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Journal of Basic Writing

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JOURNAL OF BASIC WRITING

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Journal of Basic Writing

Special Issue on Graduate Education, Volume 2

CALL FOR ARTICLES

We welcome manuscripts of 20-30 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 four to five key words. Endnotes should be kept to a minimum. It is the author's responsibility to obtain written permission for including excerpts from student writing, especially as it entails IRB review (which should be noted in an endnote).

Contributions should be submitted as Word document attachments via e-mail to: Hope.Parisi@kbcc.cuny.edu, and Cheryl.Smith@baruch.cuny.edu. You will receive a confirmation of receipt; a report on the status of your submission will follow in eight to ten 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 such fields as psychology, anthropology, journalism, and art. The journal is in active dialogue with the scholarship of new literacies, translingualism, multimodality, digital rhetorics and online and social-media impacts as per intersectional writing identity formations.

The term "basic writer" is used with wide diversity today, and critiques the institutions and contexts that place students in basic writing and standardize academic language, as much as it may illumine the subtexts of individuals' writing practices. To help readers, therefore, authors should describe clearly the student population and settings 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 written in non-technical language; and collaborative writings which provocatively debate more than one side of a central controversy. A familiarity with the journal is the best way to determine whether JBW is your next venue for scholarship.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

This Editor's Column for the second volume of the Journal of Basic Writing on graduate education finds me in a contemplative mood.

Two stories.

Story one. It is early summer and students from across the state of Arizona are congregating in Flagstaff to a late mountain snow, traveling by car, by bus, and by train for the STAR (Successful Transition and Academic Readiness) Program. They come from small dusty townships in the deep southern recesses of Arizona. They come from big cities ringed with mountains and settled in winter smog. They are from first-generation college homes. They are from places of deep economic need. They are Latinx, African-American, Native-American and/or, more and more, identify with multiple cultural backgrounds.

Some arrive with tremendous writing skills. Others, of course, are basic writers but have wonderful skills in various other areas. My own group of eighteen contains students who have just aged out of the foster care system, students whose parents are in prison, students whose parents who are in drug addiction programs, students whose families are constantly in fear about their immigration status, sometimes their very lives. These students have just left high school. They are just beginning college.

In this one month, my instructors and I will cram a semester's worth of work into the "Rhetoric in the Media" class I first created twenty-plus years ago and update each spring. We will introduce them to the NAU campus, all of its secrets, its very special places. Our students will transition from being those high school students into full-fledged college students. They will come to know the larger Flagstaff community. They will visit Sedona's red rocks and Jerome's haunted sidewalks. They will cheer one another as they climb across ropes courses in those first few days and hold each other's hands as they go deep into caves just several weeks later. They will take part in volunteer efforts around helping animals without homes, building community gardens, and supporting LGBTQ issues with Pride in the Pines. The people to their left and their right will become their best friends for the month, for the academic year, for the next four years, and for many years beyond that. And, throughout their time here, they will begin to see themselves as scholars and writers and thinkers moving through this world. And when we have our parties on the last days of our classes, they will know something profoundly that they could not have anticipated one month ago.

We have arrived here. We belong here. This is our campus, our educa-

tion, our chance to make a difference in this world.

Story two. STAR ends, as it always does, with many tearful goodbyes. The students travel back home until late August when they will move back and once again reclaim the campus as their own. Suddenly a wildfire breaks out in the mountains right above town. It writhes through the ponderosa pine trees. Firefighters from across the country beat back the fire, save people, animals, and structures. We all hope that we have escaped the worst. And then we learn that the burn has occurred mainly across the Spruce Watershed, a key place on the mountain where water funnels down into neighborhoods. When the monsoons hit, the water will rush over the scorched earth as if it is glass, carrying churning mud and burnt trees along with it. My husband and I live right at the base of the Spruce Watershed. Ours is among the first homes that could get flooded if the water overtops its low banks.

Firefighters and city crew members shift into flood mitigation mode, pile up sand bags and put up large concrete barricades near our home. My husband and I collect the few things that really matter to us into two backpacks and one box—pictures, important papers, a change of clothes, computers. Now we will have to be ready to leave any time the rains come—maybe with hours to spare, maybe minutes. The house we have renovated over the last ten years seems all popsicle sticks now, our possessions completely senseless.

The flood waters will alter this landscape in ways we cannot yet imagine, leave behind a kind of devastation. In its place will be something entirely different. I watch as the smoke haze weaves through the forest, shafts of sunlight illuminated in new ways. We will surely need time to mourn the old, to embrace whatever the new landscape becomes. And with this, we will find healing and renewal through change.

This issue.

I am so happy to edit the second volume for *JBW* on graduate education at this pivotal time in my own life and in our changing landscape of Basic Writing history, theory, and practice. The main theme of this issue is professionalization in graduate education. These essays take the concerns addressed in the first volume a step further, addressing issues such as: What can corpus studies teach us about both graduate student involvement in our scholarship as well as how to best reach basic writers and other students (Peele et al.)? What sorts of assignments might we design and what approaches might we take that will best help teachers of basic writers (Buell)? How are stakeholders represented in our scholarship and what effects might this have for the future professionalization of graduate students (Reid)? What

is the deeper history of graduate instruction in Basic Writing practice and theory and how might it inform how we approach graduate education as the discipline continues to grow and develop (Gleason)? How might the stories of the discipline of Basic Writing shape graduate students' education as well as the future of our scholarship (Parisi)?

Lynn Reid's very important "Disciplinary Reading in Basic Writing Graduate Education: The Politics of Remediation in JBW, 1995- 2015" notes that while various graduate programs and essays on graduate training have sometimes addressed Basic Writing concerns, there is often far less attention paid to "concrete pedagogical models for how to address the politics of Basic Writing." Reid traces the history of the concept of the "politics of remediation" as well as how graduate students have been socialized in the midst of various institutional changes. Taking JBW as her primary site of inquiry, Reid first examines how other scholars have analyzed themes and trends in the journal. She then provides both a close and distant reading of the journal's essays from 1995-2015 to suggest how often and in what contexts various stakeholders are mentioned. After detailed study, she concludes that "Within JBW, there are clear patterns in the way that authors recount stories about facing the politics of remediation: state legislators and administrators are evil and greedy; institutions enact disembodied policies; the general public fails to understand the work of Basic Writing; and Basic Writing experts are stalwarts of social justice working against these difficult odds." While this work has been quite valuable, she argues that graduate education also "must move beyond close reading of a few scenarios and instead read across texts to locate patterns that might help us to strategically position our work for stakeholders we may have forgotten or opportunities we may not have considered."

"Teachers, Researchers, and Communities of Practice: Building a Corpus to Support Graduate Education," by Thomas Peele, Vivian Stoll, and Andréa Stella, offers a tremendous examination of the value of corpus studies for Basic Writing as a discipline. Tom and his two graduate students at City College of New York, CUNY, reveal the ways in which this research can better help us all to understand students' writing as well as to construct potential beneficial approaches to pedagogy. They also describe their experiences both analyzing student writing and developing research projects based on their corpus. They close by suggesting that one of the main purposes of their project is "to make students aware of the rhetorical moves associated with conventional academic genres so that they are more familiar with the genre conventions of academic writing and to make explicit connections

between the genres we study in the classroom and the genres that exist, in Mary Soliday's words, 'in the wild.'"

Barbara Gleason includes the voices of some of her graduate students—Anita Caref, James Dunn, Erick Martinez, Lynn Reid, and Maria Vint—as well. This very compelling essay, "Forming Adult Educators: The CCNY MA in Language and Literacy," traces the crucial history of the Language and Literacy Master's Program at City College of New York, CUNY. Gleason shows the ways in which the program has prepared graduate students especially well to become professionalized in basic writing theory and pedagogy as well as to go on and have very successful careers in a range of areas. Throughout the essay, various graduate students from the program share their own experiences with coursework and teaching. In the end, the authors suggest that "In presenting the MA in Language and Literacy as a model, we recommend that other graduate program administrators, faculty and students consider expanding curricula to include a blend of adult learning, TESOL, language studies, composition and rhetoric, and basic writing studies. We also recommend that graduate programs consider expanding program missions to include forming educators for multiple professional pathways rather than focusing on one or even two professional careers."

"It's Not Just About the Teaching: Integrating Basic Writing History and Theory in a Master's Level Graduate Seminar," by Marcia Z. Buell, introduces us to her excellent Seminar in Basic Writing Theory and Pedagogy at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. Seeking to weave theory and pedagogy together, she notes that "[t]heorized pedagogy means making decisions about practice that rely on thoughtful and reflective applications of theory. Such applications encourage educators to not only seek methods that work, but to also to question why and how they should be applied to particular contexts in order to best serve basic writers." Buell shares her curriculum for the course as well as explains the wide range of innovative pedagogical approaches she takes so as to best introduce her graduate students to scenarios and issues that they will encounter in basic writing teaching and administration.

Finally, Hope Parisi's essay, "Who is the Basic Writer? Reclaiming a Foundational Question for Graduate Students, New Teachers, and Emerging Scholars," encourages us to trouble the history and teaching of Basic Writing for graduate students by revisiting BW's impetus for stating "for whom we work and what that focus means." The question of who is the basic writer, while expressing concern for students, has also been attuned to the interests of stakeholders with policy agendas that limit access as well as to our own

disciplinary priorities. Dating back to open admissions and Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*, the question persists in relevance, especially now as the students for whom BW is for may seem to gain more opportunities for support outside of BW programs. These shifts, Parisi shows, link the discourses of Basic Writing, access and placement, and social justice and the two-year college. In these ways, the question permits a wide range for voicing a still needed ethos for Basic Writing's future.

It's been a sincere joy and honor to bring together all of these important voices for the two special issues on graduate education and Basic Writing. Just as my Flagstaff community is seeing its way through the fires and the floods, in our discipline we are always—whether we might choose to or not—facing hard challenges, pushing through what is known and seemingly settled, and envisioning the new. And our research and teaching are always so much stronger because of our deep commitment to our students, our unwavering dedication to pull together in the face of difficulties.

I wish the very best to you all.

--**Laura Gray-Rosendale of Northern Arizona University**,
Guest Editor

Disciplinary Reading in Basic Writing Graduate Education: The Politics of Remediation in JBW, 1995-2015

Lynn Reid

ABSTRACT: *Though practitioners in Basic Writing studies often refer to "the politics of reme-diation," there are few pedagogical models that address how to teach this facet of professional life to graduate students and emerging professionals. Most often, this knowledge is transmitted through storytelling, namely narrative-based accounts of Basic Writing professionals engaging with other institutional stakeholders during moments of institutional change. This article provides some results from a qualitative study of such publications in* JBW *from 1995-2015 to highlight how a range of distant and close reading practices (Mueller) might serve to illuminate disciplinary patterns, thereby providing graduate students with new insights into the politics of the field.*

KEYWORDS: *basic writing; distant reading; politics; writing program administration*

In a 1997 survey of students enrolled in graduate programs in composition and rhetoric, Scott L. Miller, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, Bennis Blue, and Deneen M. Shepherd found that, despite an overall feeling of satisfaction with their programs, few respondents had carefully considered what the authors term the "future tense" of their professional lives: namely, the transition from graduate study to a full-time faculty role. Although graduate school is considered to be a crucial period in the disciplinary acculturation of emerging professionals, topics such as shifting societal expectations for higher education and the demands of faculty life beyond teaching have historically received limited attention in graduate curricula and programming (Austin). In their recommendations, Miller et al. emphasize the need to prepare graduate students for the job market, a topic that has remained

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at the forefront of work on graduate professionalization (Dadas). In composition studies, the teaching practicum has also featured prominently in scholarship about graduate professionalization, serving in many graduate programs as the only course directly related to the day-to-day working life of a future faculty member (Dobrin).

While the above are certainly crucial topics that might help facilitate the transition from graduate school to faculty work, I would argue that job market preparation and teaching practicums alone are inadequate preparation for the "future tense" of professional work that practitioners in Basic Writing might face. In her report of a discussion about graduate education and Basic Writing on the CBW-L, the field's primary email listserv, Barbara Gleason raises some important questions about professional training that extend beyond job market preparation, teaching, research, or even traditional service obligations. Because her focus is on the pre-service training of Basic Writing professionals, Gleason is compelled to ask: "How well prepared are MA and PhD graduates for the political dimension of their work as teachers of basic writers? Are graduate programs educating students about the political nature of BW?" (56). In the current academic and political climate where Basic Writing programs and courses are increasingly at risk of reduction or outright elimination, these are perhaps the most important questions for future Basic Writing professionals to consider. Surprisingly, despite these pressing concerns, there is little in the way of concrete pedagogical models for *how* to address the politics of Basic Writing in graduate curricula.

Below, I draw on a common graduate school assignment—reading publications from a major scholarly journal—in order to develop a pedagogical approach that might shed light on the political nature of Basic Writing for pre-service instructors completing graduate programs in composition. After providing a brief history of the politics of Basic Writing instruction as it relates to the broader call for compositionists to serve as institutional change makers, I review the handful of extant approaches to engaging graduate students with this work that has been published in the past decade. Following this, I turn to the role that literacy practices play in graduate student socialization, with particular emphasis on scholarly journals. In the final section, I analyze data from a study of narratives about the politics of institutional change that have been published in *Journal of Basic Writing* from 1995 to 2015 to argue for a more critical approach to addressing reading in graduate curricula. Rather than focus primarily on the close reading of texts (as those of us who were English majors may be wont to do), I suggest that methods of what Derek Mueller (drawing on the work of Franco Moretti in literary

studies) describes as "distant reading" can also be employed in order to make disciplinary patterns more visible and therefore ripe for further theorization.

GRADUATE SOCIALIZATION AND THE POLITICS OF REMEDIATION

The phrase "the politics of remediation" is a familiar one in the professional discourse of Basic Writing studies, circulated in oft-cited publications by Barbara Gleason ("Evaluating Writing Programs"), Mike Rose, and, perhaps most famously, in Mary Soliday's award-winning monograph, *The Politics of Remediation: Institutional and Student Needs in Higher Education*. Though she does not explicitly define this term, Soliday argues that "the politics of remediation" addresses the tensions between institutional needs and "social conflicts as they are played out through the educational tier most identified with access to the professional middle class" (1). Soliday goes on to explain that the roots of these "social conflicts" lie in the tensions between institutions providing access to higher education for students from marginalized communities on one hand and the rigidity of academic standards that, when enforced, often serve to limit that access on the other.

Rose and Gleason both echo a similar message, with emphasis on specific moments of institutional change and the various institutional stakeholders who might advocate in support of or against the interests of Basic Writing and remedial education. For Rose, such institutional pushback took the form of proposed funding cuts for Basic Writing, as his institution suggested that money be best spent on more collegiate resources than remediation. In Gleason's case, institutional politics played a significant role in the implementation and evaluation of a Basic Writing pilot program that was ultimately not adopted by her college, despite compelling research suggesting its success. In these cases, the expertise of Basic Writing professionals and the interests of students enrolled in Basic Writing courses were both secondary to larger institutional goals of providing "rigorous" and "college-level" courses for first-year students.

This so-called "politics of remediation" has a much longer history, of course. Mina P. Shaughnessy's editor's introduction to the inaugural issue of *JBW* highlights the social justice imperative of Basic Writing at CUNY during Open Admissions and the subsequent resistance that some faculty demonstrated to what they perceived as the lowering of academic standards to meet the needs of this new student population (what Theodore Gross later referred to in his aptly-titled "How to Kill a College: The Private Papers of a

College Dean," published in a 1978 issue of *Saturday Review*). More recently, legislative efforts to eliminate Basic Writing at four-year institutions and, in some cases, state-wide (see Sullivan for one example), reinforce the need for Basic Writing instructors to be savvy to their role as experts in a highly contested area of higher education. Despite this exigence, however, many new Basic Writing faculty are unprepared to navigate the institutional politics that have the potential to influence much of their professional lives.

GRADUATE SOCIALIZATION TO THE POLITICS OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Given the contentious energy often associated with Basic Writing, it becomes incumbent on professionals in this field to advocate for their work and the students who place into Basic Writing courses. Such efforts have been theorized by scholars in composition as change-making work, with the goal of bringing disciplinary best practices into their local institutional contexts in order to foster a more progressive attitude about writing across campus (McLeod). The message that compositionists should serve as institutional change makers is also prominent in Linda Adler-Kassner's *The Activist WPA: Changing Stories about Writing and Writers*. Adler-Kassner calls for WPAs to take on an activist role in an effort to bring disciplinary values to bear on their local writing programs, with the ultimate goal of fostering a more inclusive, and thus socially just, understanding of students' writing.

With this impetus for compositionists to function as agents of institutional change, there have also been increased calls for graduate education to explicitly address these concerns. Graduate education is, as Parviz Ahmadi and Ashad Abd Samad note, "a very important part of any academic discourse community as it can initiate students into their professional discourse communities by introducing them to topics under discussion, disciplinary language, and discourse community culture" (97). In composition studies, graduate education tends to emphasize the disciplinary culture around teaching and research, but as Margaret Willard-Traub argues, professing composition is inherently political work and as such "an understanding of the ways in which intellectual work in our field is bound up with institutional politics" is "essential . . . to the professionalization of graduate students" (62). In an example more directly related to Basic Writing, Gleason describes Bruce Horner's efforts to engage graduate students at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's campus in scholarly discussions about the politics of BW instruction by first "focusing on issues specific to their local context

and next by urging students to push back against institutional missives that serve to further marginalize students who place into basic writing courses" ("Reasoning the Need"). This graduate coursework serves to prepare future BW professionals by providing students with an opportunity to synthesize institution-specific primary source documents from their writing program within a broader context of BW research and scholarship, allowing graduate students to identify where patterns evident in the broader field are being replicated on their own campus. Embedded within that work is, of course, also an ethos that a Basic Writing instructor can and should serve as an agent of change in their local context.

In cases where a Basic Writing program is not immediately available as a site for graduate study, scenario-based instruction provides another useful pedagogical alternative to engage graduate students with the political nature of teaching composition. The board game *Praxis and Allies*, designed as a project for a graduate seminar on writing program administration offered at Purdue University, serves as one such example (Sura et al.) Under the direction of noted WPA-scholar Shirley K. Rose, Sura et al. crafted the game in order to emphasize the intersections between local and disciplinary forms of knowledge and the skill-sets required to negotiate the concerns of various people who may have a vested interest in writing instruction. In the game, players are assigned a scenario card (e.g., "start a new graduate program in rhetoric and composition," or "coordinate with the writing center to develop and run workshops for English language-learners"); a role (e.g., WPA; Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator); a status (tenured or untenured, assistant professor or full professor, etc.); and a list of required resources: funding, knowledge, and ethos. As a player works through *Praxis and Allies*, the impact that unplanned circumstances, missing knowledge points, or damage to ethos could have on the successful completion of a scenario are highlighted with chance cards. In order to successfully navigate the game, players must balance resources to complete each assigned scenario in the same way that a WPA might do on any given day.

For Basic Writing experts, Marcia Buell's "The Place of Basic Writing at Wedonwan U: A Simulation Activity for Graduate Level Seminars" provides a similar opportunity for graduate students to role-play scenarios that they might face in their professional work. Whereas *Praxis and Allies* centers primarily on the experience of a WPA, Buell's exercise requires graduate students to adopt the personas of different institutional stakeholders, including WPA, writing instructor, students, and literary scholars (presumably someone who is not well-versed in the interests of Basic Writing). Buell's intention in devel-

oping this game was to "allow for exploration of the ecologies surrounding pedagogical approaches," serving to situate curricular development within a broader institutional context with stakeholders who might have competing views about the role of Basic Writing. By emphasizing the crisis discourse that often accompanies discussions of Basic Writing, this role-playing game allows graduate students to transition from an idealized version of Basic Writing teaching that might be promoted by a graduate curriculum toward a more nuanced understanding of the competing institutional interests that Basic Writing might ultimately serve. Although it is necessarily limited in scope, Buell's project offers valuable insight into the "future tense" that many Basic Writing professionals might ultimately encounter.

DISCIPLINARY READING

Another common method for educating future Basic Writing professionals about the complex institutional ecologies they will ultimately negotiate is, quite simply, reading about the real-life scenarios that composition teacher-scholars publish in academic journals. Studies of disciplinarity often emphasize the role of disciplinary literacies in the process of socialization to a disciplinary discourse community (Hyland). Specifically, Ken Hyland argues that scholarly writing does not simply mirror reality, but rather aids in the construction of that reality as a social system (196). He goes on to suggest that in order to be persuasive, scholars who publish in disciplinary journals must "display a competence as disciplinary insiders" by successfully engaging in a dialogue infused with disciplinary standards with their readers (197). Disciplinary reading, however, has not been widely studied in relation to native-English speaking graduate students. There are multitudes of studies that analyze disciplinary reading practices for adolescent and undergraduate students, many of which emphasize the role of reading as a form of disciplinary socialization. These studies tend to focus largely on comprehension and skills-based concerns (see Fang and Coatoam), while the function of reading as a form of disciplinary socialization for graduate students has received little scholarly attention, perhaps because of the tacit assumption that native-speaking graduate students already possess the reading skills necessary to fully engage with discipline-specific writing.

Though there is not much in the way of graduate pedagogy that addresses disciplinary reading for native English speakers, there is no shortage of work that points to the importance of reading scholarly publications to the formation of our discipline. As Hyland notes, the scholarly discourse

and writing of a discipline "is not just another aspect of what goes on in the disciplines," but rather contributes to "producing them" (5). Charles Bazerman adds that:

> Writing is a complex activity, influencing the orientations and activities of minds located in historical, social, and physical worlds; through the creation, distribution, and reception of signs through various technologies and organizational systems; and as a consequence establishing an archive of thought, action, and events for further social use. (8)

Scholarly journals serve as exemplars of these "archive[s] of thought" that Bazerman describes and, as Robert Connors suggests, ultimately play an important role in the construction of disciplinary identity. In other words, journals in composition studies create a tacit understanding of how teacher-scholars working in this field and its related subdisciplines are expected to behave as professionals representing the discipline. Colin Charlton et al. further argue that "disciplinary memory influence[s] writing program identities and work" (19) and "because they help establish norms and values that shape individuals' behavior and thinking within a community, narratives [in scholarly publications] develop a shared history that functions as a touchstone for future generations as they negotiate their present and imagine their future" (36). From a social constructionist perspective (Jorgensen and Phillips), the types of disciplinary discourses that are transmitted via scholarly journals have the potential to shape not simply one's approach to research and the construction of knowledge in the field, but also their day-to-day experience as faculty members working in a specific local context.

Taking these arguments into account for graduate pedagogy and the issues that Basic Writing practitioners are most likely to face in their professional lives, it becomes necessary to consider what types of scholarly publications address institutional politics as a means of socializing readers to disciplinary best practices. Among the most common genres for such work are narrative-based accounts of something that happened in a particular local context, often characterized as "WPA narratives" that recount "how we struggle, argue, and bargain with colleagues and other administrators to protect our programs" (Stolley 22). These publications are a version of what Lynn Craigue Briggs and Meg Woolbright refer to as "academic narratives" that blend story and theory in order to highlight an institutional challenge that composition professionals faced, along with the strategies

they employed to further the interests of the writing program in their local context, and are commonly included on graduate syllabi as cautionary tales or models of successful efforts towards institutional change. As these sorts of narrative-based publications rise in popularity, however, it becomes challenging to consider how best to use these texts in graduate courses and, more importantly, how best to teach graduate students to engage with such work critically.

