-blind discourse through her consultation with the writing center, she did not encounter them when Dr. Flores read her early draft. Perhaps because of his direct experience with minority student applications, Dr. Flores had a positive response to her self-identification as a Latina who would have an insider view of the issues that her students could face, though he commented that he would have liked Lucinda to show how she would apply the insights she had gained through her experience of growing up poor. He did not read her references to ethnicity negatively and had been surprised when I reported that Lucinda felt the essays had been read that way. Prior to discussing the texts, he had told me that he advises students to write genuinely but also to consider how their texts would appeal to potential readers. He found that Lucinda's first draft struck that balance for an audience interested in educating minority students and had read her views on minority education and diversity as doing exactly what a personal statement should do in presenting her personal experience with the issue in question. In the interview, I asked him if he noticed anything that would support a reading of the essay as militant or negative; he responded that what came through in both essays was her desire "to help this sector of the community that needs people to help and be dedicated to them."

Reflecting on the two versions of the essay, he commented that from his perspective as a counselor/administrator, details about her early immigrant experience would be good to know, as it would give him a rounded picture of what she had been through and how she had developed resiliency and strength. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that he also had encountered admissions officers in law or other professional schools who would respond by saying the details of her early immigration experience gave the impression that she was being a “cry baby” and asking for pity, which coincided with the tutor’s assessment; however, he did not believe that readers in the College of Education would respond that way because he believed that the College of Education was making an effort to value the contribution that minority students could bring to their programs. In comparison to the view suggested by the writing center tutor, his understanding of the institution reflected a wider, less monolithic view of the university and the expectations for personal statements to academic programs.

Although Dr. Flores saw the importance of Lucinda showing her experience and discussing its significance, he noted that expectations of academic writing in general impact how students can express their sense of commitment to the underserved. This challenge is shown in the following exchange with Dr. Flores. I began the interview by asking what jumped out in the essays. Dr. Flores called the second essay better in that more attention seemed to be given to structure, but stated that while he saw Lucinda as making the necessary moves to conform to an academic standard and create a more organized essay, he recognized that her passion for teaching in her community was toned down and her voice had become less personal. He found that Lucinda’s first drafts had a sense of genuineness but the submitted ones, while still sincere, were more “Lucinda a la Americana.” As he analyzed his own responses, Dr. Flores pointed out the difficult positioning for a student like Lucinda when demands for academic discourse cut off expression of lived experience, passion, and commitment. Discursive expectations that limit access to such expression complicate how non-mainstream students can position themselves in the academy, because students are asked to be true to themselves on the one hand, but to conform to a more circumscribed way of knowing on the other.

Dr. Flores had given me permission to discuss his responses with Lucinda to help her reflect on the application experience. When she and I met after my interview with Dr. Flores, I was summarizing how he had said that the first essay really showed who she was but the second was a version of Lucinda “a la Americana,” meaning that it moved toward a more

mainstreamed style of academic discourse but also lost some of its passion. Lucinda picked up on this as a question of identity representation, as shown in the following exchange:

M: Dr. Flores described the second as, he said more plasticity, but what he meant was like the first one was really you and the second one was like...

L: A coated me—a sugar-coated me? (We both laugh.)

M: Sugar-coated? Yeah, did you feel that way in writing that?

L: Yeah, I did. I was really mad that I had to change it and by that point I was like, oh this isn't me and I tried so hard not to be negative.

Though Lucinda owned her ideas, she felt something rang false in the strongly positive tone she tried to adopt. Lucinda expressed awareness that she needed to appear positive, but upon reflection, felt that she presented herself as overly positive and distanced herself from that voice, claiming, “it isn’t me.” At the same time, she disowned her original voice of the essay, feeling it could be read as depressing. Though she wished she did not have to change the essay, she did not entirely dismiss her tutor’s reading of her paper and could see the validity of not presenting herself as disadvantaged and asking for acceptance because of that. The problem seemed to be that by bringing up an impoverished background and talking about children who fall through the cracks in a neighborhood, the essay called attention to what she lacked as opposed to what she could offer. Lucinda could see the value of competing ways of representing herself, but she ultimately evaluated her writing and the voice she should put forth based on how she understood her tutor’s response to her text. Her tutor advocated color-blind discourse, which neutralized how Lucinda could reference her own experience. Her own response complicates her agency because she was unsure of how to write in her own best interests and how to claim authority in her text. As often happens with basic writers, she could not show herself to be a critical thinker because she did not feel qualified to question her tutor’s understanding of academic writing, and instead questioned her own understanding of the College of Education’s calls for diversifying. Again, Lucinda’s choice supports Ybarra’s claims that basic writers might be quick to blame themselves for flaws in their writing. Lucinda may have correctly read the College of Education’s bids to foster diversity, but she could not reconcile the conflict between her self-representation in response to those calls and the views of someone in authority who read her self-representation as too negative for the genre.

Implications and Conclusions

Lucinda's case illustrates complex but often invisible processes of textual negotiations wherein intermediary readers play a role in shaping text, but intermediary readers, like writers, imagine and sometimes mis-imagine the expectations of end readers. These negotiations occur in writing classrooms, but also take place at other sites of writing instruction where clear markers of authority may be hard to determine. As sites of informal instruction such as writing centers take on greater roles for remedial and WAC assistance (Robinson 6) and become one of the only sites in a university where students learn about writing personal statements (Newman), it is crucial for educators to understand how response can foster competing perceptions of institutional authority. Intermediary respondents in such contexts may not always be thoroughly familiar with particular writing expectations, but because they hold some institutional authority, they can make less experienced writers feel like welcome members of the academic community or, as in Lucinda's case, like educational outsiders. Lucinda's textual decisions had resulted primarily from her interactions with an intermediary reader whom she trusted could speak with institutional authority about her essay, but who did not personally know Lucinda or the program to which she applied. This, coupled with her sense of doubt about her own writing abilities, caused Lucinda to downplay her Latina identity when writing her application essay, even though she saw it as germane to her projected career.

Lucinda's case of conflicted agency represents how challenges in negotiating institutional voice and power are compounded for basic writers in particular when, even if they act as good students in seeking out educational insiders as respondents, they encounter contradictory perceptions of what academic discourse welcomes or allows. Even though Lucinda's first drafts had flaws, they showed her to be a critical thinker who understood difficult immigrant conditions, challenges to acceptance of diversity, and the potential of education to mediate social problems. Had this understanding been bolstered, it could have helped Lucinda represent her intellectual acuity. As it was, in the second drafts, she could still present a passion for teaching but represented herself as less prepared academically than she really was, a move that fortunately did not impede her application.

Tutors in writing centers, in addition to basic writing instructors in general, need to be mindful of how basic writers might attribute expertise to them because of the potential to misunderstand feedback or to view what they suggest as a hard and fast rule. Writing center sessions can cover a lot

of ground, and while some students take away very concrete approaches to a particular text, they may also encounter ideologies about writing and power that silence as much as give voice (DiPardo; Grimm). Inquiry into how students interpret and negotiate the advice of their writing center tutors and other intermediary respondents, and how they understand their respondents' positions in relation to the academy, can be productive areas for further research.

Deeper understanding of the role of intermediary respondents can serve writing classrooms as well. In writing classrooms, we often help students attend to audience concerns, but we do not often show how audience response to text impacts the construction of future iterations of a text. Sometimes we address this shaping of text through peer review, but in peer review, students often read each other's work as just that—students reading each other's work. They may not understand other roles that can be available to them or even have a sense of how to read through possible positions such as advocate, critic, or facilitator (Ede and Lunsford). Furthermore, if basic writing students see themselves as educational outsiders, they may not feel they have authority in their own reading or responses and may view their peers as being equally unqualified. Consequently, as intermediary respondents, they might read for technical correctness, viewing the texts of their peers as static and linked only to the immediate purpose at hand.