CLOSE READING, DISTANT READING: STUDIES OF *JBW*

If my own experience as a graduate student is any indication, narrative-based accounts about the politics of institutional change are often presented to graduate students as case studies that are meant to be read with great attention to detail. The goal, it seems, is for graduate students to read these works to get a sense of the nuances of institutional politics, the number of stakeholder perspectives that might be represented, and who seems to hold power in the interactions that are described. While this is certainly a valuable approach, it fails to capture patterns in these narratives that might develop over time and that might suggest something about how readers are "disciplined" to interpret such works. Instead, Derek Mueller notes that empirically-focused methods that foster "thin reading" (also referred to as "distant reading") have the potential to reveal facets of disciplinarity that might not otherwise be visible through close reading alone. In *Network Sense: Methods for Visualizing a Discipline*, Mueller writes:

> [Many] projects [on disciplinarity] have relied extensively on anecdotal evidence, intuition, and local experiences, on tacit knowledge lodged in what Stephen North (1987) counted as his "10 years of 'living among' the people of Composition" (p. 4). Noting this tendency is not to devalue these forms of evidence, nor to characterize them as lacking rigor or substance. Instead they purposefully tend to strain for a generalizing extensibility, surfacing a locally or regionally bounded perspective to account for larger-scale trends, patterns, or turns. (159)

Here, Mueller makes an important observation about the inherent difficulty in generalizing patterns across "local experiences" (which would include the "academic narratives" that are the focus of my own study). Because details about the politics of remediation are always locally specific, this

disciplinary knowledge is often transmitted through narratives which Mueller notes are difficult to study in any sort of systematic way. As Mueller notes:

> Distant reading and thin description methods aid our corroborating claims about the field in these accounts, presenting augmentative forms of evidence to cases grounded in local experiences and, thus, these methods supply leverage for inquiring into the reach and plausibility of subjective claims about where the field at-large has been and where it is headed. (159)

Applying this approach of distant and thin readings can serve to address the methodological problem that Mueller notes above with anecdotal accounts that are so locally-specific that they may fail to provide any generalizable knowledge. Mueller theorizes the disciplinary publications of composition studies as a series of keywords that reflect the field's work and values. "Word-watching," as Mueller suggests, yields disciplinary glossaries, keyword collections, and critical examinations of disciplinary turns that reflect paradigm shifts and can serve as a robust source of data about, quite simply, what we call things in composition studies.

Though there are certainly examples of such studies of scholarly journals in composition (see Phillips, Greenberg, and Gibson; Lerner), this approach represents something of a departure from existing studies of *JBW*, which have employed purely close reading strategies to analyze specific themes and patterns. In "The Representation of Basic Writers in Basic Writing Scholarship, or Who is Quentin Pierce?" Susanmarie Harrington offers an analysis of the first 17 volumes of the journal. She is intentional in her choices, clarifying that, "It's not my purpose here to do a history of *JBW* or even a complete content analysis of work presented there" (95), and instead examines the way that student voice has been constructed in the journal. Harrington identifies a disconnect between what she perceives as a student-centered discourse shared among practitioners and teacher-scholars in the field of Basic Writing and the ways that students are depicted in the pages of *JBW*. Laura Gray-Rosendale offers a similar study that examines how student identity is constructed in *JBW* from its inaugural issue in 1975 through the time of her publication in 1999. Gray-Rosendale borrows an outside framework in order to categorize and analyze articles in the journal under study. In this case, the author relies on Joseph Harris' three metaphors which he suggests are dominant in Basic Writing scholarship—growth, initiation, and conflict—to provide a framework for analyzing thematic trends in *JBW*,

with specific focus on the construction of Basic Writing students' identities through the pages of the journal over more than two decades ("Investigating Our Discursive History"). More recently, Gray-Rosendale examines a smaller corpus of articles from 2013 to 2016 to re-examine the construction of student identity in *JBW* that her earlier work explored ("Basic Writer's Identity"). Each of these studies of *JBW* identifies patterns that become categories for analysis, all of which provide important insight into the trajectory of Basic Writing studies. Yet, because these studies were interested in examining very specific phenomena in *JBW*, other significant patterns that might be present might not be uncovered.

STUDY METHODS

My own study of *JBW* takes a different route by working between close and distant reading strategies in order to develop an analysis of disciplinary patterns in narratives about the politics of institutional change in *Journal of Basic Writing*. Though a distant reading of the different topics and institutional stakeholders that are named in the narratives I analyzed reveals patterns that might not otherwise be visible, without the initial close reading of these articles in order to develop a coding scheme, it would not have been possible to identify these patterns at all.

Sample Selection and Narrowing the Corpus: In order to locate patterns in both topics that are associated with the politics of remediation and the descriptions of various institutional stakeholders, I examined all issues of *Journal of Basic Writing* from 1995 to 2015. My goal was to focus on feature-length articles that included narrative accounts of the politics of remediation playing out in a specific local context. To locate "information-rich cases" (Patton) that would fit the scope of this study, I first read the descriptions of published essays that were included in Editor's Introductions for each issue of *JBW* with two guiding questions in mind:

- Is this an account of an experience in a local context?
- Does this selection address the politics of literacy instruction through issues such as placement, curricular change, program redesign, assessment, or access?

And finally, so that this study would be focused on program or department-level concerns rather than classroom pedagogies, I considered a third question:

- Does this selection address the role of multiple institutional stakeholders beyond simply students and their instructors?

Although students are arguably the most important stakeholders in basic writing instruction, an emphasis on the politics of individual classroom situations would have resulted in a much larger corpus of articles that did not include the perspectives of stakeholders other than students and their instructors. Therefore, I excluded students when I considered the different stakeholders named in a given selection.

If the answer to the three questions above about politics, local context, and stakeholders was yes, I included that selection in the second round of coding. During the second round of coding, I used the same three guiding questions to read through article abstracts and further reduce the corpus. What remained was a collection of twenty-four feature articles that included narrative accounts that addressed the politics of remediation and included the interests of multiple institutional stakeholders beyond students and their instructors (see Appendix).

Coding Data for Analysis: At this point, I coded each of the twenty-four articles to identify the different institutional stakeholders who were referenced (distant reading) and then followed this with an analysis of the ways that these stakeholders were described (close reading). I created an Excel spreadsheet to track different stakeholders who were named and, as needed, refined categories to capture all of the different stakeholder perspectives that were mentioned in the corpus of articles. Once all stakeholders were identified and the frequency of their mention within the corpus was noted, I completed an additional round of coding which examined how each stakeholder was described by looking at descriptive references of their actions, attitudes, and interests.

A DISTANT READING OF *JBW*

Mueller's work on distant reading focuses largely on frequency counts and various methods for data-visualization that such frequency counts over a large corpus make possible. In the absence of data-visualization, Mueller acknowledges that even a table of frequency counts alone can elucidate patterns in the data that might not otherwise be visible. This was certainly true of my study of stakeholders in *JBW* as I was surprised to identify 46 different categories of stakeholders across the 24 articles I analyzed. The chart below reflects the percentage of total articles (n=24) that include references

to each of the categories of stakeholders that I identified, proving a "distant reading" of stakeholders in narrative-based accounts about the politics of institutional change published in *Journal of Basic Writing* from 1995 to 2015. I believe that the numerical data here offers a decontextualized representation of some disciplinary patterns that are ripe for further discussion, including the sheer number of stakeholders represented in this corpus, as well as the ways in which groups of people (i.e. committees, departments, etc.) were also frequently characterized as stakeholders.

Table 1. Stakeholders in *Journal of Basic Writing*.

Stakeholder	Frequency of Mention
Academic Advisors	7 (29.16%)
Adjunct Instructors	3 (12.5%)
Administrator	7 (29.16%)
Admissions/Recruiting Staff	14 (58.33%)
Basic Writing Expert	1 (4.16%)
Basic Writing Instructor	24 (100%)
Basic Writing Program	16 (66.66%)
Basic Writing Program Administrator	12 (50%)
Board of Trustees	5 (20.83%)
College-Wide Committee	5 (20.83%)
Community-Based Organizations	3 (12.5%)
Community College	1 (4.16%)
Community Outreach Program	4 (16.66%)
Consultants Hired by the State	1 (4.16%)
Department	1 (4.16%)
Department Chair	8 (33.33%)
Department Colleagues	3 (12.5%)
Department Committee	7 (29.16%)
Director of Support Service Program	4 (16.66%)
Director of Writing Center	4 (16.66%)
Faculty (Branch Campuses)	4 (16.66%)
Faculty (General)	2 (8.33%)
Faculty (Other Departments)	6 (25%)
Faculty Governance	6 (25%)
Graduate Program	4 (16.66%)
Graduate Teaching Assistants	4 (16.66%)

Grant-Funding Agencies	6 (25%)
High School Teachers	2 (8.33%)
Institution	1 (4.16%)
Larger Academic Unit (Beyond Dept.)	15 (62.5%)
Larger College/University System	2 (8.33%)
Legislators	9 (37.5%)
Library	8 (33.33%)
Media	1 (4.16%)
Non-Matriculation Programs	5 (20.83%)
Parties to Statewide Agreements	1 (4.16%)
Placement Staff	4 (16.66%)
Public	1 (4.16%)
Student Organizations	6 (25%)
Staff Support Services	2 (8.33%)
Support Services	2 (8.33%)
Testing Companies	8 (33.33%)
Writing Center	4 (16.66%)
Writing Faculty	7 (29.16%)
Writing Program	24 (100%)
Writing Program Administrator	4 (16.66%)

I developed the list above through a grounded-theory approach to reading through each of the twenty-four articles which required coding for each category of stakeholder. I repeated this process several times, until subsequent readings did not illuminate a new distinction to be made between different categories of stakeholders. Not surprisingly, there were higher frequency counts for stakeholders directly related to the writing program, but the sheer range of stakeholders who might have an interest in a basic writing course or program is telling. Academic advisors, admissions/recruiting staff, placement staff, and testing companies, for example, tended to be referenced when placement into courses was a topic of concern. When the topic of reducing or eliminating remediation was addressed, it was generally several steps removed from those whose day-to-day work directly addressed Basic Writing and included administrators, legislators, and boards of trustees. In some instances, it was necessary to name collections of individuals such

as committees, departments, or even the institution at-large, as often these groups were represented as speaking with one voice.

An analysis of these stakeholders must also consider the constructed nature of the narratives in which their descriptions appear. Generally, authors who publish in *Journal of Basic Writing* are writing from a subject position that is invested in the maintenance of Basic Writing courses or other curricular structures and student services that would support the students who would traditionally place into such courses. The almost natural result of such subjectivity is the development of an "us vs. them" description wherein stakeholders who might appear to be threatening the work of Basic Writing are more easily portrayed in a negative light. The flip side to this is the promotion of an inherently positive image of Basic Writing instructors.

After a more detailed reading to analyze descriptions of Basic Writing instructors, I was able to develop three distinct subcategories: Basic Writing instructors as marginalized by their institutions (20.83%), Basic Writing instructors as institutional change agents (29.16%), and Basic Writing instructors as advocates for social justice (62.5%). These categories were not necessarily mutually exclusive. I defined marginalization at the institution by looking for explicit references to Basic Writing courses, programs, or faculty as somehow "othered" in a particular local context. The code for institutional change agents was reserved for any references of Basic Writing instructors who were actively seeking to change an aspect of the institutional culture about writing. In some cases, this was also associated with advocating for social justice, as arguments about access, diversity, and equitable educational opportunities were mobilized as reasons for change.

Across these statistics are identity constructions of Basic Writing instructors that speak to the sense of mission and agency that professionals in these fields ascribe to their work through descriptions of themselves and their colleagues. Beginning with these data points invites further questioning, particularly in the context of a graduate seminar: In what ways do BW instructors advocate for social justice? What are the tensions between serving as an institutional change agent and being marginalized at your institution? By whom are BW instructors marginalized? Such questions can serve to identify disciplinary assumptions about what it means to engage in the professional work of Basic Writing (assumptions that may have tacitly formed as a result of other scholarly reading in the field).

CLOSE READING DESCRIPTIONS OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS: ANALYZING THREATS TO BASIC WRITING

A close reading of this largely-positive characterization of Basic Writing faculty alongside other less-than-positive descriptions of other stakeholders—namely administrators, the general public, and the institution—reveals clear opportunities to frame distinctions between insider/outsider groups in Basic Writing scholarship. Given the extent to which graduate studies are rooted in disciplinary socialization, recognition of these patterns could provide graduate students an opportunity to approach their understanding of such relationships between Basic Writing instructors and other stakeholders with a more critical eye, which might enable proactive relationship-building rather than emphasizing reactions to institutionally-mandated changes.

The section below offers a brief overview of data from three of the outsider groups described in *JBW*: administrators, the public, and legislators. Based on my reading of articles from across the history of *JBW,* these three stakeholder groups appeared to have the potential to significantly impact the status of Basic Writing courses or programs. At the same time, I was hard-pressed to find examples in the field's scholarship in *JBW* or beyond that speak to how Basic Writing experts might proactively address the concerns of these different stakeholders. By highlighting these particular categories of stakeholders, I hope to call attention to opportunities for graduate education for future Basic Writing professionals to more deeply engage in efforts to demonstrate to these and other stakeholders the needs that courses labeled "Basic Writing" often address.

Administrators

Under this category, I include references to deans, provosts, chancellors, and the like to acknowledge that "administration" might look drastically different from one institution to the next. In the selections I analyzed from *JBW*, administrators are often portrayed as motivated by financial concerns (Warnick, Cooney, and Lackey) rather than student success. In "Remedial, Basic, Advanced: Evolving Frameworks for First-Year Composition at the California State University," Dan Melzer attributes California State University efforts to eliminate remediation to the work of the university Chancellor, citing a "top-down" approach, and even pits them in direct opposition to Basic Writing by noting that "despite the victory of many Basic Writing teachers in protecting access for underserved students, the Chancellor's Office and Board of Trustees have continued their attempts to eliminate remediation"

(85), a rhetorical move that situates the higher administration as not valuing access for underserved students, which indicates a lack of commitment to social justice and an emphasis on "the language of exclusion" (89). Likewise, in "Re-modeling Basic Writing," Rachel Rigolino and Penny Freel point to the talks among administrators to potentially "dismantle remedial programs" at SUNY in the mid-1990s (53). These descriptors consistently construct administrators as anonymous villains who threaten the work of Basic Writing programs.

The Public

A consistent theme in narratives about the politics of remediation that have been published in *JBW* is that the general public is most frequently described as ill-informed about sound composition pedagogy and driven by a vested interest education that is publicly funded. To put it another way, references to the public in narratives about the politics of remediation in *JBW* often depict the public as part of the problem that constitutes opposition to the democratic work of Basic Writing programs. Sugie Goen-Salter notes the "institutional need to convince . . . 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" (97). The public, in this characterization, leads the charge to maintain academic rigor for fear of "wasting" resources on students who have seemingly not earned the right to be in college at all.

The Institution

Because institutions often express a set of values via mission statements and policy directives, and because references to "the university" or "the college" are common in *JBW*, I considered "the institution" as a separate category. While I recognize that in practice, institutions are made up of a collective of individuals, I noted in *JBW* that "the institution" often was imbued with a distinct identity. References to "the institution" in the selections I examined most often cast "the institution" as a stakeholder whose work was in opposition to the democratic goals and ideals of the Basic Writing enterprise. In Pavesich's 2011 article, for example, although there is a great deal of emphasis on the social justice mission of Roosevelt University, the institution that is the focus of Pavesich's analysis, the university's policy regarding the placement of transfer students is described as "strain[ing] its commitment to social justice" (94). Similarly in articles written about Cali-

fornia State University (CSU), "the institution" is often blamed for policy decisions that negatively impact Basic Writing (Fox; Melzer; Goen-Salter). Here again, the institution itself becomes a stakeholder responsible for the issuance of mission statements and policy documents that marginalize Basic Writing expertise.

The above examples paint a clear picture of stakeholders whose influence threatens Basic Writing courses and programs. Each of these analyses is evidence-based, as there are interpretations from close readings to interpret each of these identity constructions. At the same time, however, close readings are necessarily limited in scope in order to develop a particular line of thinking in the service of a larger argument. The analysis of administration, the public, and the institution is useful in constructing a narrative about Basic Writing that emphasizes victimization (a trope that is arguably all too common in our field's professional discourse, published and otherwise), and one that positions Basic Writing professionals as consistently on the offensive. While there is, of course, quite a bit of truth to this conception of a Basic Writing professional's life, it is only *part* of the picture that is laid out in *JBW*. Comparing this interpretation to the analysis of Basic Writing instructors above suggests a potential disconnect between this victim identity and the primary ways that Basic Writing professionals describe themselves and their work, as only about 20% of the articles in this corpus described Basic Writing instructors as marginalized. In contrast, about 90% of the articles describe Basic Writing instructors as either agents of change or advocates for social justice. A more detailed distant reading of descriptions of other institutional stakeholders could do more to reveal opportunities for Basic Writing professionals to potentially locate allies, while also considering the complexity of institutional structures that Basic Writing is embedded within.

FREQUENCY TRENDS OVER TIME

Returning to Mueller's argument that distant reading practices make visible data that might not otherwise be uncovered, I turn here to my analysis of legislators depicted as stakeholders in *JBW*. Although legislators are represented in just over one-third of the total articles in this corpus, it is worth noting that more than half of those articles were published in the seven-year period between 2008 and 2015. The sudden spike in frequency of mentions is a clear indication that legislators are playing an increasingly prominent role in the working lives of Basic Writing professionals.

I applied the code for legislator to examples where legislators or law-makers were specifically named as stakeholders, or where such stakehold-ers were implied because a particular law or formal government policy was named. For example, a reference to "Title V, part of the legal code of the state" (Fitzgerald 5) was coded under this category, as were references to official government entities such as "The Idaho State Board of Education" (Uehling 23) and "the Tennessee Higher Education Commission" (Huse, Wright, Clark, and Hacker 37). Combining references to legislators, laws, government policies, and government agencies highlights the extent to which various levels of government oversight might impact the work of a Basic Writing program. These legislators and government policy-makers wield tremendous power over the direction of Basic Writing programs, simply by passing legislation and enacting policy that mandate particular approaches to remedial education that can influence placement, course of-ferings, curriculum, and program structure.

Table 2. Descriptions of Legislators/Policy Makers in *Journal of Basic Writing*.

Descriptive category	Frequency in Total Corpus
Defending Standards, Not Students	3 (12.5%)
Opposing Social Justice	3 (12.5%)
Defenders of Access	3 (12.5%)

Legislators as threats to Basic Writing. The descriptions of legislators and government policy makers seem to fall along two axes. The first one stands in stark opposition to the inherent mission and values of Basic Writing as a field of study. In this characterization, legislators/lawmakers/government policy makers are portrayed as threats to student and faculty interests.

Legislators defending standards, not students. An example of lawmakers characterized as a threat to Basic Writing is present in this excerpt from Huse, Wright, Clark, and Hacker's selection, which narrates one program's response to legislative mandates that impacted their ability to offer Basic Writing courses:

> According to a May 2002 *Tennessean* article, "THEC [Tennessee Higher Education Commission] officials said they aren't opposed to remedial and developmental courses, but as they prepare for a state budget that might provide no additional funding for several years and could even cut higher education funding by more than

> $90 million . . . THEC administrators are focusing on maintaining the quality of the courses higher education was meant to offer." (Cass 26)

The choice of words here is significant: presenting the concerns of the THEC administrators as centered around "the courses higher education was meant to offer" (in Cass, qtd. by Huse et al.) implies that Basic Writing courses (referred to here as "remedial and developmental courses") are *not* the types of courses that belong at the college level. This discursive construction of Basic Writing as below-standard is commonly cited in the field's scholarship beyond *Journal of Basic Writing* as a threat to the field (Otte and Mlynarczyk; Reid). While such perspectives have traditionally been common from a range of local, on-campus stakeholders (such as faculty, as Hull and Rose demonstrate, or the media, as Adler-Kassner and Harrington prove), other more famously documented examples, such as the efforts to eliminate remediation at CUNY's senior colleges in the late 1990s, are more directly tied to lawmakers and politicians (Gleason, "Evaluating Writing Programs"). In this description, legislators carry agency and power over Basic Writing instructors and programs, as they are able to mandate curricular and programmatic change.

Patrick Sullivan's article about a legislative shift in Connecticut that profoundly impacted Basic Writing includes a similar characterization of the state legislature that Huse, Wright, Clark, and Hacker present. Public Act 12-40, according to Sullivan, effectively rewrote the statewide approach to remedial education, forcing institutions to adopt an accelerated model of Basic Writing:

> Impatient with very modest graduation rates among students who require remedial assistance in English and math, this legislation took the bold step of mandating an accelerated approach to developmental education, requiring all colleges in the system—twelve community colleges and four state universities—to offer a maximum of one semester of remedial work for any student requiring additional preparation for college. Furthermore, colleges were required to offer developmental students who were deemed 'likely to succeed in college level work with supplemental support' the opportunity to enroll in a first-year composition class that provided embedded support. (45)

Sullivan's choice of words here contributes to an unfavorable image of the legislature in this case. For example, his use of the word "impatient" suggests his perception that the legislature is attempting to rush student progress. This, coupled with his observation that the legislature emphasized students "Deemed 'likely to succeed,'" indicates that the legislature is invested in maintaining rigor, rather than advocating for students. Here again, legislators are described as enjoying agency in *Journal of Basic Writing* as they are able to effectively limit access to higher education to only those students whose academic profiles suggest the potential for success and thus threaten the existence of Basic Writing courses.

Legislators opposing social justice. Other legislative initiatives do not target Basic Writing or remediation explicitly but nonetheless have an influence on the work of a Basic Writing program. This is notable in Gail Stygall's discussion of a Washington State ballot initiative that was designed to eliminate preferential treatment for individuals based on race, ethnicity, or gender, a move that Stygall notes effectively eliminated affirmative action policies. The effect of such policy changes on a Basic Writing program intended to serve populations that typically benefit from affirmative action programs can be detrimental. Stygall notes, "By December of 1998, the three-decades old Educational Opportunity Program at the University of Washington, whose two-course, for-credit composition-requirement fulfilling writing sequence is housed in the Expository Writing Program which I direct, was as much at risk as its students" (6). Here, Stygall subtly positions the legislators behind this ballot initiative as anti-affirmative action, by first noting the date of the program's inception (which is aligned with the latter portion of the Civil Rights Movement) and also by using the term "at-risk," which is often employed to describe students from minority or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Later, she adds to this by noting that "legislators and educational policy makers in state governments treat educational policy documents as just that—policy contracts" (7) and points out that "when these documents contradict and undo other policy initiatives, such as diversity commitments, we must point to the contradictions and counter arguments" (7). In her efforts to paint legislators and policy makers as anti-diversity, Stygall successfully paints them as enemies of Basic Writing.

A similar depiction of legislators as exercising their agency to work against social justice is notable in Sullivan's essay on the passage of Public Act 12-40 in Connecticut, a legislative move that forced a re-design of Basic Writing programs throughout the state. Similar to Stygall's description of educational policy as divorced from the actual needs of students, Sullivan

indicates that the Connecticut legislature approaches remediation through the lens of "an economic theory that frames investment in developmental education on a business model that privileges return on investment and statistical probabilities" (65), as opposed to the much more student-centered approaches that most developmental educators adopt. With that, Sullivan also notes that

> As I listened to and participated in statewide discussion about implementation of PA 12-40 in the tumultuous months following passage of this legislation, I was alarmed by some of the language I heard being used about underprepared students and the seemingly punitive measures being discussed to deal with them. I spoke with one consultant who was assisting the state with implementation during this process, and he had a similar read on the situation. He said that it appeared to him that some of the framers of this legislation, and some of those who were providing leadership in the initial public discussions of this bill, 'simply wanted underprepared students to go away.' (73)

This characterization of the legislators responsible for the passage of PA 12-40 notes their interest in cost-saving and investing in students who are "likely to succeed." While this is certainly an unfavorable depiction of the state legislators, alone it does not present them as interfering with a social justice initiative. Elsewhere in this article, however, Sullivan highlights the influence that this legislation has had on student placement. By requiring multiple measures and creating "bottoms" for certain courses, Sullivan argues that this legislation (and, by proxy, the lawmakers who enacted it) have "in effect, clos[ed] the open door at Connecticut community colleges" (45-46). The social justice implications of this are clearer, as limiting access to community college education is likely to have a disproportionate impact on students from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Legislators as defenders of access. This positive view of legislative influence and agency is most often discussed in *Journal of Basic Writing* in relation to mission statements. One such example can be found in Fitzgerald's discussion:

> The legal guidelines governing the mission and much of what happens in the 108 California Community Colleges are delineated in Title V, part of the legal code of the state. That code explicitly mentions instruction in basic skills as one aspect of the mission of

community colleges. Since their mission is set by the legal mandate in Title V, the mission statements adopted by the colleges vary little from campus to campus. Moreover, because Title V requires California community colleges to provide basic skills for students and the Chancellor's Office mentions remedial education, English teachers at Chabot College, like those at the other California community colleges, accept the validity of offering Basic Writing. (5-6)

In this excerpt, Fitzgerald highlights the way that legislative efforts can exercise their agency to *support* rather than threaten a Basic Writing program. In particular, she points to the way that the legal mandate for community colleges to include remedial instruction as part of their mission has the effect of persuading faculty as well as upper administrators to "accept the validity of offering Basic Writing," as opposed to suggesting that it might threaten an invisible academic standard, as the selection from Huse, Wright, and Clark demonstrates above.

By combining both distant and close reading methods, a fuller picture of the disciplinary discourse about legislators is made visible. The close reading provides characterizations of legislators who have influenced Basic Writing described in the twenty-four articles in this corpus. At the same time, the quantitative data points demonstrate the extent to which each of these characterizations is present in the selections from *JBW* that were included in this study, serving to complicate the overall analysis by revealing the frequency with which legislators are characterized as working in direct opposition to Basic Writing professionals' social justice imperative. Such findings provide an opportunity to further interrogate the written discourse of our field, to examine the extent to which the polarity between Basic Writing instructors and legislators is reinforced with direct evidence or with authors' analysis of a given scenario. It is clear to anyone working in Basic Writing today that legislators and policy makers often exercise great authority in changing remedial programs that they do not fully understand, which of course makes them a natural enemy to Basic Writing. At the same time, however, because these bodies do wield so much potential power, one might wonder if these negative characterizations might limit the possibilities that future BW teacher-scholars might envision in working with state government. Whether we want it to be true or not, closer engagement with the legislative processes that result in dramatic changes to Basic Writing is likely necessary to the future of this profession, which suggests that the ways

that we construct our relationships to legislators and policy makers should be further theorized.

IMPLICATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDY

The above examples offer only a glimpse into a much larger data set, but they serve to highlight some patterns in identity construction that could be further theorized. Within *JBW*, there are clear patterns in the way that authors recount stories about facing the politics of remediation: state legislators and administrators are evil and greedy; institutions enact disembodied policies; the general public fails to understand the work of Basic Writing; and Basic Writing experts are stalwarts of social justice working against these difficult odds. For the purposes of publishing in this field, it is instructive to recognize where one's own work fits alongside these established tropes.

At the same time, the relationships between various stakeholders that are described can provide an invaluable resource for Basic Writing teacher-scholars who are new to the field and the institutional politics that influence Basic Writing instruction. Recognizing the wide range of stakeholders who have an influence on that work can better prepare graduate students to foster positive relationships with those who will have a vested interest in Basic Writing down the road. In the absence of a game like *Praxis and Allies* for Basic Writing, the narrative accounts published in *JBW* can provide something of a road-map for encountering similar situations in other local contexts.

With that, however, one might wonder the extent to which the construal of these situations as published in *JBW* may be sending the most effective messages to graduate students about how to foster meaningful growth and change in Basic Writing. Are administrators and legislators inherently disinterested in equitable education across the board? Are all instructors who are labeled "Basic Writing experts" necessarily aligning their work with a social justice mission? Will the general public always misunderstand the work of Basic Writing? It would be dangerously reductive to suggest that these are the *only* identity constructs of these stakeholders that are present in *JBW*, but the power of these images is prominent in the pages of the journal.

Analyzing this facet of our field's scholarly discourse has the potential to call into question these identity constructs and complicate conceptions of agency for those who might adopt the professional identity of a Basic Writing expert. Rather than billing ourselves as marginalized social justice warriors, perhaps there are more agentive identities to develop and adopt. With that, presenting a more nuanced image of the stakeholders who are

traditionally assumed to be "against" Basic Writing could open up opportunities to develop more productive relationships with those parties. While the strategic work of negotiating institutional politics is well-established in the field of Writing Program Administration, explicit attention to this strategic discourse is less common in Basic Writing. Given the popularity of the term "the politics of remediation" in Basic Writing scholarship, it seems wise to expand our conversations about this term to help graduate students to better understand the larger institutional structures within which they will likely work.

Often, readers are directed to what's important in a story through an author's subtle (and at times even unconscious) effort to call attention to some elements of the narrative while allowing others to fade into the background. This process is particularly complex when narratives appear in scholarly journals, as the very goal of such work is, in part, to reproduce a disciplinary culture. When it comes to the politics of remediation, Basic Writing scholars often reproduce stories where other stakeholders exercise agency that negatively impacts our courses and programs. This is not to say that such stories are not true; on the contrary, the extent to which the forces that push against Basic Writing succeed in their efforts to reduce or eliminate it is alarming. At the same time, the reproduction of such stories, true or not, reinforces an image of Basic Writing professionals as increasingly without agency beyond our classrooms, leaving little room to theorize what might be done with what agency we *do* have in the future. Rather than focusing graduate study on the politics of remediation on a cautionary tale, an exemplar victory, or a locally-focused scenario, graduate education in this area must move beyond close reading of a few scenarios and instead read across texts to locate patterns that might help us to strategically position our work for stakeholders we may have forgotten or opportunities we may not have considered. Uncovering the patterns across the stories that comprise our disciplinary history is a small step toward authoring stories that more consciously shape the "future tense" of Basic Writing studies that we might hope to realize.

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Teachers, Researchers, and Communities of Practice: Building a Corpus to Support Graduate Education

Thomas Peele, Vivian Stoll, and Andréa Stella

ABSTRACT: *The authors of this essay discuss the impact of corpus collection and analysis on the writing program at The City College of New York, CUNY, the digital literacies encouraged by the corpus collection process, and how corpus studies can be used to support genre awareness and build communities of practice in basic writing classrooms and among graduate students. New graduate student instructors collected the corpus of student essays and later used it in their classrooms to both introduce and reinforce what students already know about rhetorical moves and genre conventions. Since these corpus-based assignments were derived from our own student writers, they showed our graduate students what our undergraduate students already knew about academic writing and helped these first-year writers build upon that knowledge—the assignments showed them, visually, the kind and frequency of rhetorical moves of the argument essay in an academic community of practice. The corpus collection and analysis process provided new graduate student instructors with hands-on experience in one strand of composition research. As they began the process of learning to teach academic discourse to basic writers, English language learners, and other students of composition, they were also actively learning the discursive practices and analytical modes of composition researchers.*

KEYWORDS: *argument; basic writing; communities of practice; composition; corpus studies; discourse communities; graduate education; rhetorical genre studies*

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I can recall breaking down paragraphs and attempting to understand what made a paragraph a paragraph. I tried to understand what it was about the content in the first sentence that made it an introductory sentence, how it connected to the second sentence and the purpose of the content in the second sentence, how a line of reasoning was threaded throughout a paragraph and how it was concluded. I tried to understand how writing worked on a macro (meaning and content) and micro (punctuation and structure) level. Draft after draft, I would use a newly learned mechanism of writing.—Jamil Shakoor (Schnee and Shakoor 94)

No matter what we think of these rules, obey is the only option. Every community formed its own language. . . If we are in school, this community of practice, then we have to follow the[ir] rules, because that's how this community works. People who can't follow the rules will be left out of the community, no matter how intelligent they are.—Marian (Carter, "Redefining" 119)

The corpus collection and analysis that we describe in this article introduced co-authors Viv Stoll and Andréa Stella, two new graduate student instructors of composition at The City College of New York (CCNY), The City University of New York (CUNY), to the multiple ways in which computer technology could be engaged in the service of writing pedagogy, and how corpus analysis could be used as a pedagogical tool in the classroom. The above epigraphs, drawn from basic writing students at Kingsborough Community College, CUNY, and Texas A&M Commerce, respectively, illustrate our motivation: to support students in the complex process of understanding one set of typical rhetorical structures of academic writing. At the same time, Tom, as CCNY's Writing Program Administrator, wanted new graduate student instructors to be enrolled in the composition teaching practicum, immersed in the discursive practices of rhetoric-composition researchers at the beginning of their teaching careers. As they introduced their students, comprised of a mix of English language learners, basic writers, high school, honors, and mainstream composition students, to the discursive practices of academic writing, they were simultaneously joining the discourse com-

munity of rhetoric-composition researchers. At our institution, the teaching practicum generally aims to support new instructors as they experience the challenges and rewards of creating assignments, responding to essays, and assigning grades, but they rarely have the opportunity to engage in classroom-based research.

The writing program's eventual ability to develop a corpus is the result of a series of disconnected events. For three years, using the model of revision analysis described by Lester Faigley and Stephen Witte in "Analyzing Revision," Tom had worked with graduate students to code revisions in essays written by first-year composition students. They focused on the categories provided by Faigley and Witte: surface changes and meaning changes (402-405). This kind of analysis, while helping to illuminate for graduate student instructors the kinds of revision that their first-year students were likely to make, was also frustratingly narrow in scope. Similar to Faigley and Witte's study, the graduate students originally involved in this project coded about six essays each, and compared their results. While we could see the revisions made by these six undergraduate students in great detail, we couldn't reliably extrapolate any broader patterns from this narrow sample. Given that this work took place between 2012 and 2014, and that all of the essays were collected digitally, the hand-coding of a very limited set of essays also seemed anachronistic. Tom wondered if it wasn't possible to conduct a larger scale analysis of revision.

In 2015, three things happened that made this large-scale analysis of revision possible. First, Tom attended Duncan Buell and Chris Holcomb's presentation at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, "First-year Composition as Big-Data: Natural Language Processing and Portfolio Assessment," which described the large-scale, detailed study of revision that he wanted to conduct but for which he did not have a corpus of student essays. Then, in the summer of 2015, he received a call from the Provost's office. At the end of the fiscal year, unspent grant monies had been returned, and they were in search of ways to spend it in support of faculty development. With this money, Tom was able to pay thirty-five current and former graduate student composition instructors $500 each to collect the first- and second-drafts of four assignments. This faculty development effort created a 6,311,220 million-word corpus containing first- and second-drafts of 4,280 essays (approximately 2,140 first-drafts and 2,140 second-drafts). He collected the four required essays in the first semester of the composition sequence: a literacy narrative, an expository essay, an exploratory essay, and a research essay. The corpus analysis that we describe was based on 548 final

drafts (1,465,091 words) of the argument-research essay. From the outset, then, the corpus project had graduate student development at its center. In order to collect the essays, instructors had to learn to use the Assignment tool in the Blackboard (Bb) course management system (Peele, "Blackboard"). Later in this essay, Viv describes the impact this process had on her pedagogy.

After the essay collection process was complete, Tom was repeatedly frustrated by his inability to recruit and retain a computer scientist to undertake the revision analysis. Even though he had already secured IRB approval for a study of the corpus, for reasons having to do with his home institution's Byzantine structure for approving non-CUNY employees, he needed to find an internal, CUNY colleague with whom to collaborate. While a few expressed interest, none were able to commit to the project. The 2015 publication of Laura Aull's book length, corpus-driven study of student writing, *First-Year University Writing: A Corpus-Based Study with Implications for Pedagogy*, though, showed him how he could conduct an analysis of rhetorical moves by using simple, free technology—Laurence Anthony's concordance software, AntConc—in order to use the corpus in graduate teaching and for basic writing and composition pedagogy. As Andréa describes later in this essay, incorporating corpus analysis into her teaching impacted her first semester as an instructor of a disciplinary-specific course, Writing for Engineering. True, Tom hasn't yet been able to conduct the study of revision in student essays that he had planned, but the corpus has provided a database of student essays from CCNY students, the study of which offers ample support for discussions of patterns in student writing across all classes.

In this essay, we describe the basis of the corpus study, the impact that the collection and analysis process had on Viv and Andréa, and how the study of rhetorical moves in student writing helped shape the philosophy and structure of the writing program. This study of local corpora provided graduate student instructors a record of the rhetorical moves that their students were making in the same social context in which they were teaching, knowledge that would guide instruction. As composition pedagogy researchers, graduate students were simultaneously joining a community of practice while learning to teach the discursive conventions of academic communities of practice.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN CORPUS-DRIVEN BASIC WRITING AND COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY

We use Shannon Carter's description of communities of practice as a framing device for her concept of rhetorical dexterity to ground our discussion of corpus-driven basic writing and composition pedagogy. Our students were unlike Carter's in that they had not been labeled "not ready for college level literacy" as a result of state-mandated tests ("Redefining" 95). The City University of New York, of which City College is a part, does not rely on written entrance exams. However, City College is both a Hispanic and a minority-serving institution; the most current available data estimates that median parent income for our students is low, at $40,200 ("Economic"). Also CCNY students have diverse language backgrounds, and are likely to be first in their families to attend college, immigrants or from immigrant families ("City Facts"), and be less familiar with the expectations of academic writing than mainstream composition students. They also have diverse language backgrounds ("City Facts"). Although our students have not been marginalized in the same way that Carter's students have been, they share many of the demographic characteristics that could lead them to be labeled basic writers.

Before we begin our exploration of communities of practice, we want to emphasize that in our discussion of our study of the corpus, we focus exclusively on the argument essay only for reasons of time and space. We do not make any recommendations, explicit or implied, about the best content for basic writing courses. As our curriculum shows, we assign essays in a variety of genres. Space does not permit us to include discussions of more than one genre of essay. That genre—the loosely defined argument essay—provides us with a reference point for what Carter describes as a "familiar" community of practice ("Redefining" 99). In "Redefining Literacy as a Social Practice," Carter describes a pedagogical approach aimed at improving students' rhetorical dexterity, "that is, the ability to effectively read, understand, manipulate, and negotiate the cultural and linguistic codes of a new community of practice (the academy) based on a relatively accurate assessment of another, more familiar one" (99). In our context, we used the corpus as an example of a familiar community of practice. Admittedly, our use of loosely-defined argument essays is a far cry from the examples that Carter provides, which include practices familiar to her students, "like skateboarding, photography, basketball, *Halo 2*, and cheerleading" ("Redefining" 105). Carter notes that writing assignments can function "within the context of what we know about how literacy functions in the world beyond the artificial 'school' litera-

cies we often celebrate" (103). The specific assignment that Carter describes is, we imagine, significantly more complex and in many ways more satisfying in that it makes connections between non-academic and academic literacies. We contend, however, that the academic literacy represented by the argument essay is no less authentic than other literacies. Since we built our own corpus, these essays were literally written by our students; moreover, the form is ubiquitous in rhetoric-composition classes and, in variations, across the curriculum. Corpus analysis helps students to assess their own discursive practices in academic writing with a high degree of accuracy, and they can build upon that knowledge as they learn more about that genre in the college environment.

Aull's study, which examines various rhetorical moves that students make in response to a range of assignments, provides a useful model for the ways in which we might assess rhetorical dexterity. Based on a corpus of "19,433 essays written by FY students at two four-year institutions, as well as information about the 91-million word reference corpus of published academic writing from 1990-2013," Aull's multiple studies "suggest that students need more guidance about how academic writers use personal evidence as argumentative views (versus opinions) and also that there may be a connection between open-ended prompt questions and FY arguments that are generalized and personalized" (15). While Aull's study does not specifically illuminate our own, it does model multiple ways in which corpus studies might inform discussions of patterns in first-year writing with both graduate student instructors and with composition students.

As another model for our project, Zak Lancaster's study of rhetorical moves in student essays compares a narrow range of rhetorical moves in the same corpora that Aull used. By comparing the ways in which professional writers, advanced college students, and pre-college level high school students introduce objections to their claims (discussed in more detail below), Lancaster shows that writers in all three categories place a high value on interpersonal relationships. As Lancaster notes, writers "in all three groups preferred to acknowledge objections namelessly. . . They likewise preferred to interact with readers' views indirectly, without attributing propositions pointedly to the reader" (451). For example, instead of using the wording "some readers may challenge," student writers in particular are much more likely to use a formula such as "some would/may/might argue that" (451). The nameless objections ("some" instead of "readers") allow the writer to "project a reader-in-the-text with whom the writer can negotiate meanings without impinging on the reader's face. Since, that is, the alternative view is

left unattributed, the face-threatening-act (FTA) of purporting to know what the reader is thinking is mitigated" (448). Such information is potentially valuable to basic writing students as they acquire rhetorical dexterity as it shows how advanced academic writers make use of some of the rhetorical moves that are a common focus of instruction in basic writing classrooms—how to structure written arguments that engage multiple perspectives. The rhetorical information revealed by corpus analysis provides another kind of map for students in academic writing. Changes in digital technology make it possible for instructors to create a variety of corpora, including a corpus made up of their own students' essays, to produce a highly local map of these moves.

All our models echo the aims of rhetorical genre studies and writing across the curriculum pedagogy (Bawarshi and Reiff; Bazerman; Miller; Reiff and Bawarshi; Swales). Among other goals, rhetorical genre studies aims to demystify the elements of genre for students who have not been immersed in them while at the same time maintaining that genres are not fixed and hardened formulas but arise in social contexts and shift as culture shifts. Obvious examples of this are the text message, the social media post, and the comments section of digitally-delivered newspaper articles, none of which existed in their current form twenty years ago but all of which follow recognizable if malleable genre conventions and are seamlessly integrated into the lives of traditional-age college students in 2019. This aim, to introduce students to the elements of various genres as those genres are influenced by students' work, social, and academic lives, resonates strongly within basic writing studies, which has long understood the value of making explicit the conventions of academic writing and the importance of student subjectivity (Bartholmae; Bizzel; Delpit; Elbow; Peele and Antinori; Rose; Shaughnessy).

OUR CORPUS ANALYSIS PROJECT

As Viv and Andréa describe, the corpus collection and study during their graduate educations informed their teaching in multiple ways. It served to generate ideas about how to incorporate other digital practices and helped to demystify and isolate the typical rhetorical moves in academic arguments; the rhetorical moves that were mapped in our corpus analysis helped define, for instructors and students, the discursive practices of this academic community of practice. At the same time, including graduate students in a large-scale research project situated them within the community of practice of rhetoric and composition researchers. The corpus study showed how genre

conventions inform essays written by undergraduate writers and career academics; it demonstrated to them that all of our undergraduates—basic writers, mainstream composition students, and English language learners—are aware of and make use of identifiable rhetorical moves, as it provided a method for making clear to themselves and to their students some of the moves that are expected in argumentative essays.

Thus far, we have grounded the corpus collection and analysis project within basic writing and rhetorical genre studies; we now turn to three salient engagements with the process—collecting the data, analyzing the data, and more widely interpreting the data points—as well as to the specific impact that collection and analysis had on two new graduate student instructors: Viv and Andréa.

Collecting the Data: Competing and Collaborating in Expanded Spaces

In the fall of 2015, Viv was a master's degree student in the Language and Literacy program at City College, and it was her first time teaching composition as an adjunct instructor, so much of the protocol was new to her. Viv was extremely happy to find that new instructors would be paid to participate in a large-scale corpus collection project that included training on how to create a syllabus and assignments, incorporate the required textbook, as well as use Bb for posting assignments, communicating with students, and collecting their work. The collection process had a significant, positive impact on Viv. The requirement to use the Bb Assignment tool to collect the essays prompted her to develop multiple digital literacies, which affected how she archived, graded, and evaluated student essays. Because of the digital collection process, she had not only individual essays from individual students, but, conceptually, a body of digital essays, the study of which might reveal information that would be useful to the class overall. She was led to consider the ways in which her students' essays were not only texts, but specifically digital texts. If essays are mediated on a digital platform, how might she be able to make use of that platform's affordances?

Little did she anticipate that her participation in the corpus collection process would lead her to a significantly expanded sense of place. As she developed her digital processes, she broadened the technological and cultural base upon which her course rested. By using automated processes to archive student essays, she reproduced the archival processes of large-scale, publicly available databases such as YouTube, which automatically collects, organizes,

and makes its content available. Instead of resisting digital processes, Viv followed the logic of the database (Johnson-Eilola).

As a result of the emphasis on the digital collection process, by the time the fall semester began, Viv was prepared to run her class totally in the digital realm. All student writing for the class would be submitted digitally so that she could easily collect the drafts for submission to the corpus project. Because she was working fully in the digital domain, Viv could:

- preserve a clean copy of the student's original work
- type comments on the essay then "save as" to preserve her comments
- upload her responses to Bb for students to review
- submit unmarked first- and second-drafts of all essays to the corpus project

Viv developed a methodology for collecting and responding to students' work. She used the Assignment tool on Bb where students could upload their first drafts. She downloaded these as Microsoft Word documents, read them, and responded with in-text, marginal, and final comments. She would then "Save As" and upload her responses to each student. After considering Viv's comments and those of their peers, students would revise their essays, then upload the final drafts to a new Bb Assignment link. From there, Viv would access and download them for final evaluation and grading. She sent both sets of the essays to the corpus project archive as she received them from the students.

To compare students' first and final drafts, Viv used the "track changes/ compare documents" function in Microsoft Word. This digital tool allowed her to combine a student's first and final drafts into one document in order to easily view every change made from simple word choice to major content revisions. Being able to compare the two drafts in this way helped Viv quickly determine what kind of revisions were made and if they were substantive and meaningful—the exact criteria she understood to be most relevant for the corpus project.

Viv was inspired by what she saw as a significant correlation between the larger, program-wide goals of the corpus project and her goals as a teacher. The corpus project might illuminate the global structure of writing classes at City College, supporting the development and evaluation of writing program pedagogies and curricula. As an active composition pedagogy researcher, Viv was brought directly into that community of practice along

with the other thirty-four paid researchers. The corpus collection process directly influenced her to become more finely attuned to ways of looking at and evaluating students' writing using digital technologies. For basic writers specifically, this kind of attention—a detailed map of the changes that they have made in response to instructor and peer review—demonstrated the seriousness with which instructors read and respond to students' work and also situates that work in the social context of peer and instructor review.

By thoroughly analyzing what they had changed, added, or omitted between drafts, Viv felt that she was ostensibly viewing maps of her students' minds, and by interpreting these maps, she gained crucial information about these students, individually and as a class. She was also able to present her findings across the corpus of their texts in visual form or patterns. As every instructor does, Viv made determinations about learner types, language levels, English language skills, and familiarity with U.S. academic culture and writing standards. These insights helped her to adjust her teaching and communication practices to better meet individual students' needs and those of the class as a whole, thus addressing her part of the collective goal of understanding the techniques and processes that students employ in their writing and improve how writing is taught.

In retrospect, Viv notes that being conscious of her class's contribution to this larger endeavor motivated her in a dialectical combination of competition and cooperation. Competitively, she experienced a drive to ensure that the contributions from her students were equally as significant and meaningful as those from other classes, so she pushed harder for substantive results than she might have otherwise. Simultaneously, she was inspired by the collaborative nature of the project and felt supported as a member of a larger cohort of instructors who were also immersed, many for the first time, in teaching groups of students from a wide range of backgrounds. As an active member of this cohort of researchers, the isolation that Viv might have felt as a new instructor was mitigated. In this way, her experience mirrored the experience of basic writing students, who often feel isolated in unfamiliar and intimidating new environments. Viv was empowered through her membership in a group that was potentially leading toward transformative change. The culmination of her experiences elicited a powerful, visceral sense that she was working in a space that extended far beyond the confines of her own classroom.

Analyzing the Data: Troubling They Say / I Say

The data collection process took place in the fall semester of 2015, and Tom prepared the data for analysis in the summer of 2016. That summer and fall, he conducted preliminary analyses of the data for presentation at the 2017 Conference on College Composition and Communication (Peele, "Cultivating"). He first presented the corpus analysis to students in a graduate composition pedagogy class in spring of 2017, a move he hoped would reduce their isolation—the long hours that new instructors spend alone, grading essays, without very much in the way of an external reference point—and provide them with a sense of belonging to a larger, collective body of instructors who were addressing the same issues.

Many of the students in that class, including Andréa, were new composition instructors. He used a part of the corpus—the argument-based research essays—to show these students how the rhetorical moves that CCNY students make compare to students in other colleges and to professional writers, to introduce graduate student instructors to corpus analysis, and to persuade instructors to focus on the role of digitally-mediated collection and transmission of student writing in a contemporary academic setting. Using the CCNY corpus, Tom initially asked graduate students to conduct a form-function analysis (described below) on a few of the argument essays. To conduct this analysis, he provided the graduate students with a list of sentences that had been drawn from the argument-based research essays. Most of the graduate students resisted the idea of student writing as data. They feared that by looking at a massive collection of essays, we were stripping away each author's individual voice—the very aspect of the essay that gave it value. As they discovered, however, and as Andréa describes in the next section, corpus analysis relies heavily on human interpretation.