In addition to learning how to interpret response more broadly, the complexities of color-blind discourse expectations can confuse or inhibit students who seek to write from a racial or ethnic perspective. While recent scholarship suggests that classroom instructors seek ways to incorporate racial, cultural, or ethnic expression into the classroom (Crisco; McCrary; Rankins-Robertson, Cahill, Roen and Glau), it is possible that, like Lucinda, students might encounter seemingly authoritative respondents in other areas who are not convinced of the value of such expression. Finding authority to give voice to such concerns requires students to understand that concepts like color-blind discourse are actually in flux across the university so that generalized statements, such as avoiding discussion of minority background, can be purposefully challenged by examining expectations in individual departments or programs and seeing where such discourses might be competing. However, basic writers need practice in understanding how competing discourses can be negotiated with authority. Though basic writers may use an array of response networks, such as having a friend read over a paper or engaging in a classroom peer review, they may not be practiced in analyzing responses and weighing them against their own writing goals, or

in discerning the layers of institutional authority embodied in institutional offices and programs.

To increase awareness of the impact of response cycles, at least for some writing tasks, attention to response can be taken beyond the classroom. Basic writing students can be asked to trace their own response networks to uncover who might be giving them feedback and how they interpret such feedback. If they notice multiple respondents (family members, friends, writing center tutors, student services, instructors or professors) responding through different perspectives and speaking through various levels of expertise or institutional or personal connection, they can begin to address questions of identity representation and agency in ways that further their own goals while also meeting institutional expectations.

It could also be beneficial to offer students some practice with locating writing within a larger institutional context as opposed to just the local classroom context. For instance, students can explore interactions with intermediary respondents by crafting personal statements in basic writing courses. As Lucinda's experience indicates, personal statements are rhetorically complex intersections of audience and purpose, but they are a kind of "occluded genre" (Swales 18) in that they commonly are required but seldom taught. When students write personal statements, they must articulate how they see themselves fitting into the larger university and project who they can become based on who they currently understand themselves to be. In a sense, they have to supply the narrative while also advancing a focus or way of reading the account. In looking at how personal statements can be constructed and read, basic writers can practice negotiating textual interactions and explore how to gain authority in discussing points they feel should be brought to the fore. It might even be possible to have students research reading and evaluation processes of faculty for departments to which they want to apply before they have to submit high-stakes applications. By learning more about how the institutional positioning of a respondent influences how she or he reads texts and by seeing how interactions with respondents shape texts, basic writers can become more active and authoritative participants in their own cycles of response, which in turn can lead to them feeling more welcome within academic institutions.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Timothy Barnett, Vanessa Ruiz, Katherine Dzielawa, and Joseph Cytrynbaum (in memoriam), along with two anonymous reviewers

for their insightful comments on previous drafts. I owe a debt of gratitude to Hope Parisi and Cheryl C. Smith for their kindness, support, and patience in the long process of completing this article. And of course, I am extremely grateful to the real Lucinda and Dr. Flores for sharing their writing processes and understandings in this project.

Notes

1. All names in this study are pseudonyms.
2. Lucinda preferred Latina as an identity term. Though she used the term Hispanic in her own writing, most often when she referred to herself, she used Latina.
3. The use of direct quotes from speaking and writing has been approved by the university IRB. However, the name of the university for program or writing center documents are not named to maintain participant anonymity as specified by the IRB.
4. In actuality, the application essay was just one episode in repeated cycles where Lucinda felt silenced in her education classes because she perceived that the students, and sometimes the teachers, were not interested in what she or any Mexican American might have to say. Her experiences suggest that a repeated lack of acknowledgement of ethnic voices could cause individual writers to question and eventually censor displays of ethnic affiliation, even when they are central to the student's academic goals.

Works Cited

- Bakhtin, M. M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. V. W. McGee. Eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1986. Print.
- Barron, Nancy G, and Nancy M. Grimm. "Addressing Racial Diversity in a Writing Center: Stories and Lessons from Two Beginners." *The Writing Center Journal* 22.2 (2002): 55-83. Print.
- Bokser, Julie. A "Pedagogies of Belonging: Listening to Students and Peers." *The Writing Center Journal* 25.1 (2005): 43-60. ERIC. Web. 15 Nov. 2012.
- Brizee, Allen, and Jo Doran. "Personal Statement: Top 10 Rules and Pitfalls."