To frame in-class activity and discussion, we replicated a part of Lancaster's study examining the rhetorical moves drawn from Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's text, *They Say/I Say (TSIS)*. Lancaster isolates three rhetorical moves that appear in an argument essay—the introduction of an *objection* to the argument that the student is making (that is, the introduction of a point of view that more or less opposes the argument that the student is making), *concessions* to the objections (the moves that writers make to admit that their opposition might have a point), and *counter* wordings (the moves that writers make to disagree with objections to their arguments). Examples of rhetorical moves for introducing objections include "some readers might object that," or "it could be argued that." Using Anthony's

concordance tool to identify these wordings, we created a concordance of all of the occurrences of the search terms. The tool allows the researcher to click between the concordance and the sentence in the context of the whole essay, so instructors were able to judge how the search terms were being used. The software could create, for example, a list of every sentence in which the word "argued" appeared, and then, by clicking to the full essay, help the reader see if the wordings were functioning as objections to the writer's argument.

This in-class form-function activity directed graduate students to look at a particular rhetorical move to decide whether or not the students had used the form *it could be argued that* as a means of *introducing an objection* or for some other reason, such as emphasizing their own argument. Graduate students were able to see the patterns that emerge in students' texts across the writing program and to experience the difficulties of coding texts. In class, we looked both at the wordings provided by Graff and Birkenstein and alternative wordings for introducing objections, making concessions, and offering counter arguments which Lancaster presents in his study. We found that CCNY students, just like the students and professional, academic writers in Lancaster's study, were much more likely to use nameless rather than named objections (for detailed results of the study, see Peele, "Is"). Our study revealed the same general patterns that Lancaster discovered, and new graduate student instructors in the graduate seminar, and their students, developed a clearer understanding of the rhetorical moves that students might imitate as they worked toward rhetorical dexterity in academic contexts.

The introduction of this analysis of a local corpus of student writing also illuminated for graduate students how we interpret academic essays. We noted that we read specific moves differently, debating whether or not students had in fact, for example, introduced an objection to an argument or instead expanded their original idea. As Andréa describes in the next section, it was harder for us to agree on how the wordings were functioning than we had anticipated. As with Viv's experience, Andréa's participation in a collaborative grading process helped her to feel both that she belonged at the institution, as a member of the community, and that she was receiving specialized training for working with students with a wide range of writing proficiencies. Because she was conducting a very close reading of specific moves in hundreds of essays, she was able to fairly quickly develop a list of the multiple ways that students might struggle with this fundamental yet complex set of rhetorical moves—an experience that she would not have had by reading just one class set of essays during her first semester teaching the course.
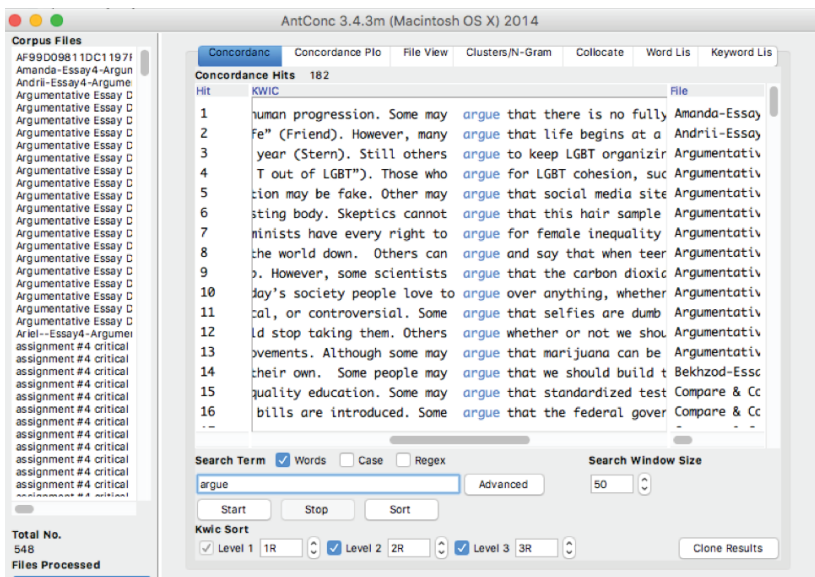
Figure 1. AntConc-generated Concordance of "Argue"

As members of this community, we also wondered how much of a difference it made that the linguistic formulas in *TSIS* were not representative of the formulas that writers generally use. Should the aim be to use *TSIS* heuristically, as Don Kraemer has recently argued in the pages of *JBW*? To what extent were instructors teaching their own linguistic preferences under the guise of correct usage, and how did the teaching of formulaic genres mesh with other aims of the composition classroom? We don't offer any answers to these questions here, but the use of our corpus and the close examination of *TSIS* proved generative of thoughtful discussions concerning the aims of composition and how best to reach them. Corpus-driven genre studies in this class introduced the rhetorical-move, genre structure concept that Graff and Birkenstein describe in their book, gave graduate students instructors an opportunity to see how CCNY students conform to patterns of rhetorical practice that are evident in other colleges and in professional, academic writing, and to trouble the concept that many of us develop in isolation: that *our* reading of a student essay is, in some essential way, the only possible reading.

Interpreting Rhetorical Moves Beyond Data Points

Andréa's first semester teaching first-year composition, in the fall of 2016, was also during her final year of graduate school at City College for her MFA in Creative Writing; and in spring of 2017, she also enrolled in our graduate course, Composition Pedagogies and Rhetorical Theories, where Tom introduced the class to corpus analysis. Having previously worked as a qualitative researcher, Andréa did not have the same fears as her graduate peers about the potentially dehumanizing effect of turning student essays into data and of stripping away human voice in that process; Andréa was intrigued by the possibility of capturing students' rhetorical moves through a large scale analysis. During the Composition Pedagogies class, Tom hired Andréa as a research assistant, and Viv, Tom, and Andréa began to prepare for a corpus analysis presentation at the 2017 Computers and Writing conference. Building on the in-class activity described above, they analyzed the corpus to see how CCNY student essays would compare to Lancaster's results.

For their particular data set, Tom and Andréa analyzed 548 argument-based research essays to find the rhetorical moves students were using to *entertain an objection*. To conduct the study, they used the search terms that Lancaster provides in his study to create concordances (451, 453, 455). For example, they created a concordance of the word "argue," then coded the sentences according to how the word was used in the sentence. If the student attributed an objection to her own claim to a recognizable person or group (i.e., "opponents to a ban on tobacco argue" or "professors argue") they assigned a "1" to this use. If the student introduced an objection but did not name a specific person or group (i.e. "others argue" or "some argue") they assigned a "2." They did not code uses of "argue" that did not introduce an objection.

If part of the concern surrounding corpus data analysis is the potentially dehumanizing effect of turning student essays into data points, Tom and Andréa can confidently assert that, after scoring all 548 student argument essays, the coding of rhetorical moves in student essays depends heavily on human interpretation. Before starting their initial round of coding, Tom provided Andréa with background on the process and expectations for scoring the essays using Lancaster's research as the model. Andréa had previously encountered coding but never within the context of linguistic analysis. Andréa stepped into the role of mentee in these preliminary discussions, which gave her space to interrogate the required assignments in tandem with the coding process. For the coding itself, the first person who scored

the essays hid the column of scores in the spreadsheet; the other researcher then scored the student essays while remaining unaware of the first scores.

Once they were both finished, they did the big reveal to see where they agreed and disagreed. After the first round of coding, they were in agreement only about seventy percent of the time. The essays on which they disagreed entertained objections in a variety of ways they did not expect. This brought up several questions about how to understand the student's intent, the importance of placement of the rhetorical move within the context of the essay, and the larger question of how to structure assignments. The following sample from a student's essay shows one kind of discussion that Tom and Andréa had about coding rhetorical moves.

> However, the other party believes that enforcing gun control can be harmful because they believe that this would violate the Second Amendment and in addition, they argue that without their guns in their possession, they feel unsafe and not being able to protect themselves.

On the one hand, since "argue" is directly preceded by "they," it should be coded 2, since a specific entity is not identified in this particular construction. On the other hand, the referent for "they" could easily be read as either "the other party," which counts as an unnamed group, or it could be read as a group who "believes that enforcing gun control can be harmful," which earns it the code of 1. In a similar vein, how far back into the essay should the coders go to find the referent for a pronoun that occurs just before the search term? In some cases, students named an objector only once, early in the essay, pages before the use of the pronoun referent. Similarly, Tom and Andréa noted several instances in which the student used this language not as a means to introduce a concession but rather as a way to support their own argument. They also noted the use of this form in an essay that never actually made an argument (even though one was intended), but instead offered a series of perspectives. Yes, the student used the rhetorical moves, but did the form follow the function?

Working with the CCNY corpus also gave Andréa exposure to a large set of student essays, providing her with insight into what CCNY students are being asked to do in the classroom and how they are composing texts. While working on the corpus analysis, Andréa was teaching a section of Writing for Engineering. She wanted to give her students a macro understanding of why they were being asked to write different texts in specific ways. Andréa quickly

harnessed the engineering students' penchant for data to her advantage by showing them the corpus study as a new entry point for understanding essay writing and genre analysis.

After a meeting with Tom, Andréa used the classroom projector to show the rapt engineers what the corpus of essays looked like as data. Andréa explained the rhetorical moves that were occurring in a few of the sentences that she and Tom disagreed on. By using this kind of example, which pinpointed the occasional opacity found in student writing, the engineering students were able to clearly see the gap between what a reader confronts and what students sometimes assume is being understood. The presentation was followed by a low-stakes, small group discussion in which the students shared different sentences of their own with each other and compared them to the genre expectation being asked of them. Students were able to see, for example, in their research proposals, that writers typically follow a range of rhetorical moves to introduce objections. The visual presentation allowed students to see how what they were doing fit into the overall pattern of what other students were doing and what the expectations were, and it had the possibility to lead to discussions about the values represented by these rhetorical moves. As Amy Devitt writes, "critical genre awareness. . . can help students maintain a critical stance and their own agency in the face of disciplinary discourses, academic writing, and other realms of literacy" (337). At the same time, she notes that unlike "scholars merely studying genre, students wishing to participate in the academy or discipline or profession cannot simply disengage but must follow that distancing with enlightened participation" (338). Visual corpus analysis, then, opened the space for students both to see, literally, the extent to which they were conforming to genre expectations, and to evaluate, in a preliminary fashion, their own roles in reproducing discursive structures.

As a result of the in-class corpus analysis, Andréa collaborated with the students to revise assignments so that they better reflected students' new understanding of genre and rhetorical moves. To the delight of both Andréa and the engineers, the updated assignments were built from evidence-based writing analysis and felt more grounded in a language that they all could understand. The Lab Report and Technical Report essays were previously modeled after the forms in the professional field, focusing on the macro structure of each genre. The revised assignments focused on both the genre construct of the overall essay as well as points where the students could test rhetorical moves.

CURRICULAR CHANGE IN THE WRITING PROGRAM: HEIGHTENED RHETORICAL GENRE AWARENESS AND TRANSFER

At the end of the corpus collection and analysis, Tom and Andréa distributed an evidence-based, rhetorical moves assignment at a faculty development training. In the assignment, they pointed out, among other things, that CCNY students very often used "some/ many/ one might/ could/ may object/ disagree/ argue that. . ." to introduce an objection, but almost never used "At first glance," "On the surface," "It might seem that," or "It could be argued that." To make a concession, students often used "of course." In the assignment sheet, we suggested that they consider other options, such as "Although I," "While I," "Yes," "It is true," "While it is true," "Clearly," "Obviously," or "Certainly" (Peele, "Is").

This low-stakes writing assignment also asks students to use the library's *Opposing Viewpoints in Context* database to find brief articles that offer opposite viewpoints on one issue and to identify the rhetorical moves that the authors make. The assignment mirrors *TSIS*'s template technique and, we hope, helps students make connections between their use of genre conventions in their own writing and how those same moves are used by professional writers. Using the corpus as a frame of reference, and comparing rhetorical moves across corpora, marked a shift in how our program discusses student writing. The corpus analysis and faculty development around it has begun to move us away from the assignment sequence that had been in place—a literacy narrative, an expository essay, an exploratory essay, and a research essay—toward a curriculum that asks students to study genre explicitly in order to support their transfer of writing knowledge from composition to other classes. The new curricular model is based both on corpus analysis, which is now a part of teaching practicum for new, graduate student instructors of composition, and on the study of transfer presented by Kathleen Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak.

WRITING AND LEARNING TO TEACH IN SOCIAL CONTEXTS

As we have noted, some strands of basic writing and rhetorical genre studies in composition aim to help students situate their own literacy practices within broader social contexts. The more students are able to see how their literate lives fit within a continuum of literate practices, the more equipped they will be to draw on those practices as they begin the process of learning how to write academic essays in college. As Carter notes in her

description of the basic writing program that she developed at Texas A&M Commerce,

> [R]hetorical dexterity attempts to develop in writers the ability to negotiate the school literacies celebrated in the current social order in ways that are as ethical and meta-aware as possible. We begin this process by articulating the ways in which what they already know well may help them learn what is, as of yet, less familiar to them. (*The Way Literacy Lives* 18)

Building connections between what is known and what is new helps students value their literacy practices and also creates a foundation for thinking of those practices as situated within social contexts.

Our corpus study situates writing within the local context of City College first-year students. By mapping the rhetorical moves that students make in their argument-based essays, we were able to help students compare their own and their peers' rhetorical moves to the moves made by professional writers. Some scholars might argue that corpus studies do not, as Lynne Flowerdew describes these critiques in her study of the variation of cultural expression within academic genres, "consider the socio-cultural context as they deal with decontextualized corpus data" (321). Flowerdew goes on to say, however, that as "genre analysts are keen to emphasize, 'move structures' should not be seen as a rigid set of labels for coding text but instead should accept variations of the prototypical move structure patterning for a genre" (326).

Far from studying genre as a set of rigid guidelines, Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff note in their resource guide to genre studies that by "arguing for genre as a centerpiece of literacy teaching, . . . genre scholars have debated the ways genre can be used to help students gain access to and select more effectively from the system of choices available to language users for the realization of meaning in specific contexts" (37). Their aims, in other words, are to make clear the available choices and to demystify the conventions of the genre, goals that genre theorists share with many basic writing instructors. In our study of rhetorical moves, our aim, as with portfolio assessment, was to take a closer, program-wide look at what students were doing, and to fold that knowledge back into the curriculum, faculty development, and pedagogy.

Multiple genre studies theorists have made the argument for the explicit teaching of genre as a means of demystifying the expectations for second language learners; the same argument applies to basic writing stu-

dents and to their instructors. As Ken Hyland notes in his explanation of genre pedagogy, "genre is a socially informed theory of language offering an authoritative pedagogy grounded in research on texts and contexts, strongly committed to empowering students to participate effectively in target situations" ("Genre-Based" 27). The study of rhetorical moves in corpora situates literacy within a social practice. In classroom corpus study activities, both undergraduate and graduate students look at how their peers, or their students, make use of, in our case, the rhetorical moves that writers use to introduce objections, to make concessions, and to offer counter arguments. In comparing these practices to the moves made in peer-reviewed publications, students and instructors situate their own literate practices within a broader social setting. While the most immediate social setting is academic, variations of the claim/ objection/ concession/ counter argument structure that we look at in this study are recognizable across a wide range of public-facing genres, including long-form journalism, op-eds, advocacy articles in print and online magazines, and arguments for and against institutional policy changes in a wide variety of organizations including universities, schools, and other non-profits, among other contexts.

Our aim was to make students aware of the rhetorical moves associated with conventional academic genres so that they are more familiar with the genre conventions of academic writing and to make explicit connections between the genres we study in the classroom and the genres that exist, in Mary Soliday's words, "in the wild." Teaching genre is a way of making the conventions explicit for basic writers and other students of composition, but this needs to be coupled with an awareness that genres shift over time and are responsive to social situations. There are, certainly, values that these genres express, and discussions of these values fit well within a broader focus on the shifting and contingent nature of genres. Basic writers, who are likely to be less familiar with conventional rhetorical moves than other students, might, like English language learners, leave our classes with a much better sense of academic genre expectations as well as an awareness of the ways in which genres reproduce social relations. Explicit instruction of genre conventions is similar to providing students with model essays or with grading rubrics, both of which are intended to make the instructor's expectations as transparent as possible. Overt instruction in genre expectations—asking students to find examples of a particular genre, making connections with them between various genre types, and looking at the same message written for different audiences—extends this transparency so that students are in

a better position to assess, evaluate, imitate, and reject genre conventions and the values they express.

In addition, corpus analysis for rhetorical moves offers new instructors of composition at every level methods for discovering, studying, and making use of the rhetorical moves that their students will need as they pursue their educations. Much current scholarship highlights the value of genre studies and demonstrates some of the conventions of those genres (Adler-Kassner; Hart-Davidson). For new graduate student instructors, it introduces them to a community of practice, which helps them learn more quickly about the ways in which students struggle with a particular form. And, as Lancaster shows, it offers a way to illuminate the values that are embedded in the genre—in this case, an emphasis on the importance of interpersonal relations in the academic argument, an emphasis that is largely overlooked in our field's discussion of argument. The corpus collection encouraged instructors to be more digitally active and to make connections, for students, between digitally driven, non-academic writing and academic writing. The explicit study of genre helps demystify the rhetorical moves that students will need to make in academic writing, but it doesn't do so in a socio-cultural vacuum. Instead, if they build their own corpus, corpus analysis offers instructors and students an opportunity to examine their essays in a highly local context.

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Forming Adult Educators: The CCNY MA in Language and Literacy

Barbara Gleason with Anita Caref, James Dunn, Erick Martinez, Lynn Reid, and Maria Vint

ABSTRACT: This essay provides a profile of an interdisciplinary master's program whose curriculum supports current and future adult educators seeking employment opportunities in higher education, adult literacy education, adult English language instruction, writing centers, and secondary education. A faculty administrator and five former graduate students collectively present an overview of the master's program while also providing experience-based narratives on program participation. Curricula for two graduate courses—a basic writing graduate course and a course focused on teaching adult writers--are profiled and then commented on by former students who reflect on the roles these courses played in their educational lives and professional futures.

KEYWORDS: adult learning; adult literacy education; basic writing; college composition; English language learners; first-year writing; graduate education

> In a profession in which almost every professor of note has published a textbook. . . [Mina Shaughnessy] never did; her writings. . . were always addressed to teachers and administrators. She chose this audience because of her conviction that educators were the ones to be educated.
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> —Robert Lyons, "Mina Shaughnessy," 1985

In the wake of the City University of New York's widely publicized effort to democratize higher education in the early 1970s, The City College of New York (CCNY) English Department enrolled thousands of "Open Admissions students," developed a sequence of three basic writing courses, hired numerous basic writing instructors, and created a highly innovative writing center. An additional, though lesser known, development was a newly established graduate program designed to offer professional support for college

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teachers of remedial, first-year, and advanced writing courses as well as for secondary and elementary education teachers. This essay focuses on that graduate program's evolution and its current goal of preparing individuals for careers in fields of adult literacy education, college writing and reading, English language learning, writing centers, and secondary education. Curricula for two teaching-focused graduate courses are described, together with reflective commentaries on course participation and professional outcomes by former graduate students. In presenting this overview, we aim to show how one interdisciplinary graduate program with a social justice orientation can lead to multiple career pathways and provide meaningful employment opportunities for MA graduates.

Antecedents: 1975–2003

Begun in 1974-1975 as an MA in Teaching College English, the CCNY English Department's teaching-focused master's program is an important legacy of pioneering work in basic writing teaching and program development that flourished between 1970 and 1975 and remained active for years to come, despite a city-wide financial crisis that compromised CUNY college budgets. Mina Shaughnessy and many of her colleagues, not just at The City College of New York but all across CUNY, paved the way for developing innovative forms of graduate education for college writing instructors. Two years before the new MA in Teaching College English was established, Shaughnessy taught a special topics graduate course, ENGL 1750 The Teaching of Col-

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lege Composition. With four hours of weekly class attendance, substantial reading assignments, and required class observations, ENGL 1750 blended a practicum with a seminar. Among the many assigned authors were Gary Tate and Edward Corbett (*Teaching Freshman Composition*), Albert Kitzhaber (*Themes, Therapy and Composition*), K. Patricia Cross (*Beyond the Open Door: New Students to Higher Education*), and Francis Christensen (*Notes toward a New Rhetoric*). Guest speakers included Janet Emig, Kenneth Bruffee, Sarah D'Eloia, Pat Laurence, Ross Alexander, Louise Roberts, and Donna Morgan. Within two years, ENGL 1750 had evolved into two separate courses that were required for the new MA in Teaching College English: ENGL 1750 Introduction to the Teaching of Basic Writing and Literature and ENGL 1751 Supervised Team Teaching.

Because Shaughnessy was appointed Dean of Instructional Resources in 1975, she was not available to participate in the graduate program after it was established in AY 1974-1975. And although many other dedicated and talented CUNY basic writing teachers may not have taught graduate courses, their experimental teaching, textbooks, research and revolutionary thinking about higher education's goals and possibilities tilled the soil for various forms of graduate education that lay ahead.

The English Department's teaching-focused MA is also the legacy of Marilyn Sternglass, who was hired in 1985 to provide leadership for the graduate program. During her first semester at CCNY, Sternglass proposed renaming the program MA in Language and Literacy in order to spotlight two conceptual fields (language and literacy) needed by teachers following multiple career pathways. The program's title change aimed to emphasize *a conceptual foundation for a curriculum that would allow graduate students to pursue different professional pathways rather than one specific career.*

In fall 1985, Sternglass joined forces with CCNY education professor Cynthia O'Nore to develop two closely aligned master's programs, the School of Education MA in English Education with a Specialization in Language and Literacy, and the English Department MA in English with a Specialization in Language and Literacy—an alliance that would last well into the 1990s. Sternglass and O'Nore presented *one document with course distributions for two distinct but closely aligned programs* for discussion in the November 1985 English Department meeting. The proposal included course distributions for (1) an MA in English with a Specialization in Language and Literacy and an optional TESOL concentration and (2) an MA in English Education with a Specialization in Language and Literacy (Sternglass, *Proposal*; O'Nore, *Proposal*). The proposed master's programs were unanimously approved by a

vote of the English Department faculty (*English Department Meeting Minutes,* November 21, 1985). The School of Education MA program and the English Department MA program offered a shared curricula that provided all graduate students with *a deep bench of faculty* and *a wide array of course options* from both the English Department and the School of Education.

For the English Department MA in Language and Literacy, Sternglass proposed that the MA's original requirement of 39 credits be reduced to 33 credits and that every student satisfy a foreign language requirement in order to bring the MA in Language and Literacy in line with two other English Department master's programs, an MA in English (Literature) and an MA in Creative Writing. And in a major departure from the 1975 MA in Teaching College English curriculum (which required 18 credits in literature or humanities), the newly proposed MA in Language and Literacy required no literature credits; instead, students were offered the opportunity to enroll in literature courses for elective credits. Sternglass's November 1985 proposal for the new MA in English with Specialization in Language and Literacy describes a curriculum with four 3-credit courses in the areas of language, reading, writing, and cognition; nine 3-credit language courses; nine 3-credit elective courses; and a project in lieu of a thesis (3 credits) (Sternglass, *Proposal).*

The proposal approved by English faculty in November 1985 was slightly revised before an official course distribution appeared in CCNY graduate bulletins; a required 3-credit thesis replaced the 3-credit project. The resulting curriculum is described in an undated standard letter that Sternglass routinely sent to prospective graduate students (Sternglass, Letter) (Figure 1). A similar letter was sent to prospective students by MA Director Fred Reynolds between 1995 and 2000 (Reynolds, Letter).

The courses are presented and classified somewhat differently in official CCNY graduate bulletins but remain a close match to the curriculum described in Sternglass's proposal and her letter. The earliest relevant graduate bulletin available in the CCNY Cohen Library Archives Department is the bulletin for 1991-1993. From 1991 until 2000, the MA curriculum described in graduate bulletins remained stable (Figure 2).

Courses focused on teaching English language learners were available but not required unless a student opted for a TESOL concentration. For students who chose the TESOL concentration, a 3-credit TESOL Methods course and one additional 3-credit language course replaced the six elective credits available for all other students. Jerome (Jerry) Farnett chose a TESOL concentration for his graduate course work in the MA in Language and Literacy between 1998 and 2000. His course selections are listed in Figure 3.

Curriculum Summary MA in English with a Specialization in Language and Literacy MA Director Marilyn Sternglass		
Required Core Courses		**12 Credits**
Language	ENGL 1760 Introduction to Language Study	3 Credits
Reading	EDEL 72718 Reading from a Psycholinguistic Perspective or EDSC 72712 Reading and Writing Instruction in Secondary Schools	3 Credits
Writing	ENGL 1750 Writing: Theory and Practice	3 Credits
Cognition	EDFN 70702 Psychology of Learning and Teaching or Psychology U738 Cognitive Psychology or EDSC 75770 Language and Learning	3 Credits
Language Area Courses		**9 Credits**
Elective Credits		**9 Credits**
Thesis		**3 Credits**

Figure 1. Summary of MA in Language and Literacy curriculum as described in a standard letter sent to prospective graduate students by Marilyn Sternglass from late 1980s until 1995.