- The Purdue OWL*. Purdue U Writing Lab (2010): n.pag. Web. 18 July 2011.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. *Critical Academic Writing And Multilingual Students*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2002. Print.
- Casanave, Christine P. *Writing Games: Multicultural Case Studies of Academic Literacy Practices in Higher Education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002. Print.
- Clark, Irene. "Perspectives on the Directive/Non-Directive Continuum in the Writing Center." *The Writing Center Journal* 22.1 (2001): 34-58. ERIC. Web. 22 Dec 2012.
- Crisko, Virginia. "Rethinking Language And Culture On The Institutional Borderland." *Journal of Basic Writing* 23.1 (2004): 39-63. Communication & Mass Media Complete. Web. 30 Dec. 2012.
- DiPardo, Anne. *A Kind Of Passport: A Basic Writing Adjunct Program and the Challenge of Student Diversity*. Urbana, IL: National Council Of Teachers Of English, 1993. Print.
- Ede, Lisa, and Andrea Lunsford. "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: the Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy." *College Composition and Communication* 35 (1984): 155-171. Print.
- Graham, Joan. "Two Papers, Two Views." In Chris M. Anson ed. *The WAC Casebook: Scenes for Faculty Reflection and Program Development*. New York: Oxford U. P., 2002. 72-81. Print
- Grimm, Nancy. M. *Good Intentions: Writing Center Work for Postmodern Times*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. Print.
- Gunter, Kimberly K. "Braiding And Rhetorical Power Players: Transforming Academic Writing Through Rhetorical Dialectic." *Journal of Basic Writing* 30.1 (2011): 64-98. Communication & Mass Media Complete. Web. 2 Jan. 2013.
- Hispanic Scholarship Fund. "About the Hispanic Scholarship Fund." 2008. Web. 15 April 2008.
- Holstein, James A, and Jaber F. Gubrium. *The Active Interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995. Print.
- Ivanic, Roz. *Writing and Identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 1998. Print.
- Lamos, Steve. "Literacy Crisis and Color-Blindness: The Problematic Racial Dynamics of Mid-1970s Language and Literacy Instruction for 'High-Risk' Minority Students. *College Composition and Communication* 61.2 (2009): 125-148. Web. 26 May 2011.
- Lillis, Theresa M. *Student Writing: Access, Regulation, Desire*. London: Routledge, 2001. Print.

- Martinez, Aja Y. "'The American Way': Resisting the Empire of Force and Color-Blind Racism." *College English* 71.6 (2009): 584 – 595. Web. 8 June 2011.
- McCrary, Donald. "Represent, Representin', Representation: The Efficacy of Hybrid Texts in the Writing Classroom." *Journal of Basic Writing* 24.2 (2005): 72-91. Communication & Mass Media Complete. Web. 30 Dec. 2012.
- Newman, Steve. "Tales of the Professional Imaginary: Personal Statements for Medical School at Johns Hopkins, 1925 to the Present." *Issues in Writing* 15, (2004) 31-55. Web. 4 Dec 2011.
- Prior, Paul A. *Writing/Disciplinarity: A Sociohistoric Account of Literate Activity in the Academy*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998. Print.
- Rankins-Robertson, Sherry, Lisa Cahill, Duane Roen, and Gregory R. Glau. "Expanding Definitions Of Academic Writing: Family History Writing in the Basic Writing Classroom and Beyond." *Journal of Basic Writing* 29.1 (2010): 56-77. ERIC. Web. 4 Dec. 2011.
- Robinson, Heather M. "Writing Center Philosophy and the End of Basic Writing: Motivation at the Site of Remediation and Discovery." *Journal of Basic Writing* 28.2 (2009): 70-92. ERIC. Web. 4 Dec. 2011.
- Roozen, Kevin. "Journalism, Poetry, Stand-up Comedy and Academic Literacy: Mapping the Interplay of Curricular and Extracurricular Literate Activity." *Journal of Basic Writing* 27.1(2008): 5-34. Print.
- Swales, John M. *Research Genres: Exploration and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Villanueva, Victor. "Blind: Talking About The New Racism." *The Writing Center Journal* 26.1 (2006): 3-19. MLA International Bibliography. Web. 21 Dec. 2012.
- Ybarra, Raul. "Cultural Dissonance in Basic Writing Courses." *Journal of Basic Writing* 20.1 (2001): 37-52. ERIC. Web. 19 May 2011.
- . "Latino Students and Anglo-Mainstream Instructors: A Study of Classroom Communication." *Journal of College Student Retention* 2.2 (2001): 161-71. ERIC. Web. 7 June 2011.