Jerry's course selections provide an excellent illustration of how the Language and Literacy MA combined courses in applied linguistics, TESOL, composition, and literacy. Not long after earning his MA, Jerry was appointed Evening Program Coordinator at Onondaga Community College, a position that he still holds today.

While the MA in Language and Literacy was gaining steam under Sternglass's leadership in the late 1980s, a newly established CCNY English as a Second Language Department offered courses for a growing student population of multilingual students who had begun entering the college in

MA in Language and Literacy Curriculum
Summary of Course Requirements
The City College of New York
Liberal Arts Graduate Bulletin 1991-1993

A minimum of 33 graduate credits with the following distribution:

Required Core Courses Intro to Teaching Basic Writing and Literature (3 credits) Supervised Team Teaching (3 credits) Intro to Language Studies (3 credits) Thesis Research (3 credits)	**12 Credits**
Education Courses Course options included reading, writing, teaching and learning psychological development, and language and learning.	**6 Credits**
Language Courses	**9 Credits**
Other Electives	**6 Credits**

Figure 2. Summary of courses listed for the MA in Language and Literacy appearing in the CCNY Graduate Bulletin for 1991–1993 (pages 54 and 55).

greater numbers as a result of CUNY's 1970 Open Admissions policy. Undergraduate English language learners could enroll in spoken English classes and also in academic reading and writing courses that substituted for the English Department's Basic Writing 1 and Basic Writing 2 courses. Four ESL Department faculty contributed substantially to the English Department MA in Language and Literacy as course instructors and thesis mentors: Nancy Lay, Susan Weil, Elizabeth Rorschach, and Adele MacGowan-Gilhooly.

Between 1986 and 1995, the MA in Language and Literacy curriculum continuously evolved and the program gained a stronger foothold as more students enrolled in courses. One distinguishing feature of the newly designed MA was an interdisciplinary curriculum that combined composition and rhetoric, literacy studies, and TESOL. A second important aspect of the program was the MA's alliance with a new and fast-growing ESL department: full-time faculty specializing in TESOL regularly taught graduate courses for the English Department's MA in Language and Literacy. And a third distinctive feature was the institutionalized linking of a School of Education MA in

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Example of a Graduate Student's Courses for English Department MA in Language & Literacy with TESOL Concentration

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- ENGL B5000 Introduction to Teaching Writing and Literature (3 credits)
- ENGL B5500 TESOL Methods (3 credits)
- ENGL B6100 Sociolinguistics (3 credits)
- EDUC 70001 Language and Learning (3 credits)
- ENGL B5400 TESOL Materials and Testing (3 credits)
- ENGL B6400 Theories and Models of Literacy (3 credits)
- ENGL B8400 Writing Research (3 credits)
- ENGL B5100 Supervised Team Teaching (3 credits)
- ENGL B5300 Examining Your Own Reading and Writing Processes (3 credits)
- ENGL B5200 Thesis (3 credits)
- ENGL B8003 Independent Study (3 credits)
- ENGL B8001 Independent Study (1 credit)

Figure 3. Courses listed on Jerome Farnett's CCNY graduate transcript (1998-2000) for completion of the English Department MA in Language and Literacy.

English Education with a Specialization in Language and Literacy and the Humanities Division's MA in English with a Specialization in Language and Literacy. Graduate students registered in both programs enrolled in so many courses together that they often became well acquainted with each other and with faculty teaching courses for both master's programs.

During her ten years at CCNY, Sternglass very effectively strengthened the MA in Language and Literacy by contributing to the hiring of new faculty specializing in TESOL and in composition studies. In the late 1980s, Sternglass participated in hiring new full-time TESOL faculty and during the early 1990s, Sternglass participated in hiring four new composition faculty who all taught courses for the MA in Language and Literacy: Barbara Gleason, Mary Soliday, Patricia Radecki, and Fred Reynolds. During these years, Sternglass also developed the MA curriculum by offering pilot courses, officially proposing new courses, and updating existing course titles. For example, ENGL 1760 English Syntax became Introduction to Language Studies, and ENGL 1750 Introduction to Teaching Basic Writing and Literature became Writing Theory and Practice. Among the new courses added were *Theories*

and Models of Literacy, *Contrastive Written Language*, *TESOL Methods*, *TESOL Materials and Testing,* and *Examining Your Own Reading and Writing Processes*. And from 1985 to 2000, every registered English Department MA student wrote a 3-credit thesis. The variety of topics chosen by students can be seen in the following examples of thesis titles:

- A Project of English Writing Program for Chinese College Students
- Grammar: Yes or No?
- A Case Study: Learning Strategies for the Self-Empowerment of Student Writers
- The Rhetoric of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Educational Implications for Composition Pedagogy
- The Queens English: The Forms and Functions of Gaylect
- A Case Study of a Basic Writer
- Holding the Book: A Literacy Narrative

As thesis writers, graduate students pursued topics that reflected their interdisciplinary course work and their own particular interests.

By offering a curriculum that attracted teachers of adult literacy, adult English language learning, secondary education, and college English, the new Language and Literacy MA was highly unusual in 1985 and that remains true today. Composition and rhetoric master's degrees and TESOL master's degrees tend to be distinct programs with little overlap. And in the 1980s as well as the 1990s, very few adult education master's programs even existed. That is no longer true today: adult education-focused master's programs are now abundantly available. For example, an innovative, adult-oriented public college developed initially for working adult undergraduates, Empire State College, SUNY, has established an entirely online MA in Adult Learning, "designed for students who work with adults in various settings" ("Master of Arts in Adult Learning"). Occasionally, and often for scheduling reasons, a graduate student will enroll in a graduate course offered by Empire State College's MA in Adult Learning and then transfer the credits to City College for fulfillment of the MA in Language and Literacy degree requirements.

When I began teaching CCNY graduate courses in the early 1990s, I made it a point to talk with numerous MA in Language and Literacy graduate students in order to learn about their educational histories, professional experiences and goals, and current interests. The graduate student who made the most lasting and meaningful impression on me was Anita Caref. Anita was searching for a master's degree that would support her growing

professional involvement in teaching adult literacy in New York City. Anita possessed a very clearly defined professional goal: she planned to devote her entire professional life to educating adults who enrolled in "adult literacy education." From Anita, I learned that "adult literacy education" included Adult Basic Education (ABE), adult English language instruction, preparing adult learners for GED test-taking, and workplace literacy education for adults. Anita also informed me that in New York City adult literacy education was (and still is) primarily offered by five categories of providers: educational institutions (high schools and colleges), public libraries, unions, community-based organizations, and prisons. My crash course in adult literacy education included a visit to the Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Education Program, which Anita administered in the mid-1990s. Meeting students and their teachers while also observing the program's physical space with desks, offices, classrooms, and informational flyers posted on doors and walls made the entire project of adult literacy education seem far more real and compelling to me. Although I had very recently earned a PhD focusing on composition and rhetoric at the University of Southern California, I knew very little about "adult literacy education" —about adult education providers and their financial challenges, adult literacy teachers, or the social and economic realities that led individuals to seek out these programs.

Because Anita had been so definite about her professional orientation and so helpful to me as a newly hired assistant professor, I reached out to Anita while I was preparing to write this essay for *JBW*. Upon receiving my invitation to contribute to this project, Anita graciously agreed to comment in writing on her experiences with searching for a graduate program and participating in the MA in Language and Literacy. Here is an excerpt from Anita's written commentary:

> I was already working as an adult literacy teacher at the Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Program when I began searching for a graduate program that would expand my options and qualify me to find full-time work in the field. I had begun my career as an elementary school teacher and loved it. But when my own children were small, I was looking for a way to work in education part-time, and fell into adult education. My first class was a Level 1 ESL class in a church basement in Flatbush, and even though my students spoke barely a word of English, I relished the opportunity to be around adults for a few precious hours each week. That experience, coupled with teaching an adult basic education class in an elementary school in

East New York a few years later, convinced me to make a lifelong commitment to adult literacy.

I began working in adult education in 1985 with no theoretical or practical training. Although I learned a great deal on the job, it would have been much better for my early students (and myself) if I had had the opportunity to take courses specifically geared to teaching adults. Realizing that adult literacy teaching was highly complex and challenging, I sought a graduate program that presented best practices for teaching adult literacy and approaches to integrating social studies and science learning into literacy courses.

It was John Garvey (formerly of Academic Affairs at CUNY) who recommended the Language and Literacy MA at CCNY. While not designed specifically for adult literacy practitioners, the Language and Literacy MA sounded like the best option for me in New York City. Having already read Mina P. Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations*, I was trying to incorporate her methods in my classes and felt excited by the prospect of participating in a program that carried on her legacy. I found the courses to be engaging and relevant to my work, and the methodology employed by the professors was learner-centered and required that students actively engage with the texts we read and wrote and also with one another. I eagerly embraced both the subject matter and the methods employed by the professors. It was in these classes that I was encouraged to research the connections between reading and writing, and those insights have continued to inform my work as a teacher, curriculum writer, and professional development facilitator to this day. (Caref)

While completing her MA, Anita was already administering CUNY's Brooklyn College Adult Literacy Program. She would later go on to administer "five additional adult education and family literacy programs (in college, community, and union-based settings), all located in Midwestern states" (Caref). In recent years, Anita has been developing curricula and providing professional development opportunities for adult education instructors as a full-time Adult Education Specialist in Language Arts and Reading for Chicago Community Colleges.

Anita Caref was among several MA in Language and Literacy graduate students who were actively developing professional careers as adult educators during the 1990s. These graduate students called attention to an ongoing process of professionalizing the field of adult literacy education and a need to integrate research on adult learning and best practices for teaching adults into the Language and Literacy MA curriculum. The need for an increased focus on adult literacy education was apparent to Marilyn Sternglass, who advised me to develop this dimension of the program during our informal discussions about the MA's future. Even though she was no longer living in New York City after her retirement in 1995, we talked frequently about our scholarship, my teaching, and the MA in Language and Literacy when we met at conferences or when she would visit New York City. After the MA program stopped offering any courses in Fall 2000, I consulted Marilyn several times regarding my efforts to re-open the MA program.

A New Emphasis on Graduate Education for Adult Educators

In 2003, a program reset occurred in part because the Consortium for Worker Education—a union-based provider of adult education throughout New York City—provided financial and political support to restart the MA in Language and Literacy after a three-year hiatus in which no classes were offered due to increased class size requirements and related enrollment issues. As a result of my direct request for program support, Consortium for Worker Education Executive Director Joe McDermott wrote a memorandum outlining specific forms of support that he would provide for the MA in Language and Literacy. The three primary forms of support that Joe offered were (1) a fund of $30,000 that would be available during a three-year time span for part-time and full-time Consortium instructors who enrolled in adult literacy education courses (at CUNY tuition rates); (2) classroom space at the Consortium site (275 Seventh Ave., New York, NY), which offered the convenience of a central Manhattan location as well as opportunities to learn about adult literacy courses being offered at the Consortium for Worker Education; (3) access to all New York City union members for MA program student recruitment (McDermott). Equally important was something not mentioned in the memorandum: the political advice that I received from Consortium consultant Dr. Irwin Polishook, a recently retired Lehman College professor who had long served as CUNY's faculty and staff union president.

As CUNY's union president, Irwin had developed strong expertise at negotiating agreements within the City University of New York—expertise

that he generously shared with me (in 2002, 2003 and 2004) as I attempted to construct a persuasive case for restarting the MA in Language and Literacy. The most important lesson that I learned from Irwin was that sensitive or highly consequential negotiations should always take place in face-to-face conversations, not via phone conversations or email communications. On one occasion, when Irwin wanted to talk with specific CCNY administrators about MA program reinstatement, he invited several individuals to meet Joe McDermott at the Consortium for Worker Education. Present at that meeting were Alfred Posamentier, Dean of the CCNY School of Education, James Watts, Dean of the CCNY Humanities Division, Marilyn Sternglass, CCNY Professor Emeritus, Joe McDermott, Executive Director of the Consortium for Worker Education, Irwin and me. This meeting remains indelibly etched in my memory: for the first time I saw two City College deans agreeing to support re-instatement of the MA in Language and Literacy.

As a result of the offer of resources for program reinstatement from the Consortium for Worker Education, the MA program acquired increased internal support from Humanities Division Dean Watts, who removed the MA in Language and Literacy from a list of CCNY programs now slated to be officially and permanently deregistered. CWE Dean Daniel Lemons and my colleague, English Department Professor (and former Chair) Joshua Wilner, provided meaningful internal support for several years and continued to do so until the program was officially reinstated in 2005. With external support offered by the Consortium for Worker Education, the MA in Language and Literacy re-opened in fall 2003, now on an experimental basis, with the support of English Department Chair Fred Reynolds, who persuaded the English Department Executive Committee members to approve a proposal to allow applicants to enroll initially as non-matriculated students. In December 2003, I sent a letter to multiple administrators requesting that graduate students be permitted to matriculate before enrolling in spring 2004 courses. That request was agreed to by college administrators and facilitated by Fred Reynolds, who obtained all needed committee approvals for reopening the program with a revised curriculum.

In spring 2004, English Department Chair Linsey Abrams sent a letter to English Department faculty stating that the MA in Language and Literacy had been officially reinstated.[1] That decision was upheld by CCNY Provost Zeev Dagan one year later when a new cohort of prospective students were applying to enroll in fall 2005 courses. As a result of the official program reinstatement process that occurred between 2004 and 2005, I transferred my line from the CCNY Center for Worker Education (my home base from

1997 to 2007) back to the English Department in order to administer the MA program.

With a strengthened focus on teaching adult learners, the MA in Language and Literacy began attracting a new type of graduate student—individuals who had some experience with tutoring or teaching adults, often within CUNY or SUNY programs. In this same time frame, CUNY was starting two new programs that could employ part-time and full-time instructors: CUNY Start (for CUNY applicants who need remedial writing, reading, and math instruction to prepare to take the CUNY entrance exams) and CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP), a program that provides English language instruction for CUNY applicants who are English language learners. In addition, CUNY colleges' continuing education divisions employ part-time teachers whose highest educational attainment is a bachelor's degree. Already engaged in teaching/tutoring, these older, professionally active MA applicants were attracted to a program focused on preparing adult educators.

The new curriculum for the adult learner-oriented MA program included four core courses (in the areas of language, literacy, adult learning, and second language learning), two language and literacy electives, and four general electives, which could be fulfilled by enrolling in additional courses in literacy, language, teaching and learning, literature or creative writing graduate courses, or other courses that students related to the MA program's curriculum and mission. A lasting remnant of the dual master's program that Sternglass and O'Nore had created in 1985 was—and still is—the option for students to enroll in twelve credits outside the CCNY English Department. This option provides opportunities for students to take advantage of courses offered by the CCNY School of Education, other CCNY departments, and other CUNY colleges. The thesis option was eliminated due to a lack of full-time composition faculty available for mentoring: for most of the years between 2003 and 2014, I was the sole full-time CCNY English Department faculty member teaching graduate courses in the Language and Literacy MA. However, the thesis option is now available for graduate students participating in a study-abroad version of the program, which allows students to enroll in courses offered at specific universities located in Germany, Austria, France, or Italy.

From 2003 to 2014, the MA in Language and Literacy benefited from the contributions of numerous excellent instructors: Lynn Quitman Troyka, J. Elizabeth Clark, Kate Garretson, Joanna Herman, Elizabeth Rorschach, Adele MacGowan-Gilhooly, Jane Maher, Mary Soliday, Thomas Peele, and Mark McBeth. These highly talented instructors were full-time CCNY pro-

fessors, full-time professors at other colleges, or part-time CCNY faculty. Three former CCNY graduate students also taught graduate courses: Marco Fernando Navarro, Wynne Ferdinand, and Lynn Reid. And in fall 2014 the English Department renewed its commitment to the MA by hiring two full-time composition professors, Thomas Peele and Missy Watson, who have both made significant contributions to the program by teaching and mentoring graduate students, designing new courses, proposing professional conference panels with graduate students, judging graduate student awards, and providing leadership for the first-year writing program—which employs CCNY graduate students and alumni.

The MA program has also received significant support from a great many accomplished, hard-working, and generous graduate students, starting with a fall 2003 cohort of about twenty individuals who agreed to enroll in two graduate courses as nonmatriculated students in order to help reopen a program with a very uncertain future.[2] Only about one-half of those students continued in spring 2004, but a handful of new students entered the program in spring 2004, and in 2005 and 2006, sixteen individuals earned MA degrees in Language and Literacy. Several years later, in spring 2011, current students started planning elaborate graduation receptions, inviting registered students, recent alumni, and faculty to gather for celebrations with food, music, and organized activities. Additionally, in fall 2013, Joel Thomas spearheaded an initiative to start up an official CCNY graduate student organization, the Institute for the Emergence of 21st Century Literacies (IE21CL), whose activities can still be found on a publicly available Facebook page.[3] Most recently, Maria Vint, Michele Sweeting-DeCaro, and Debra Williams participated in four student recruitment open houses on the CCNY Harlem campus and at the CCNY Center for Worker Education campus.

Since the Language and Literacy MA program re-opened in 2003, a wide assortment of electives has been offered, including existing courses, such as Sociolinguistics, and many new special topics courses: Community College New Literacies, Digital Literacies, Writing Center Theory and Practice, Composition Pedagogies, Discourse Analysis, Translingual Writing, Composition and Rhetoric, Reading and Writing Autobiography, Living in a Visual World: How the Eye Writes, and New Literacies. Two additional courses focus specifically on teaching and will be described more fully in this essay: Basic Writing Theory and Practice and Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts. These two courses directly support the program's mission:

This graduate program. . . prepare[s] individuals who wish to teach

reading, writing, and language to adult learners, especially those enrolled in adult literacy, ESL, or basic writing/reading college classes. (*MA in Language and Literacy Mission and Goals Statement*)

Because developing existing professional careers and finding secure employment are primary motivations of many graduate students, the MA has offered Basic Writing Theory and Practice and Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts several times in recent years. Those two teaching-focused courses allow students to become familiar with the fields of basic writing and adult education while exploring best practices for teaching writing and reading to adult learners.

Introducing a New Basic Writing Graduate Course

A graduate course titled Introduction to Teaching Basic Writing and Literature had existed in the MA curriculum since its inception in 1975. However, during the 1990s, that course's focus on basic writing disappeared when the phrase "basic writing" was deleted from the course title. In summer 2006, a new course—Basic Writing Theory, Research, and Pedagogy—was offered by Lynn Troyka, who composed a course description that appears in her syllabus:

> How does 'basic writing' (BW) differ, if at all, from garden-variety 'writing'? How are basic writers different, if at all, from other first-year writing students? To explore these and related questions, we will use a practical approach to debate the conceptual frameworks underlying theories of BW, including those of cognitive development (Vygotsky), critical literacy (Shor), psycholinguistics (Smith), and experiential models (Hillocks). We will critique the relative merits of qualitative and quantitative research designs, including those for assessing writing and drawing conclusions about effective BW pedagogy. We will craft cases and simulations for BW classroom use; analyze and share productive responses to provided samples of the writing of BWs; define our visions for potential research, conference presentations, and journal articles about BW; and write reflections on our readings and discussions. Each student will craft a pre-approved final project to explore or apply ideas related to the course. (Troyka, Syllabus)

This innovative graduate course introduced students to the professional field of basic writing, best practices in teaching basic writing, and related research. By participating in this course, students also gained heightened awareness of controversies and ongoing debates in higher education. Three of the sixteen graduate students enrolled in Troyka's 2006 BW graduate class went on to develop full-time careers in higher education: Reabeka King-Reilly, Assistant Professor, Information Literacy and Library Instructional Services, Kingsborough Community College, CUNY; Michael Burns, Assistant Professor, English, West Chester University of Pennsylvania; and Lynn Reid, Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Composition and Director of Basic Writing at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

After Troyka taught the initial basic writing graduate course in 2006, similar graduate courses have been offered four more times by the MA in Language and Literacy.[4] These courses have introduced graduate students to instructional approaches for teaching basic writing—such as possible uses of multimodal composition in basic writing (Gleason, "Multimodal"), basic writing curricula, including various forms of Accelerated Learning Programs (*ALP – Accelerated Learning Program, Community College of Baltimore County*; Anderst, Maloy, and Shahar), and scholarship focused on how college students' reading and writing practices are perceived by students, teachers, scholars, and journalists writing for mainstream media (Adler-Kassner and Harrington; Gray-Rosendale, "Re-examining"; Gray-Rosendale, "Rethinking"; Tinberg and Nadeau).

All five recently offered basic writing graduate courses made use of Susan Naomi Bernstein's edited collection (in multiple editions) of basic writing scholarship, *Teaching Developmental Writing: Background Readings*, and instructors of four courses relied on either the second edition of *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Basic Writing* (Adler-Kassner and Glau) or the third edition of *The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Basic Writing* (Glau and Duttagupta). These books were provided to students free of charge by Bedford St. Martin's Publishing Company (now Macmillan). Guest speakers have also been a common feature of these classes. In spring 2011, Jane Maher spoke to graduate students about her biography of Mina Shaughnessy, her own education, and her teaching life at a community college and at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women (Maher, "You Probably Don't Even Know I Exist"). In spring 2013, Bernstein talked with graduate students about editing *Teaching Developmental Writing: Background Readings,* teaching basic writing at the University of Cincinnati and LaGuardia Community College, and understanding students' learning differences. Bernstein also described

her own experience with an ADHD learning difference (Bernstein 26), a highly authentic teaching moment that strongly engaged the attention of all students present. Additionally, two former basic writing students spoke with graduate students about their experiences in CUNY college basic writing courses.

For a course that I offered in spring 2013, ENGL B2802 Basic Writing Theory and Pedagogy, I provided an overview of the curriculum in my syllabus:

> Our curriculum blends a survey of instructional practices and curricula with an analysis of BW issues and topics. We will first explore terms: *basic writing, basic writers, remedial English, developmental writing, basic composition.* What do these terms mean? Why do terms matter? The perspectives of teachers, students, and institutions will all be considered—with special attention to writing instruction at The City College of New York. Our second focus: we will examine curricula, textbooks, and writing assignments. You will become familiar with strategies for *scaffolding* writing assignments. We'll focus on teaching invention, composing a first draft, revising, and editing. Third, we will contrast alphabetic literacy with digital literacy and we will also contrast purely text-based composition with multimodal composition. Fourth: We will be discussing BW issues throughout the semester. A key issue is the controversy about whether or not teachers should encourage students to use their own linguistic codes and preferred modes of communicating in academic writing courses. (Gleason, Course Syllabus)

Course participants were asked to write literacy narratives, create blogs for informal responses to readings, participate in a group discussion and present a collective report on a particular book, write individual book reviews and write reflective essays.

One direct outcome of that spring 2013 course was a conference presentation the following semester at TYCA NE (Teaching English in the Two Year College-Northeast) in Morristown, NJ. Mabel Batista, Sofia Biniorias, Mark Jamison, Nayanda Moore, RAsheda Young, and I presented a panel titled "Graduate Student Blogs: Preparing to Teach in the Digital Age." Today, all of these former graduate students have gone on to develop significant careers in teaching and/or program administration: Mabel teaches basic reading and writing as a full-time instructor for CUNY Start; Nayanda teaches writ-

ing to undergraduates enrolled in courses at The City College of New York's Center for Worker Education; Mark is Senior Program Manager of Learning Operations at ACS Workforce Institute (in partnership with CUNY School for Professional Studies); Sofia served as Director, Undergraduate Education and Strategic Initiatives, until recently being promoted to Advisor to the Dean, Katz School of Yeshiva University; and RAsheda is a Lecturer at Rutgers University.

Student Perspective: Lynn Reid

One of the graduate students in Troyka's 2006 BW graduate class, Lynn Reid,[5] has developed a full-time career as a teacher and scholar of basic writing. After earning an MA in Literature at CCNY, Lynn completed a PhD in Composition and Applied Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where she was the 2018-2019 recipient of the Patrick M. Hartwell Memorial Scholarship for an IUP graduate student in Composition and Applied Linguistics PhD program.

Reflecting on her experiences in Troyka's summer 2006 basic writing graduate course, Lynn comments on her reasons for enrolling, her impressions, and an immediate professional benefit from course participation:

> Although I was a literature student, I had been introduced to composition studies briefly the year before as I worked as an intern at the Rutgers writing center where we read about the power dynamics of peer tutoring and pedagogical approaches to writing center work. In the summer of 2006, I was set to begin work as a writing tutor for the Rutgers Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) summer program. I saw that a course titled Basic Writing Theory, Research, Pedagogy would be offered in July and, thinking that this course might inform my work as an EOF tutor, I secured permission to enroll.
>
> Unbeknownst to me at the time, I was stepping into a course taught by a former editor of *Journal of Basic Writing*, a former CCCC Chair, and a winner of the CCCC Exemplar Award, Lynn Quitman Troyka, whose passion for basic writing and community colleges was infectious. Through this course, I was introduced to the language politics and social justice imperatives that gave rise to basic writing as a professional field of study in the 1970s. Much of the class centered on reflection through in-class writing, but most memorable were the

poems that Lynn concluded each session with. Within six months
of taking this course, I interviewed for a part-time professional tutor-
ing position at the Brookdale Community College Writing Center,
where I began to focus my scholarly and pedagogical interests on
working with students enrolled in basic writing courses. (Reid)

Although Lynn may well have found her way into the composition
field independently and in her own time, Lynn's opportunity to study with
a basic writing teacher-scholar as prominent and talented as Troyka had a
profound impact on her career. Lynn is a recent Council of Basic Writing
Co-Chair (2015-2018) and current Associate Editor for *Basic Writing Electronic
Journal*. And as an IUP doctoral student, Lynn has written a dissertation
focusing on narratives of institutional change appearing in *Journal of Basic
Writing* and *Computers and Composition* between 1995 and 2015. Even though
Lynn has only recently completed a PhD, she has already made numerous
significant contributions to her profession and is well known nationally by
basic writing teacher-scholars.

Student Perspective: Erick Martinez

Having entered the MA in Language and Literacy directly after com-
pleting a BA in English at City College of New York, Erick Martinez enrolled
in my spring 2013 Basic Writing Theory and Practice course with no prior
experience as a college writing tutor or a teacher.[6] A son of immigrants from
Mexico, Erick recalls how his parents risked their lives to enter the United
States: "My parents swam across the Rio Grande river, my mother almost
drowning with her baby in her hands." At a young age, Erick became fluent
in both Spanish and English, developing a strong bilingual identity that he
continues to maintain and rely on today. Although he went to work as a
young man in order to help support his parents and siblings, Erick remained
unwavering in his focus on education. As a CUNY college student, he earned
an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in his twen-
ties, and now, in his early thirties, he is enrolled in the English PhD program
at the University of New Mexico—in part supported by a $10,000 Sydney
and Helen Jacoff Scholarship awarded by the CCNY Humanities and Arts
Division and primarily supported by a teaching assistantship provided by
the University of New Mexico.

Reflecting on his experiences as a student in that spring 2013 basic
writing graduate student, Erick recalls conceptual and pedagogical issues
addressed in class:

> In this course we learned about the field of basic writing, what it means to be a 'basic writer' and how people see the field. Learning the history of City College and how it helped shape the field of basic writing was eye-opening. In class, we examined various curricula, textbooks, and writing assignments that one would teach in a basic writing course. The course itself was structured in the way a basic writing class would be taught. This is one of the differences that make this particular course stand out apart from other graduate courses. We also discussed the contrast between alphabetic and digital literacies and whether or not students should be encouraged to use their own language varieties when communicating in college classes. (Martinez)

The spring 2013 graduate course proved particularly consequential for Erick's future employment as a teacher. While still registered in his MA program, Erick secured an opportunity to teaching basic writing (for the first time) at a New Jersey community college. He reports that he was hired because he had completed a graduate course on teaching basic writing and because he was enrolled in the MA in Language and Literacy. Erick's involvement in teaching basic writing extended to taking over a class for another teacher in mid-semester and discovering that his basic writing course syllabus was being used to help restructure curriculum for all basic writing courses.

Today, as a PhD student, Erick is acutely aware of the role he will play in higher education as a Latino and a bilingual professor:

> Being a Latino male in America has shaped the way I see the world, especially when it comes to education. Most of my instructors were white. Being someone from a different cultural background, I have always felt like an outsider. Many of my friends did not go on to college and many of my colleagues in college were white. I had trouble identifying a group to which I would belong. My day consisted of going from home to school to work. I could never go away to college because I had to help my family with finances. Sometimes my work obligations came before my school obligations and it affected my classwork; but I persevered. That is something I learned from my parents. As I continue my progress toward the doctoral degree, my focus will be on trying to help the students that are marginalized. (Martinez)

For his dissertation, Erick is researching assessment and multimodality in basic writing classrooms—yet another outcome of Erick's introduction to basic writing while he was a CCNY graduate student. As a current college instructor and future professor, Erick Martinez aims to offer support for multilingual college writers, at-risk students, and first-year writing programs.

Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts

In spring 2015 and again in spring 2018, I taught a new course titled Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts. The course title came directly from a section title of a book that Kimme Nuckles and I had recently co-edited (Gleason and Nuckles). That section of the bibliography featured abstracts of essays and books focusing on various educational environments for adults seeking formal learning, e.g., GED or High School Equivalency (HSE) preparatory workshops, English language learning courses, Adult Basic Education (ABE), remedial writing and writing and college composition in community college classrooms, union-sponsored education programs, prison education, adult-oriented college degree programs, and workplace education.

Guest speakers were featured both times this new course was offered. Debby D'Amico, worker education research writer and consultant for the CUNY School for Professional Studies and for the Consortium for Worker Education, was a guest speaker in the spring 2015 course. And Language and Literacy MA alumnae Michele Sweeting-DeCaro and Melissa Valerie spoke to students enrolled in my spring 2018 course. During her class visit, Debby discussed the importance of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). She explained that funding for adult literacy education was increasingly tied to work—which limited the subjects that could be taught and defined curriculum for courses supported by government grants, a long-standing revenue source for adult education. Debby's presentation encouraged graduate students to consider adult education from the perspectives of labor, unions, and worker education in New York City. Subsequently (in spring 2018), Michelle and Melissa discussed their teaching experiences in two very different adult-oriented programs: the CCNY Center for Worker Education (which offers two undergraduate degrees and one graduate degree for adult workers who are also college students) and the SUNY Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center (which offers workshops for adults who seek high school equivalency diplomas). In addition, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY

Professor Shoba Bandi-Rao gave a stimulating presentation on her use of digital storytelling in her basic writing classes.

A second major component of my spring 2015 course and a subsequent spring 2018 course was a field research study of an adult-oriented program or course. Every student enrolled in both sections of Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts identified a course or program that educates adults, sought permission to visit and write about the course/program, and then conducted a limited ethnographic study. Students practiced conducting interviews, writing descriptive field notes, and collecting primary source documents. They read selected chapters from *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*, 4th Edition by Bonnie Stone Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater, wrote field research reports on adult-oriented educational programs, and delivered related oral reports to their peers in class. This project allowed students the experience of conducting and writing independent research while engaging in "self-directed learning," a pillar of adult learning theory (Merriam and Bierema).

Influenced by Debby's presentation on unions and worker education, Lisa Diomande researched a College Prep Program managed by the 199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund, a component of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. (A few years later, Lisa was hired as HSE Program Coordinator and Instructor at the Henry Street Settlement House.) Kevin Kudic studied the Manhattan branch of the American Language Community Center, a for-profit educational program for adult English language learners. (After completing his MA, Kevin taught high school English in China for a year and is now pursuing a second master's degree in English Education at Queens College, CUNY.) Erick Martinez researched an English language learner class at La Guardia Community College. And Maria Vint studied the GED Bridge to College and Career Programs at La Guardia Community College. Lisa, Kevin, Erick, Maria, and I ultimately made a presentation at the fall 2015 TYCA NE conference in Lancaster, PA on the basis of these field studies. Our TYCA NE panel was titled "Understanding Adult Learning in Diverse Educational Contexts: Profiles of Four Pre-college Writing/Reading Courses."

Student Perspective: Maria Vint

Maria Vint exemplifies the older, more professionally active graduate students who were attracted to the MA in Language and Literacy in greater numbers when the program re-opened with an adult learner focus in 2003.[7] Having entered college at age 23, Maria began her undergraduate studies

as a returning adult enrolled in a basic writing class at Nassau Community College. Maria's experience in that class and her undergraduate education as a whole were transformative:

> The first time I found myself in a remedial writing course wasn't as an instructor; I was twenty-three, in the first semester of my associate's degree, working full-time to support myself, and in need of the basics. I can still remember, clearly, as the instructor wrote the outline of the five-paragraph essay on the board. It was in that moment that all of the frustration I was always overcome with, the anxiety, all of my indirection and hopelessness, finally melted away. There was a formulaic nature to writing, with rules and structure, and this basic writing class introduced me to them.

> I went on to become a language major in my undergraduate studies, analyzing the growth and structure of English and Spanish, and with each degree achieved, I felt empowered, refined my identity, and increased my self-worth. After witnessing the transformative effects of a higher education, I was overcome with a passion to help other adult students in similar situations to my own. (Vint)

After earning her associate's degree, Maria spent her spring 2011 semester in Salamanca, Spain, where she enrolled in the Cursos Internacionales program for language learners through the American Institute of Foreign Studies. As a result of learning Spanish and becoming interested in language studies, Maria decided to major in English Language Arts and minor in Spanish at Hunter College. In her senior year, she provided leadership for re-activating an existing chapter of an honors program for Hispanic students and served as acting president for that chapter for a few months.

In the same year that Maria completed her BA at Hunter College, she earned a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) offered by the Cambridge English Language Assessment. Soon thereafter Maria began working as a teaching assistant for CUNY Start, applied to the MA in Language and Literacy, and began coursework in spring 2014, when she enrolled in Second Language Acquisition and Adult Learners of Language and Literacy. The following semester, fall 2014, Maria registered for Basic Writing Theory and Practice, Introduction to Teaching Composition and Literature, Sociolinguistics, and Introduction to Language Studies.

In spring 2015 Maria enrolled in Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts. Here are some of her memories of her learning and of professional benefits gained from course participation:

> As a student in the Teaching Adult Learners in Diverse Contexts class, I engaged in eye-opening conversations about various adult learning sites, from literacy programs to English as a second language classrooms, prison education settings, and union labor education initiatives. We dissected both the pedagogies and structures of these courses, the stigma and complications surrounding some of them, the innovative work being produced in this area, and the socio-economic, political, and cultural factors that can lead an individual to search for such courses. I took away more than just than the knowledge I developed as a result of 15-week investment in studying these topics; I acquired experiences, skills, and insights which will last a lifetime and built critical relationships with individuals who continue to aid in my growth as an adult educator today.

> Once the major assignment for the semester had arrived – the ethnography of an adult learning site – I had a specific site in mind but was not able to gain access. Professor Gleason then offered to connect me with a Language and Literacy program alumna who was involved with innovative work in the area of higher school equivalency exam preparation—Wynne Ferdinand.

> Being introduced to Ms. Ferdinand was the best "plan B" I didn't know I needed; our interaction for the project has enhanced my expertise as a teacher and a graduate student while helping me to redefine my professional path. During our first meeting, Wynne Ferdinand described the Bridge to College and Careers HSE program. I learned about the intricate complexities of program creation, from the research needed to create an effective system, to proposal and grant writing, to different types of funding structures and the need to meet certain goals. Becoming aware of this information has significantly altered the trajectory for the future I envision. I witnessed the ways that the needs of the people enrolling in an HSE program were heard and taken into consideration. I later discovered that

three factors inhibiting NYC HSE students from completing their programs are income instability, inability to pay for a prep course, and lack of resources for commuting to campus. Traditional HSE / GED programs often require a tuition payment and do not provide support for commuting to class; however, the Bridge to College and Careers program offers MTA card incentives, tuition-free course enrollment, a college-readiness orientation and work-oriented themes for curricula, which have successfully impacted rentention and GED/HSE testing pass rates.

Following the completion of my work for Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts, Wynne Ferdinand, Barbara Gleason, and I presented a speaker panel focused on the graduate course field research project at the CCCC national conference, in Houston, TX. Our talk offered three perspectives: the professor implementing this project, the coordinator of the HSE program, and the graduate student engaging in this field research.

My academic relationship with Wynne Ferdinand subsequently opened various doors for employment in other areas of higher education: Ms. Ferdinand hired me for a part-time administrative role at John Jay College. As a First Year Program Associate, I learned about student success and retention initiatives, recruitment campaigns for special programs, and inter-departmental collaboration. Following this experience, I was offered and accepted a full-time program administrative position at John Jay College. (Vint)

It is worth noting that Maria began her undergraduate experience as a community college student enrolled in a basic writing course. As Sternglass argues in *Time to Know* them, early educational support in critical reading and academic writing can be vitally important for many students who enter college without adequate strength in academic literacies. This was true for Maria, who recalls a highly positive experience as a student enrolled in a basic writing class. Maria advanced so dramatically as a writer that she received both of two awards available for Language and Literacy MA students: the Marilyn Sternglass Writing Award and the Marilyn Sternglass Overall Merit Award. And in summer 2019, Maria enrolled in the first semester of her PhD in Composition and Applied Linguistics at Indiana University of Pennsyl-

vania. Maria's educational life exemplifies the fundamentally important possibility of success for many undergraduates who begin their college lives in supportive basic writing classes.

Student Perspective: James Dunn

James Dunn entered the MA in Language and Literacy as a self-described "mid-life career changer."[8] Earlier in his life, he had been a traditional residential campus college student who completed his degree in four years between the ages of 18 and 22. He then earned a master's degree in communications and journalism and he worked as a professional writer before moving to New York City to become Manager of Web Production for the Brooklyn Public Library. Five years later, James became managing editor for three social media websites in New York City. Then, in 2007, James began teaching college writing as an adjunct lecturer at Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY. So when James entered the MA in Language and Literacy in spring 2014, he was actively developing a new career as a college instructor.

Basic Writing Theory and Practice and Teaching Adult Writers were two of the ten courses that James completed to earn his MA. Here is James' commentary on his learning in the basic writing graduate course:

> Although I benefitted from all the courses that I participated in, it was the readings, lessons, and discussions from Basic Writing Theory and Practice (fall 2014) that have shaped my professional identity most profoundly. That semester, we read an essay by Adrienne Rich that was included in Bernstein's book, *Teaching Developmental Writing*. In 'Teaching Language in Open Admissions,' Adrienne Rich writes, 'I think of myself as a teacher of language; that is, as someone for whom language has implied freedom, who is trying to aid others to free themselves through the written word, and above all through learning to write it for themselves' (Rich 23). Adrienne Rich wrote this essay during the 1970s. But in 2019, a time of increasing police brutality, income inequality, austerity budgets, and political instability, it is even more of an imperative for teachers of basic writing to aid others in freeing themselves through words. Even today, I can see how students who are underprepared for college through no fault of their own are often stigmatized and in some instances seen as lost causes. One thing I know for sure is that the teaching of basic writing is a form of resistance to those

who would have some people in our society remain as part of a permanent underclass. (Dunn)

At the 2018 TYCA NE conference in New York City, James met Susan Bernstein. He told Bernstein how much he had enjoyed the diverse perspectives represented in *Teaching Developmental Writing: Background Readings* and later commented to me on how meaningful it had been to meet one of the scholars whose work we had discussed in a graduate course. James' interest in developing his expertise as a teacher of basic writing and college composition increased substantially as a result of a two-year substitute line lecturer position that he held at Medgar Evers College, CUNY between 2017 and 2019.

In spring 2018, James enrolled in Teaching Adult Writers in Diverse Contexts. Although he had entered the MA program in order to advance his career in higher education and, more specifically, his experiences as a college instructor, when it came time to choose a site for a field research project, James decided to focus on an adult English language course offered by Catholic Charities for adults living in Brooklyn and Queens. This choice allowed James to learn about teaching and learning experiences that were unfamiliar to him:

> The field research report took me from the confines of my computer-networked CUNY classroom to an adult-oriented hybrid Civics/ESL course located in a church basement on a tree-lined street in the New York City borough of Queens, where nearly half the residents are foreign-born. Students sat at brown card tables in a classroom with no computers or any other multimedia components that you would likely see in a modern and well-funded classroom. This classroom was a barebones operation. Even so, there was nothing lacking in spirit among the instructor and his fifteen students. I observed them struggle, laugh, share, and support one another. Despite the rigor of a three-hour class, these students persevered in order to improve their access to social and economic opportunities. As both self-directed learners and a community of learners, these adult learners willingly shared their individual learning experiences with each other. These students had a lot at stake. The goal of this course is to prepare them for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) naturalization test that consists of 100 civics (history and government) questions. (Dunn)

James has also commented on the linguistic diversity of his students and how their cultural backgrounds—as well as his own—impact his thoughts about teaching:

> My students are a linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse group: most are black women; some are first generation college students. As a writing instructor, I focus on getting to know what social, cultural, and political issues are important to my students, and I choose various texts that will give them an opportunity to use prior knowledge and experience to interpret situations, events, or various discourses. My approach is heavily influenced by my experiences as a graduate student enrolled in Language and Literacy courses and by my lived experience as an African-American man. Although basic writing courses are no longer offered in the Medgar Evers College English department, I still at times refer to basic writing theory in my work with first-year composition students. (Dunn)

Although James could easily continue to find employment as a part-time college writing instructor, he is also exploring opportunities to teach adults preparing to pass the New York high school equivalency exam. High school equivalency exam preparation programs and other forms of pre-college adult education are widespread in New York City, in part because they are needed by a large immigrant population and in part because about 27% of New York City's high school students fail to earn a traditional high school diploma in four years (Chapman). There is abundant part-time work and also a significant number of full-time jobs for adult education teachers in New York City. James hopes to gain experience teaching pre-college adult education courses in the upcoming year.

Conclusion

In 2006, I argued for increasing the presence of courses focused on teaching basic writing in composition and rhetoric graduate programs ("Reasoning the Need"). At that time, CCNY was in the initial phase of restarting the CCNY MA in Language and Literacy with a newly established emphasis on preparing adult educators for multiple professional pathways. I now understand that my focus on basic writing graduate courses was too narrow, that the larger curricular context is very important, and that graduate program curricula and program missions are equally deserving of scholarly attention.

In order to broaden and complicate this essay's narrative point of view, I invited five former graduate students to contribute written commentaries on their learning and professional experiences related to MA program participation. Diverse in age, race, gender, and culture—these five contributors all share a common focus on developing careers as teachers of adults. Anita Caref, Lynn Reid, Erick Martinez, Maria Vint, and James Dunn have actively pursued professional opportunities that support their aspirations as educators—either in higher education or adult education contexts or both. Their stories illustrate the possible lives of adult educators and the many ways that a graduate program can contribute to students' professional opportunities and career advancement. The contributing authors also reveal how central students' experiences and perspectives can be to the current and future life of a graduate program. It was largely owing to the presence of Anita and other graduate students pursuing adult education careers in the 1990s that the need for professionalizing adult literacy education via graduate education became apparent, first to Sternglass and then to me.

Every year, graduate students earn Language and Literacy MA degrees and go on to find meaningful employment as teachers, program administrators, writers, and editors, most often by relying solely on the MA, and sometimes by relying on a second master's degree or a PhD. While jobs may not be equally plentiful across the US, in New York City, both part-time and full-time jobs are abundantly available for professional educators whose highest educational attainment is a master's degree. No matter what jobs students have pursued, completing the MA in Language and Literacy has readily allowed most graduates to find part-time and full-time employment or advance in existing careers.

A research-active core group of talented faculty has proven particularly crucial for maintaining and growing the MA in Language and Literacy. We have been exceptionally fortunate in being able to attract first-rate instructors. What has also been apparent for a very long time is that the MA in Language and Literacy relies heavily on key alliances with other instructors—including the English Department MA in Literature and the MFA in Creative Writing faculty, who have long provided essential support for the Language and Literacy MA. In addition, the MA program has formed important alliances with the CCNY School of Education, the CCNY Center for Worker Education, La Guardia Community College's GED Bridge to College and Careers Program, and the Consortium for Worker Education. These alliances have kept the MA program afloat in difficult times and benefitted students by offering course enrollment and employment opportunities.

For more than three decades, the MA in Language and Literacy has thrived by continuously attracting highly qualified graduate students and developing a strong base of alumni support.[9] Graduate students are drawn to the MA primarily because it offers opportunities for career advancement and for starting new professional pathways, especially for adult educators and program administrators. In presenting the MA in Language and Literacy as a model, we recommend that other graduate program administrators, faculty, and students consider expanding curricula to include a blend of adult learning, TESOL, language studies, composition and rhetoric, and basic writing studies. We also recommend that graduate programs consider expanding program missions to include forming educators for multiple professional pathways rather than focusing on one or even two professional careers. In so doing, programs open up opportunities for graduate students to learn about professional endeavors that they may not have known about before embarking on graduate studies and to find viable employment in areas related to teaching and learning. Equally important are the contributions that graduate programs can make to their communities: some of the most complicated teaching challenges are situated in adult literacy and language programs, pre-college basic writing and reading programs, and first-year college writing courses. Providing well-designed, affordable professional education for adult educators contributes not only to their professional futures but to the well-being of thousands of students who whose lives they will impact as teachers and educational program administrators.

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made substantial contributions as an instructor and thesis advisor and strongly supported reopening the program at a crucial juncture; Joshua Wilner, who has supported the MA in Language and Literacy all through his career at CCNY and served as Acting Program Director; Renata Miller, who generously supported the MA in Language and Literacy in her capacity as English department chair; current English faculty chair Elizabeth Mazzola, who provides strong support of the program; Yana Joseph, Administrative Manager, CCNY English Department; and Migen Prifti, Director of Graduate Student Advising, Division of Humanities and Arts. Finally, we deeply appreciate the contributions of all editors and manuscript reviewers who have supported the writing of this essay: Michael Baugh, Jane Maher, Louise Wetherbee Phelps, Hope Parisi, Cheryl C. Smith, and Laura Gray-Rosendale.

Notes

1. On May 8, 2004, English Department Chair Linsey Abrams distributed a letter to all CCNY English faculty. She wrote, "The English Department is pleased to announce the resumption of the MA Program in Language and Literacy. We owe thanks to Professor Barbara Gleason, newly its Director, for her vision and hard work in giving the program new life. We are pleased to welcome all the newly matriculated students, and wish them well in their future studies. –Professor, Linsey Abrams, Chair."

2. The first six graduates of the reopened MA in Language and Literacy were Elise Buchman, Martha Galphin, Patricia Moreno, Michael Orzechowski, Ruben Rangel, and Kristina Brown, who all earned degrees in June 2005. Four of these students received tuition benefits from the Consortium for Worker Education. Nine more students earned degrees in June 2005: Arlene Gray, Renee Iweriebor, Judith King, David Abel, Michele Fulves, Asma Amanat, Patricia Jones, Michael Montagna, and Albricia Moreira. All of these students enrolled in a program with an uncertain future. And they all knew that they were contributing to an effort to reopen the program.

3. Elected IEL21C officers in AY 2013-2014 were Mark Jamison, Sofia Binioris, Lisa Diomande, and Melisha Rose. Elected officers IEL2C officers in AY 2014-2015 were Stephanie Jean, Raynira Tejada, Nicholas Magliato, and Maria Vint. Elected IEL21C officers for AY 2015-2016 were Maria Vint, Erick Martinez, Ivan Learner, and Kevin Kudic.

4. After Lynn Quitman Troyka taught a basic writing graduate course in 2006, basic writing-focused graduate courses were taught by Barbara Gleason in spring 2011, spring 2013, and fall 2014; a fifth course was offered by Lynn Reid in Fall 2016.

5. Lynn Reid was invited to contribute to this essay (by Barbara Gleason) because she completed a CCNY basic writing graduate course, she taught a basic writing graduate course for the MA in Language and Literacy, and she is an active basic writing teacher, program director, and scholar.

6. Erick Martinez was invited to contribute to this essay (by Barbara Gleason) because he enrolled in both graduate courses discussed in this essay, he has spoken about his graduate student experience at TYCA NE, he is focusing on basic writing for his dissertation research, and he exemplifies the many multilingual students who participate in the MA in Language and Literacy.

7. Maria Vint was invited to contribute to this essay (by Barbara Gleason) because she exemplifies many undergraduates who start their college careers as basic writing students and then go on to become high performing undergraduates and graduate students; because she completed both graduate courses discussed in this essay; and because she has very effectively spoken about her graduate experiences as a panel speaker at TYCA NE and at CCCC.

8. James Dunn was invited to contribute to this essay (by Barbara Gleason) because he completed both graduate courses discussed in this essay, he has substantial experience teaching first-year writing courses in two different CUNY colleges, and he exemplifies many mid-life career changers who participate in the MA in Language and Literacy.

9. Between 2005 and 2019, 141 graduate students have earned MAs in Language and Literacy. A small group of former leaders of the graduate student organization are now forming an alumni organization for the MA in Language and Literacy.

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It's Not Just About the Teaching: Integrating Basic Writing History and Theory in a Master's Level Graduate Seminar

Marcia Z. Buell

ABSTRACT: *This article describes a version of the Seminar in Basic Writing Theory and Pedagogy, a Master's level course that Marcia Buell taught in summer 2017 at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. Buell argues that because many MA students enter graduate courses in Basic Writing expecting that the course will show them how to "fix" problems in the texts that basic writers produce, it is necessary to design MA courses which promote a* theorized pedagogy, *to show how history, theory, and social or institutional contexts drive pedagogical approaches. In addition to discussing the concepts that graduate students in the course learned and sometimes struggled with, Buell introduces resources and hands-on activities used to help graduate students address key questions such as what makes a student a Basic Writer, or how we might tap linguistic understandings of basic writers instead of assuming a lack of knowledge about language.*

KEYWORDS: *Basic Writing; deficit notions; definitions of basic writers*

Graduate courses that focus specifically on Basic Writing theory and pedagogy are relatively rare (Gleason), despite the large enrollment of students who are classified as basic writers in community colleges and some university programs. Even when such programs exist, graduate students may come into such courses seeking ways to "fix" the grammar and structure of basic writers, adhering to a commonly held view that basic writers should be taught to eliminate surface grammatical errors from sentences before moving to paragraphs, which also follow circumscribed forms, so that fuller discourse is not introduced until these building blocks are mastered (Otte and Mylnarcyzk). This deficit view of basic writers lays blame on the students'

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cognitive abilities or lack of willingness to learn, and disregards how marginalizing factors such as racism (Inoue), or restrictive educational policies (Glau), impact writing practices. Since graduate students in composition programs may view themselves as reasonably adept in writing, and may not have had to struggle especially hard to develop their writing skills, it can be hard to see that basic writers may feel like outsiders in higher education because of institutional practices, and even teacher perceptions, on the one hand, and identity questions on the other.

To mediate against potentially debilitating deficit stances, it is necessary to design MA courses which promote a *theorized pedagogy* that explores how history and social or institutional contexts drive pedagogical approaches. Theorized pedagogy means making decisions about practice that rely on thoughtful and reflective applications of theory. Such applications encourage educators to not only seek methods that work, but to also question why and how they should be applied to particular contexts in order to best serve basic writers. In applying theorized pedagogies, graduate students can learn to address easily recognizable concerns, such as the basic writer's need to develop a better command of grammar or organizational structures, while also learning to recognize and work with the intellectual and social strengths that basic writers bring to their academic endeavors, despite the often harsh realities of their lives.

The need to foster sensitivity to the intersections of institutional and social influences on Basic Writing became very clear to me a few years ago when I taught an earlier version of the Seminar in Basic Writing Theories and Pedagogies. One of my students had suggested that the class watch the PBS video, *Discounted Dreams: High Hopes and Harsh Realities at America's Community Colleges*, which depicts how community colleges offer the hope of higher education to otherwise disenfranchised students, but also shows how the policies of some community colleges, such as little institutional investment in training and support for instructors in developmental classes, limit those hopes. One section of the video illustrates developmental math and English classes across several community colleges with examples of ineffective or disengaged teaching, and instructors who express that "students have the right to fail." The adjunct teachers express that they are not trained for their positions, and that remedial classes are offered to newer instructors because others do not want to teach them. In one scene, a new and relatively inexperienced adjunct teacher is shown reading to a few students in the front of the room and pointing out the placement of a semi-colon in a sentence, while the rest of the class sits in the back listening to music or

sleeping. The disengaged teaching is juxtaposed with another scene where there is institutional support for two experienced full-time tenured English professors to team-teach a dynamic class that includes cooperative learning and games where students take ownership of their own learning. Interspersed with these views of classes are depictions of dismissive administrative attitudes suggesting that since "anyone can teach basic writing," resources for supporting and training of adjuncts are better used elsewhere; also there are illustrations of how complex the lives of basic writers can be.

Despite the video discussing institutional constraints on the community college students and teachers, several graduate students in a previous seminar responded viscerally only to what they saw as the poor teaching illustrated in the video. One student commented that the disengaged instructors had no business teaching, which, while perhaps a reasonable reaction to what was shown, disregarded the contexts of inequality and institutional disdain for developmental courses which fostered such teaching. One graduate student, who had gone from adjunct teaching to full-time teaching, did note with dismay that it is always the adjunct teachers who get blamed, and spoke in support of strong adjunct instructors, but she still overlooked administrative factors that might prevent instructors from fully engaging with their students. Though the class with collaborative learning suggested that the instructors thought of their students as capable learners and problem solvers, the other settings suggested that the instructors mirrored the institutional view that developmental students were not fully worth the efforts to educate them.

Given the goal about making a class about Basic Writing be more than an introduction to teaching approaches for "fixing" student writing, what follows is a discussion of how I designed the Seminar in Basic Writing Theory and Pedagogies to allow students to explore social, institutional, and pedagogical aspects of Basic Writing in an integrated way.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COURSE DESIGN: DEFINITIONS OF BASIC WRITERS AND BASIC WRITING

Students enroll in the Seminar in Basic Writing Theory and Pedagogy for a mix of professional and educational reasons, and with widely different understandings of who basic writers are. Some students who are enrolled in our Masters of Composition program typically have little teaching experience, but aspire to teaching composition at the community college or university level. The course also attracts high school teachers and current

community college instructors who enroll in master's courses for professional development credit or added validation, especially when they can take it in the summer outside of the regular school year. Occasionally, an MA literature student will join the class primarily to gain an added boost in a highly competitive job market. Students in the MA literature program tend to be strong in analyzing published texts, but have little or no knowledge of composition or writing studies theory. The various backgrounds of the graduate students point to key differences in perceptions of who basic writers are and what they may need.[1] Such variety in backgrounds has the potential to generate rich discussions and break down barriers of understanding between high school and college instructors, or composition and literature majors.

At the same time, while there is a diversity in professional orientations, often the Seminar in Basic Writing Pedagogies draws largely middle class white students, which influences how members of the class might understand uptake of standard language. Many students who enroll in this graduate course feel confident in their general writing abilities. If these students admit to struggling with more complex writing, they attribute the difficulty to the topic and not to the act of writing itself. However, they come into the class believing that basic writers struggle with all aspects of writing, regardless of the topic. They also tend to express a love and appreciation of reading, at least in terms of reading literature, but feel that basic writers do not have such an affinity for reading.

Consequently, when asked to define a basic writer, I have found that MA graduate students might make skill-based comparisons to themselves, without accounting for class or ethnic backgrounds, or life experiences. Some definitions offered on the first day of this course were that a basic writer was someone who does not know, or failed to learn, grammar and basic essay structure, or that a basic writer is someone who does not read enough and therefore does not know how texts work. These assertions are not necessarily wrong in themselves, but incomplete and limited, stemming from the notion of deficit that Basic Writing theorists and practitioners have been fighting against for years (see Rose; Bartholomae "The Tidy House"; McCrary; Inoue), and importantly, from seeing basic writers as having impoverished literate and language practices compared to those that they have acquired.

In setting up the course, in addition to taking into account the professional and lived experiences of the students, I also needed to decide how to address the varied scholarly voices in the field. Basic Writing as a discipline has a relatively brief, but highly complex history, so in course design, it is necessary to decide how much of the course should reflect recent scholarly

developments and how much should rely on texts reaching back a few decades. Though current scholarship addresses concerns with definitions of basic writers, inequities in education, and changes in program design, graduate students may miss the nuances of current debates if they do not have a sense of how those debates played out over the past five decades. For instance, now, as was the case when Mina Shaughnessy was writing *Errors and Expectations* in the 1970's, there are questions about who should have access to higher education and how higher education could equitably address cultural difference while still maintaining academic standards. In the not so distant past, disenfranchised students had to fight for educational access and programs, and then had to fight for resources to accommodate their needs (Otte and Mlynarczyk). Now states seek to eliminate remedial courses in higher education, but without readily providing resources for learning support. Consequently, defining basic writers shifts in relation to the goals and needs of different institutions. By viewing access, equity, and definition as continuing issues, graduate students can better understand their own teaching contexts or potential teaching contexts in terms of what policies are being put into place for what reasons, and which historical patterns repeat.

One set of conflicting definitions from the 1980's and 1990's that I continue to use centers on how students see themselves and are seen in higher educational contexts. In "Inventing the University," David Bartholomae proposes that basic writers at an elite university might have good structural command of written language, but may not be able to articulate complexities of thought through their writing. In contrast, in *Lives on the Boundary*, Mike Rose, who has worked with and advocated for a very different population in adult education, suggests that basic writers might not have had the life opportunities to engage with academic reading or writing.

This contrast of views illustrates how conceptualizations of cognitive ability, personality, identity, and social contexts suggest approaches for Basic Writing courses, assignments and support structures. Some approaches may work explicitly with texts while others may advocate for addressing affect and life experiences.[2] Some approaches seek to erase cultural and linguistic difference in writing, while other approaches seek to build upon it (Otte and Mlynarczyk; McCrary; Elder and Davila). How Basic Writing and basic writers are defined impacts the extent to which innovations in pedagogy can be realized.

A growing concern with course design centers on the shifting relationship that higher education has with secondary schools. Scholarly discussions that are relevant to graduate students teaching in or planning

to teach at community colleges or universities may not address the needs or interests of high school teachers. Since much of the scholarship tagged Basic Writing discusses higher education contexts, it makes sense that the emphasis would be here, but it is also a legitimate concern since high school teachers work with underprepared writers and have a mix of students who are going to college or seeking other paths. Additionally, high schools now push to have students be college ready, and that often means expecting that students will circumvent developmental courses in college, blurring the lines between preparatory and developmental instruction. Additionally, as there is a tendency for college level instructors to blame weak writing ability on high school teaching, conversations across the educational levels must be encouraged. Though currently there are no readings on the syllabus addressing the connection of high school to college, the experiential activities are designed to foster that exchange.

Basic Writing does not exist in an educational vacuum. It is part of the broader context of culture (Clark and Ivanič), and so exists within other cultural and political conflicts. For example, a few years ago, the field was asking about the place of Basic Writing in universities, when state funding for developmental courses was being pulled away or severely restricted, even as standardized assessments and narrow definitions of literacy permeated high school curriculum. Currently, though stand-alone non-credit courses focused on grammatical structure or rhetorical modes still exist in community colleges and universities, some institutions responded to changes in funding and to the perception that the non-credit classes contributed to student attrition with innovations such as ALP courses (Adams, Gearheart, Miller, and Roberts), Stretch courses (Glau), or Studio models (Lalicker),[3] and more flexible placement assessments (Blakesley). As graduate students prepare to teach in various contexts, or as teaching contexts shift, students have to at least be aware of the approaches that are gaining traction in colleges and universities across the country. They need to understand that curricular choices depend on the structures which house them.

TEXT AND MATERIAL OVERVIEW

To connect issues from the past to those of the present, the narrative of the course roughly followed the layout of George Otte and Rebecca Mlynarczyk's book titled Basic Writing*, and then picked up some of the key texts referenced therein.* The chapters in their book are: "Historical Overview"; "Defining Basic Writing and Basic Writers"; "Practices and Pedagogies"; "Research"; and "The

Future of Basic Writing." However, in some cases I also used relevant texts not mentioned in their overview. Often the supplemental articles were used for experiential activities to give students hands-on experiences with some of the concepts discussed. Additionally, I also made some modifications to the sequencing of the course around the chapters in *Basic Writing*. The main changes were that I did not have the class work with the chapter on Research, for reasons that will be explained below, and that I moved "The Future of Basic Writing" to be discussed earlier in the course, right after the introduction and first chapter. This made sense in my course because teachers now are entering programs where credit-bearing extended or support models are in place or are being implemented. The chapter "The Future of Basic Writing" offered a good overview for how the field had been shifting, but in my view, served well as an introduction to the field.

Below is a list of texts used in addition to Otte and Mlynarczyk's chapters which allowed the class to go into depth about key questions such as how institutional contexts shaped definitions of basic writers, how working from narrow definitions of basic writers could inhibit rather than foster learning, and how instructors could learn to tap basic writers' linguistic practices and knowledge to set up inclusive classrooms with cognitively engaging activities. For each section, I list the main theme from *Basic Writing* and the texts selected that addressed that theme. The reasons for each choice will be explained with each set of texts.

Historical Overview

 Introduction *Errors and Expectations* (Shaughnessy); Excerpt from *Lives on the Boundaries* (Rose); "Inventing the University" (Bartholomae)

Central to any historical discussion of Basic Writing would be Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations.* What I find most useful to current students is not necessarily her detailed discussion of the grammatical forms, but her argument that basic writers make errors because they are actively working with language and means of expression as opposed to being lazy or careless. Consequently, I decided to put the introduction to *Errors and Expectations* on the syllabus, but to leave out the more heavily error-focused chapters of the book. The introduction offers a view on how Basic Writing began as a field and of the complex social situation that surrounded its implementation. This complexity is addressed in the tensions between opening the doors to higher education and then managing the influx of students that the schools had not

been fully prepared to handle. Despite Shaughnessy's showing that students with Open Admissions came from many different kinds of backgrounds, the chapter illustrates a general perception that lacking a command of grammatical structure of written language was the root of writing problems for basic writers regardless of social context. David Bartholomae and Mike Rose each argue that social context has an impact. Bartholomae argues that basic writers might have good control over grammar, but in an elite university, may be unable to engage with topics in nuanced or in-depth ways. Rose argues that the way academic tasks are set up can derail a student's ability to process and produce text, particularly among working-class students.

Defining Basic Writing and Basic Writers

Discounted Dreams: High Hopes and Harsh Realities at America's Community Colleges (Glasser, Isaacs, and Merrow); "Tidy House" (Bartholomae); "Remediation as Social Construct: Perspectives from an Analysis of Classroom Discourse"; (Hull, Rose, Losey, Fraser and Castellano); Recognizing the Learning Disabled College Writer (O'Hearn)

Discounted Dreams offered an overview of community colleges in general, and provided a window on complex intersections of school policies and student lives. While the previous section on the history of Basic Writing largely established definitions of basic writers as being tied to characteristics of the students, in this section, each of these texts challenged definitions of Basic Writing by illustrating the uncomfortable notion that sometimes our teaching practices and perceptions impose deficit labels on students in Basic Writing classes. The ideas from these texts align well with concepts from the video. To address these concepts, small groups of students have a chance to read one of the texts in depth and share their insights with the rest of the class.

Practices and Pedagogies

"Grammar Games in the Age of Anti-Remediation"(Rustick); "Represent, Representin', Representation: The Efficacy of Hybrid Text in the Writing Classroom" (McCrary); CBW Research Share (Baldridge)

Here the supplemental materials moved beyond what Otte and Mlynarczyk present. Though the course was designed to bring up considerations beyond pedagogy, it was important to examine how pedagogical processes

can move focus away from deficit notions and toward social considerations and cognitively challenging, communicative tasks. With this chapter, we worked through contentious issues in the field, exploring what it meant to look at grammatical knowledge through a lens of student world knowledge and capability as opposed to a lens of deficit. We did so by tapping tacit understandings of grammar and the potentials of hybrid discourse. We also explored the CBW Resource Share to see how other instructors designed engaging and challenging lessons that allowed students to show their perceptions in their writing.

Research (No texts used- not covered in this session)

Previously, I had included the chapter on Research, along with examples of research in Basic Writing, but in a very short summer session, I justified the removal of the research section, because, though reading the research that accompanies shifts in pedagogies, policies, and attitudes is certainly important, students needed to start work on their own open-ended final projects, so that they could explore topics relevant to their own contexts. These projects included a feasibility study in establishing a writing center in a high school district, an exploration of ways to incorporate creative processes in composition classes at a community college, and a proposal for better articulated vertical alignments of composition classes between freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior classes in a high school district with the end goal of preparation for college writing. In place of reading about established research practices, several students e-mailed questions to experts in the field, who had generously responded to my request on the CBW-listserv for people willing to be interviewed. Details about this approach will be discussed later.

The Future of Basic Writing

"A Basic Introduction to Basic Writing Program Structures: A Baseline and Five Alternatives" (Lalicker)

Lalicker's text gives a general description of the kinds of programs that had been emerging from the late 1990's. He also lays out considerations for adopting one configuration over another depending on context. Community Colleges in the Chicago area, and lately NEIU itself, have been restructuring basic writing classes in the last few years. At times though, some of the graduate students who taught in community colleges said that it seemed as if faculty would only learn about an approach through an administrator who

would tell them that a new model would be adopted, and that they then needed to figure out how to make it work. Otte and Mlynarczyk, along with Lalicker, set up definitions of program innovations and provided a context for graduate students teaching at community colleges to more broadly understand programmatic options.

Readers might notice that some key texts were omitted from the course reading list or that not as many newer texts were included. In setting up a critical focus, I chose texts that illustrated how social perceptions might play out in classrooms instead of working with texts that offered a larger social critique. I have found the graduate students in this seminar to be school- focused and therefore I chose the classroom and institutions of higher learning as sites through which to explore perceptions of equity and privilege. I have also found that some of the texts written previously lay out foundations for discussion of current issues, so that reaching back a little further helped students find a lens through which to view current questions. Future versions of the course might use more current texts as situations in higher education shift.

ACTIVITIES FOR A THEORIZED PRACTICE: FOUR AREAS FOR IN-CLASS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In addition to reading and discussing texts, I sought to incorporate in-class activities where the graduate students could actively engage with writing or pedagogical problems, so that they could use shared experiences to build upon the insights they gained from reading and from their own out of class experiences. The goal of the activities was either to have students look at their own writing and thinking processes or to have them engage as teachers or learners for some of the concepts discussed in class. With some activities, the students needed to write in class, or articulate grammatical or textual choices. In other activities, they had to teach material to each other, or articulate their work to professionals in the field beyond our classroom. These activities allowed the class to develop their insights with reflections from how they felt in the moment of engagement. (Individual activities will be described in more detail later.)

Area 1: Questioning What Causes Difficulty of Written Expression

Exercise 1: "Becoming" a Basic Writer

To challenge the idea that inadequate or tangled text comes solely from a lack of knowledge of how written language works, I put two activities on the syllabus for early in the course. Before engaging with any reading, on the first day of class, I asked my graduate students to provide their own definitions of basic writers. Once we shared definitions which tended to center on lack of knowledge of grammatical structure, or lack of interest in reading, I asked the class to write to a prompt which was designed for most of the class to have difficulty addressing with any fluency. This prompt asks the students to make an argument about whether or not South Korea should maintain a ban on Japanese animae and other elements of Japanese pop culture, given the cultural imposition of Japan on Korea during the second World War (see Appendix). Students are asked to discuss specific animae, which might either show aspects only of Japanese culture or present a broader pan-Asian cultural perspective. Students have about 15 minutes to write on this topic. In all of the times I have used this activity prior, and as was borne out with this class, students did not take the full time to write, but instead, stopped writing early in frustration, produced simplistic statements about television, spent time explaining how much they did not know about the topic, or wrote in circles about a vague idea. Students in this class gratefully accepted the offer to stop the clock early, and generally expressed embarrassment about what they wrote. Many of them decried how they then felt like basic writers because they had produced very short, and in some cases, highly repetitious text, offered ideas that did not progress, and in some cases ignored the prompt because they had nothing to say about it.

The prompt was designed to make composing difficult, illustrating that as we move from familiar topics or contexts, anyone can become a basic writer. The inability to write in a certain way and at a certain time may not come only from a lack of knowledge about writing, but also from challenges presented in contexts. At the end of the writing period, students shared how they felt about their performance on the prompt. Many said that if they could have researched more, they could have done better, and this led them to acknowledge how beginning writers feel when they are pushed to write without enough background information. Some also felt disoriented because their sense of identity as students who usually showed themselves

to be comfortable writers was shaken. The discomfort they felt writing also lead to discussion about how identities might clash with writing tasks. The activity served as a preview to the idea that ways to define a Basic Writer are not stable and set, and that deficit notions do not account for challenges found in some writing contexts.

Exercise 2: Analyzing Content and Grammatical Error

While the animae writing activity was intended to give students a chance to reflect on their writing practices when they did not have a solid way into the topic, another area that merits reflection is whether or not what we define as a lack of grammatical knowledge really is just that. Working through complexity or developing an idea more deeply can lead to an increase in grammatical error (Bartholomae, "Inventing the University"), as shown on pages 7 and 8 of *Errors and Expectations.* On these pages, there is a portrait of student writing which Shaughnessy argues is a student losing control of grammar to discuss a fairly complex idea about infant and adult perception. I used the projection screen to show each successive sentence attempt in isolation, so that the students could analyze what was going on from sentence to sentence. The question then was whether the sentences suggested lack of command of grammar or whether a change of perspective was impacting the writing. The following is an analysis of what we observed. In the first two attempts, the student wrote:

> Start 1: Seeing and hearing is something beautiful and strange to infant. Start 2: To a infant seeing and hearing is something beautiful and stonge to infl (p.7).

Though these two sentences have a few grammatical errors such as the missing article "an" in the first sentence before "infant," or an incorrect article, lack of a comma after "infant" and the spelling of "strange," they have a basically correct structure and suggest that seeing and hearing may have different meanings for parents and infants. This sense of difference continued in Start 6, where the student wrote: "I agree that a child is more sensitive to seeing and hearing than his parent because it is also new to him and more appreciate. His. . . " (p.8). In this instance, the idea was being elaborated on as the writer was adding reasons for his agreement. However, by Start 8, the student's ideas were changing to a mix of agreement and disagreement and, by the final start listed, Start 10, the student wrote:

> I disagree I fell that seeing and hearing has the same quality to both infants and parents. Hearing and seeing is such a great quality to infants and parents, and they both appreciate, just because there aren't so many panters or musicians around doesn't mean that infants are more sensitive to beautiful that there parents. (p.8)

Certainly, the grammatical correctness has deteriorated in the text, but the complexity of the idea has also increased. Shaughnessy did not say if this was a series of starts in one sitting or if they came over time with discussion. When read within the context of the whole chapter, the situation does look like one of a student struggling with structure. But when looked at in isolation as a progression of writing, it can also look like a writer who was struggling with a shifting or developing stance on the topic. Seen this way, the original point was refined, which might account for revisions that seemed to double back over themselves and result in more grammatical errors. Graduate students in the class noted that they had not really read the examples as the progression of an idea when they just saw them in the chapter, but rather as a set of individual sentences with various errors, as was perhaps what Shaughnessy had intended to show. They also noted how attention to the grammar had kept them from seeing that what the writer was saying was also shifting. Teachers and teachers in-training sometimes have trouble understanding how expressing a complex thought might lead to deterioration of grammatical control, so this was one way to show how grammatical knowledge is not necessarily a set or stable ability. It is my hope that these two activities broadened the definition of what it means to be a basic writer, and how factors other than command of the surface structure of language could come into play.

Area 2: Questioning Whether We as Instructors Are Perpetuating Deficit Labels

Another way that deficit notions can be challenged is to examine our own ingrained attitudes about intellectual abilities and diligence when we encounter students whose writing does not follow academic norms. While many instructors support students through their writing struggles, others, even well-intentioned ones, can quash motivation and knock down, instead of build up, confidence among basic writers. The texts used here illustrate how we as instructors (including myself) might draw on deficit notions of basic writers, even if we are not aware we hold such views. These texts also illustrate how deficit notions of student performance also graft onto social attitudes

about race, ethnicity, class, gender and ability. David Bartholomae's "The Tidy House" discusses a student who is a critical thinker, but presents his critique in an angry, swear-word laden way that pushes against academic writing conventions, and at first makes Bartholomae confused about how to read the essay. Glynda Hull, Mike Rose, Kay Losey Fraser and Marisa Castellano's "Remediation as Social Construct: Perspectives from an Analysis of Classroom Discourse" shows how an instructor's strict adherence to a teacher-controlled discussion pattern where the teacher initiates, responds to, and evaluates student contributions, and judges students based on their adherence to this structure, causes an engaged and enthusiastic student to lose confidence in her own abilities, even though she is a strong writer and a critical but divergent thinker. Carolyn O'Hearn's "Recognizing the Learning Disabled College Writer" discusses how instructors might deem the writing of dyslexic students as lazy or careless. O'Hearn's article is a bit outdated in that it focuses on spelling errors that can largely be addressed by spell checks now, but it still portrays the concern that a writer's effort and engagement might be discounted because of surface errors.

These articles encouraged reflection about classroom expectations and instructor attitudes that may be socially normalized and therefore invisible to those who hold them. Each of these articles addressed different aspects of these attitudes. However, with the abbreviated term, to assure that my graduate students had a chance to consider at least some of the issues in depth, instead of having all the students read all three articles, I assigned the readings in a format that I call "Each One Teach One." In this format:

- Students selected one of the three articles to teach to other students in small groups.
- At the start of the class session, students who read the same article met and discussed what they read and what they wanted to share with their classmates.
- After that, we once again divided the class so that they were mixed in with students who had not read the same texts. Generally, these were groups of six, with two people who had read the same article in each group. Students took turns introducing their articles and raising points for discussion, so that all the students were at least exposed to ideas from all of the articles.
- Consequently, each student attended to one article intensively, but could learn about and discuss issues from each of the articles.

This format for reading and discussing these articles yielded many talking points. Based on "The Tidy House," students questioned the way our assignments might shut some students out, even though we are trying to invite them into a way of thinking that we deem valuable. Students also commented on how we might not recognize critical thinking when we see it written in an unexpected form. In a similar way, with "Remediation as a Social Construct," students questioned how classroom discourse might limit rather than invite the free flow of ideas. "Recognizing the Learning Disabled College Writer" generated robust discussion from high school teachers questioning how learning disabilities were addressed in college classes. They noted that students with IEP's throughout K-12 received a lot of guidance and support, so they felt that such students would be lost when they entered a college environment where they had to self-disclose and seek out assistance to obtain accommodations. Through the Each One Teach One activity, we found that though examining our own attitudes in the classroom could be uncomfortable, it was eye-opening to see how we as instructors or future instructors might be complicit in creating doubt among our students, and making them feel unwelcome in colleges and universities, despite our intentions to do the opposite (Ybarra).

Area 3: Activating Latent and Conflicting Knowledge about Standard Language

Another way of looking at linguistic ability is to tap what basic writers may know about Standard English, even if it does not yet come through in their writing. Margaret Rustick offers approaches for uncovering tacit understandings of grammatical knowledge through games. In her article "Grammar Games in the Age of Anti-Remediation," Rustick argued that many people who become writing teachers like to play with language and may have been encouraged to do so since childhood in the forms of word games or puzzles, but basic writers have had fewer opportunities to play with language in school settings (though such play may have occurred orally outside of school). She suggested that if students were offered a non-evaluative space to explore aspects of language, they could test their understandings of multiple grammatical rules that might be in conflict with each other. Rustick introduced several classroom games with a grammar focus that pushed students to articulate grammatical knowledge and defend their judgments on sentences. As one of the hands-on activities in the class, we modified Rustick's game called

"Sentence Survivor" and played it in class. Actually playing the game, rather than just reading about it, forced players to articulate what made a sentence correct as well as what made it incorrect, and to use their understanding of grammar to argue for their perceptions.[4]

To play the game, the instructor creates a multi-clause sentence with many adjectives and descriptive phrases or clauses. Then:

- Students in groups take turns to eliminate up to three consecutive words while still maintaining a grammatically correct sentence.
- Meaning can shift in the sentence, which sometimes occurs in disconcerting ways, as long as the grammar remains intact.
- In teams, students get points for each word they eliminate, unless opposing teams successfully challenge their grammatical correctness.

Rustick suggested writing each word on an individual card which students hold up in the front of the room and which they place down when their word is eliminated. I modified this so that the sentence was projected in a Word or Google Doc. To keep track of how the sentence changed, I projected two copies of the same sentence. We kept the first copy as a reference and eliminated words from the second copy. Below is the sentence that I created for the game, following Rustick's guidelines of using multi-clausal sentences with an abundance of adjectives.

> Though many educators and other public employees in the state of Illinois are deeply concerned about budget cuts to elementary, high schools, colleges and universities across the state, we tend to forget about the sad plights of the poor multi-million dollar lottery winners, who because of reasons beyond their control, will not be receiving the much anticipated winnings due to them by taking a risky chance at playing the lottery and having their correct number selected by a machine with bouncing ping- pong balls, because the state says that checks cannot be written at this time.

With this sentence, as often happens in this game, the graduate students first removed adjectives or phrases that kept the basic structure intact, such as the word "many" in the first line or "much anticipated" near the end of the sentence. However, as the game progressed, meaning was affected when a team nominated removal of word sets such as "other public" (resulting in "though educators and employees") or "bouncing ping-pong"

(making the phrase "machines with balls"). Students tended to object to some meaning shifts, so we would then have to read the new version of the sentence out loud to check that the emerging sentence was still following grammatical rules. Often we would argue about whether a phrase was grammatical and why we would say that it was or was not. So, for instance, if a team nominated removing the first word "though," suggesting that the sentence can begin with "many,"other teams could challenge this choice by saying it was then creating a comma splice since two complete sentences were then separated by a comma, and that the word "though" made the clause dependent. Graduate students might use grammatical terms, such as "subordinate clause," but such terms are not necessary in explanations. In this case, it would suffice to say something like, "If you do that, you have a comma separating two whole sentences." When we played with this sentence, the end result, after much debate was:

> Though employees are concerned, winners will be receiving winnings due to having their number selected, because checks cannot be.

Although the final version of the sentence lacked meaning, the class determined that the clauses followed grammatical rules, but they also noted that even grammatical sentences could result in nonsense. The process of deriving the final sentence, with much good natured arguing, forced students to draw on their latent grammatical knowledge and to explain why the revised sentence followed grammatical rules. The game helped illustrate that we have latent understandings of grammar that we take for granted, but that these understandings can be accessed when students are tasked with articulating what they know as opposed to being shown what they did not write correctly. Also the game illustrates how intertwined meaning and grammar are, as most of the arguments arose when nominations violated the meaning of the sentence as opposed to grammatical rules, illustrating how grammar enhances but does not embody meaning.[5]

While the game Sentence Survivor offered opportunities to display a knowledge base and deep linguistic understandings of standard grammar, the graduate students resisted exploring how use of non-standard dialects and other languages might also position basic writers as linguistically adept as opposed to linguistically deficient (Shaughnessy; Rose; McCrary; Elder and Davila). However, viewing standardized English as the only acceptable written form negates the communicative and cognitive skills necessary for

negotiating across language differences, and as Asao Inoue points out, often sets up basic writers, and especially basic writers of color, for failure in that their stronger language abilities are not recognized, but their challenges are amplified. Upon seeing non-standard formats and discourses, teachers and teachers in training may not look for, and therefore may not appreciate, the thought that goes into such writing. Donald McCrary argues that if basic writing students have opportunities to use hybrid language in at least a few assignments, there would be opportunities for teachers and students to learn about the rhetorical value of fluidity in moving across dialect and standard styles.

Nevertheless, the graduate students noted that inviting non-standardized dialects into classroom writing butted up against institutional constraints. For instance, when reading McCrary, some of the graduate students expressed interest in incorporating hybrid writing assignments into their classes, but wondered out loud about the negative responses of colleagues and department chairs who might view such assignments as counter to the mission of the writing program. Putting the question on the table at least allowed students to see that questions of language diversity needed to be addressed in ways that moved beyond a school-home dichotomy. The games, in connection with these readings, helped the graduate students appreciate that linguistic knowledge took many forms and worked in many kinds of applications, even if, in the case of hybrid language, they found such writing would be hard to implement.

Area 4: Finding Pedagogical Approaches

Though the course brought up many questions that should inform pedagogical choices and understandings, the students in the seminar still needed to build up their own repertoires in implementing cognitively and socially engaging activities, which challenged narrow representations of form and correctness. To provide interesting and user-friendly teaching approaches, I directed the graduate students to the Council of Basic Writing Resource Share, designed by Elizabeth Baldridge. I introduced this site fairly early in the term and invited students to explore whatever approaches or activities they wanted, and then to present one or two to the class, when we covered the "Pedagogies and Practice" section of *Basic Writing.* In presenting to the class, the graduate students had to show the activity (and, in some cases, have their classmates do the activity) and link it to theoretical concepts discussed in class. For the presentations, I allotted the bulk of two class days (6+ hours),

so that students would have time to really discuss the activities and imagine them within their own teaching contexts or potential teaching contexts. Generally, students in the class enjoyed sharing what they found and enjoyed taking part in the activities, although the hands-on experiences with these activities sometimes bolstered, and sometimes challenged, the theoretical concepts discussed in the course.

One activity that promoted language play in offering and supporting interpretations was an open-ended activity called "Finding Your Inner Morgan Freeman," created by Isabel Quintana Wulf. This activity showed a soundless introduction to a nature video and asked the viewers to write what they thought would be said in the voiceover. When engaging in this activity, the graduate students appreciated the variety of writing and ideas generated from a shared but ambiguous text that invited higher-level thinking. They noted that this activity encouraged students to play with language and draw on interpretative skills without insisting on standardized language, since a voiceover can take standardized and non-standardized forms.

However, not every presentation aligned with theorized practice. One student in my class presented an activity requiring that participants underline the topic sentences of an essay, with the assumption that it would be the first sentence of every paragraph. When I questioned whether this would lead to mechanical underlining without regard to topic development, some students thought about ways that discourse could vary from the "topic sentence as first sentence" pattern and still be unified. Others in the class favored a more mechanical approach, arguing that it would reinforce a "correct" pattern for writing, even if not all writing followed that pattern. As a class, we debated if rote mechanical work positions the basic writer as incapable of discerning organizational or cohesive devices to establish relationships in texts or whether such rote work might in turn build a stepping-stone for deeper understandings of texts. These kinds of debates were productive to have because they illustrated how views of theory and views of practice might compete against each other in basic writing classrooms and programs.

FINAL PROJECTS: ENTERING DISCUSSIONS IN THE FIELD

Previously when the seminar was offered, the culminating project had been a group role-play, where students in the class took on roles of different stakeholders, such as poorly served basic writing students, tenured literature faculty, or adjunct instructors who by teaching in different places had upwards of one hundred students a week, to discuss the place of asic Writing

in a fictionalized university (See Buell). However, the focus of the simulation was outdated, and given the short time in the semester,[6] I had to weigh how much time we would spend with a simulation versus time spent on other things, such as the Each One Teach One readings and the Resource Share discussions. In the end, instead of a group simulation, I revised this final project as an individual or group research project, calling on students to write a proposal for a programmatic assessment or pedagogical approach, which they could see applied to a specific context. The proposal could cover any aspect or combination of aspects we had looked at in the course to encourage integrated thinking about policies and practices. This opened up the option for students to explore support structures for basic writers, connections of assessment to pedagogy, configurations of programmatic policy or, for some, a more theorized approach to their own teaching. I encouraged students to view the proposal as something they would like to see implemented in their own workplaces or possibly at schools they had attended. Students presented their research proposals to the class as drafts, and then wrote up final versions with a reflection about the process which included steps that they might use for implementing their ideas.

On the programmatic level, since I was only familiar with some recent developments through reading, I decided that once I knew student topics, I would put out a call to the Council of Basic Writing listserv to see if experts in the field would be willing to be interviewed online by the students in the class about these topics. Members of the CBW-listserv were extremely generous with their time and advice. Not only could they direct my students to other key resources but also, more importantly, they could speak from direct experience to the questions posed by the students. For some of my students, this was their first time engaging in professional discussions with practitioners in the field outside of their immediate academic circle and they found these conversations exhilarating. In addition to help with their immediate projects, I think these exchanges helped my graduate students to feel more of a part of the broader Basic Writing community, and I hope they will use the listserv again for other purposes.

Darin Jensen and Christie Toth have argued that graduate training programs overlook community college contexts, but graduate training programs in universities may also pay little attention to pressures on high school writing teachers. Facilitating communication across universities, community colleges, and high schools is valuable because we grapple with the same issues, and all of us, including myself, had a chance to learn about how shared concepts played out across the different contexts. From one

student teaching in the community colleges, we learned of the positive aspects and the tough challenges in designing co-curricular classes, loosely following the stretch model, across the seven community colleges in the city of Chicago. The city colleges are moving toward a greater integration of reading and writing courses and are trying to implement directed self-placement assessments across the seven colleges. However, implementation was similar to what Warnke and Higgins noted, in that administrators imposed approaches that work in other programs without adequate attention to variations and nuances across institutions. Nevertheless, one graduate student reported that this was an encouraging move away from treating writing as an isolated skill and from using narrow definitions of reading and writing ability as a yardstick for student placement so that at least some of the rigid gatekeeping grammar and structure parameters were slowly breaking down. His work well illustrated the complexity of these elements and was bolstered by his interviews set up through the listserv, where he could ask how other programs had implemented new curriculum and assessments.

From the high school teachers, we learned about shifting access concerns for basic writers at the high school level. Recently in a few of the area high schools, local studies had uncovered low numbers of students of color in Honors or AP classes although the districts had large minority or immigrant populations. The schools then mandated that teachers nominate students to the Honors or AP classes, though they may have currently been in developmental classes instead of standard classes. While such students initially felt honored to have the opportunity to take high-level classes, after essentially being "dropped" into the classes, they struggled with the material, not because they could not learn it, but because they had no scaffolding for how to approach the expectations of the course. Teachers of some of these advanced classes, accustomed to students who knew very well how to succeed in school and whose family discourses aligned well with the standardized English expected in the course, complained that the new students brought down the quality of the course. The questions Shaughnessy highlighted about equality and access being seen in conflict with quality of instruction in City College reverberated in northern Illinois nearly fifty years later. One of the students opted to use this situation for her final project, discussing how the courses needed to consider a more articulated vertical alignment in the high school, so that students could have a better sense of what was expected from freshman to sophomore, sophomore to junior, and junior to senior years. She also argued that better resources were needed to help

students succeed in advanced courses and to help teachers understand how to reach these students and tap their potential.

REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In laying out the course for the Summer 2017 version of the Seminar in Basic Writing, I tried to show some of the topics and issues that graduate students needed to develop a nuanced view of issues in Basic Writing. At times in professional journals, when I have read class or activity descriptions, I had the impression that everything worked as it should; I do not mean to leave that impression. Though I feel a lot of learning and growth occurred in the class, there were areas that did not succeed with all the students. Seeing that there was not a universal definition of Basic Writing was hard for some students in the class to internalize. Even with analyzing how the definition of basic writers might vary, and with the experience of not being able to express themselves in the first day activity, a few graduate students wanted to talk about basic writers in terms of how they might perform within a level category, such as English 099. The variety in how basic writers are defined and how writing instruction might be approached frustrated some of the graduate students, who perhaps sought more of a guide in how to "fix" textual errors. Nevertheless, by exploring the Resource Share and interacting with professionals in the field though the CBW-listserv, along with the other readings and activities, the graduate students in the course gained greater awareness of how pedagogical choices could highlight growth and foster deep learning for basic writers, even in the face of institutional and social constraints.

As Barbara Gleason noted in 2006, and as Jensen and Toth reiterated in 2017, especially in connection to preparing graduate students to teach in community colleges, and as this special issue and the previous special issue of *Journal of Basic Writing* illustrate, there is a need for graduate classes which introduce Basic Writing history, theory and pedagogy. As we design these courses, we have to balance the important insights gained from our academic history with sensitivity to changes in how the field fits into the shifting landscapes of secondary and higher education. Basic Writing theory has always called for the consideration of local contexts and constraints, requiring that we not see Basic Writing as one entity. Furthermore, Basic Writing concerns are part of an academic continuum. In my classes, we sometimes joke about how the level above always blames the level below for what their students cannot do— the content area professors blame the Basic Writing or first-year composition teachers if students cannot write at the expected

level; college professors and instructors place the blame on high schools; high school teachers blame their colleagues in middle school. Though we have to look at local contexts, we also have to foster discussion across different educational levels so that we can better coordinate our efforts across secondary schools, community colleges, and universities. We need to better articulate curricular vertical alignments from high school to college level introductory writing courses, and from Basic Writing courses and first-year writing courses in connection with Writing Across the Curriculum. At the same time, we need to be mindful of ways that academic discourse could bar rather than welcome marginalized students and instead seek ways to be more linguistically inclusive.

As I look at the course design for the future, I hope to incorporate more ways for those teaching in high schools and community colleges to facilitate discussions across contexts. I also hope to further explore how institutional constraints within high schools influence possibilities for college level writing courses, and how community colleges and high schools can better communicate with universities. As institutions implement new programs, we need to critically interrogate rationales and actualizations of practice and policy (Warnke and Higgins). Finally, within and beyond the class, we should use the resources of the Basic Writing community and contribute back where we can. The graduate students in this class were impressed by the CBW Resource Share and by the responses through the CBW-listserv. Along with the helpful information and techniques, I think a key benefit was that they felt ready to participate in the larger professional community. In laying out the design for one version of a Seminar in Basic Writing, I hope that others will find insights into the design of their own MA courses.

Notes

1. For example, high school teachers may be accustomed to a wide range of writing abilities and challenges and may be able to read past structural difficulty in a given text, while a literature student with little exposure to the texts of developmental writers may find the same piece of writing incomprehensible. Or, an MA composition student with a fair knowledge of theory may feel ready to teach in any situation, but may be surprised when classmates who already teach at a community college caution that writing instruction must be tied to demonstrating improvement on a narrow performance assessment.

2. Rose and Bartholomae give telling examples of how these differences in definition impact how classes are designed and taught. Rose describes writing where students draw on their own experiences and those of their classmates as sources for largely narrative tasks. Bartholomae has students use complexly written texts as sources for analysis. Both define their courses as Basic Writing. More broadly, a program or institution that views basic writers as lacking grammar skills in standard English might limit discourse to isolated sentences to practice repetition of forms. In contrast, a program or institution that views grammar as more integrated into other communication systems may design writing activities that explore grammatical structures rhetorically.

3. At the time that I was teaching this seminar, we had not overhauled our developmental non-credit program, but in the intervening time, we are experimenting with a studio model where the highest level developmental non-credit course is combined with an English 101 course with additional support. However, the courses for this pilot have been under-enrolled, so it is unclear where this innovation will go.

4. In my experience, I have noticed that college writing teachers, as well as second language teachers, are sometimes hard-pressed to offer meaningful grammatical explanations, so they either rely on saying that this is "just the way English works" or point students to handbooks which may have a lot of examples but offer rules in isolation.

5. We play it in the Basic Writing Seminar so students can work with their own perceptions of how grammar works. Additionally, as Rustick points out, it also works well and in a surprisingly similar way with Basic Writing or first-year composition students. I have set up Sentence Survivor games in my Seminar in Basic Writing class and in my freshman composition classes, which have a fair number of basic writers. In all settings, classes become loud and active with debates about why a form is or is not correct - and such debates are essentially the point of the game.

6. I like this activity, especially in how it can bring perceptions of teaching conditions and priorities to the fore. But in planning the course, I felt that my focus was outdated in that now the question may be less about the place of a Basic Writing program in a university and more about what form a program can take to allow students the support they need

with increasingly shrinking resources and low public and institutional support. I tried to think of a way to modify the simulation to still keep the question of how differing stakeholders would view programs, but I found it hard to frame this in a form that would allow a whole class exploration of these issues in a simulation format. However, after reading Warnke and Higgins' article about critical form, I see the potential for building these issues into a simulation.

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APPENDIX

Prompt

What It Might Be Like to Be a Basic Writer

Assume this is a writing prompt for a program in cross-cultural communication that you would like to apply for as additional validation to your Master's degree. Read the scenario and write in response to the writing task. You have 15 minutes.

Scenario

According to Time International, Japanese *anime*, along with other Japanese pop cultural exports, has enjoyed wide popularity in other Asian countries such as South Korea. Along with its quality of production, *anime* has become popular because characters have Asian features, and many stories take place in non-specific but primarily Asian settings, although some stories are specifically located in Japan (Poitras, 1999). Young Koreans are said to feel that they can relate better to the characters they see in these stories than the ones presented in more westernized portrayals found in Disney, and that more broadly, Japanese popular culture portrays styles that they want to emulate.

Nevertheless, not long ago *anime* and other forms of Japanese popular culture were banned in Korea, in part because of the fear of cultural imposition by the generation who experienced colonization and cultural domination before and during the Second World War. To them, modern Japan's position in the cultural sphere elevates Japanese styles and sensibilities and undermines efforts to develop local pop cultural products and artists.

Writing Task

Write a short essay supporting either the position that Japanese popular culture and more specifically, *anime,* represent and inspire young Asians because they present accessible characters and perspectives, or the opposing position that *anime* primarily serves to expand Japanese cultural hegemony by infiltrating Japanese values and lifestyles through its characters and stories, at the expense of local cultural appreciation.

Use specific evidence and details to support your thesis. Consider Japan's past and current position in Asia. Also as evidence, cite Japanese *anime* or other movies that sold well in other parts of Asia, and analyze features that show it to be representative of either perspective. (Remember, you should not consider the effect of *anime* on an American market.)

Once you decide whether the culture portrayed in *anime* is general Asian or specific to Japan, make recommendations for whether the ban should be upheld, modified or done away with.

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Who is the Basic Writer? Reclaiming a Foundational Question for Graduate Students, New Teachers, and Emerging Scholars

Hope Parisi

ABSTRACT: The question of who is the basic writer threads the history of Basic Writing, characterizing many disciplinary tensions and concerns. When traced to Basic Writing's beginnings as part of open admissions at CUNY, the question often links to Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations as a telling of basic writers' language deficiencies. This essay attempts to reclaim the question of who is the basic writer for Basic Writing studies by proposing to offer it to graduate students of Basic Writing and their mentors as a heuristic occasion for professional development. To de-link the question a bit from its acquired history, I critique and reframe Errors' relation to its open admissions context and to its author's intentions for informing teacher disposition and emphasizing student affect. As well, I highlight examples of student-present literature for how they model teacher disposition in view of this question, and I reference recent basic writing scholars' efforts to view students more authentically from co-constructive and race-conscious perspectives.

KEYWORDS: affect; Basic Writing; basic writers; community college; Errors and Expectations; Quentin Pierce; Shaughnessy; social justice; two-year college

Recently having completed a project with a student affairs colleague, I've just spent a good part of my summer orienting myself to the research of persistence and retention, literature important for advocating for basic writers, particularly those assigned to remediation at community colleges. Authored by scholars of sociology, economics and education, urban education, and student affairs, this literature is discernibly "public facing," speaking to policy makers, administrators, and scholar-colleagues who strive for macro-reflections of the field. Professionally, these scholars teach and train graduate students, interface with Student Affairs and administration, and,

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admittedly, write impressive papers. I believe this literature is a great boon to our field's own growing efforts to argue policy, placement, and assessment, particularly from a two-year college and social justice standpoint. In fact, much of the literature on persistence and retention deals squarely with the community college now educating nearly half of all U.S. college students and a "*marginalized* majority" (Deil-Amen 136) of nontraditional students, also nationwide, and where most of our basic writers and readers, so designated, are taking their pre-college, developmental, or remedial courses.

While macro-reflections of Basic Writing have filtered my perceptions of the field for quite some time, I did not realize the extent to which intersections with policy in the scholarship were peopled with so many research-smart social science professionals, voicing many similar concerns. Some of these scholars are familiar to us, such as Hunter Boylan and Vincent Tinto; and others less so. And the extent to which many of our comp-rhet, community college scholar-colleagues have been optimizing this research toward reform proves its relevance to the work of the two-year college "teacher, scholar, activist" (Sullivan, "The Two-Year College"). In the mix, I find an interesting band of questions asking "whether" along with "why" and "how so," taking account of the many facets of incurred costs such support leverages on students themselves. Probing "whether"—whether remedial designations work, how much, and under what circumstances—as I have found, also returns critical clarities regarding the "who" of remedial identities and policies. For example, my recent dive into the retention and persistence literature has shone light in corners of what I believed were fairly developed views of basic writing cohorts, but I had never noticed *these*: commuting two-year college students who tend to prize campus events and activities in which academic and social advantage *combine*; Latinas in community college who consider the influences of their not-college educated partners as assets, not detractions; and "racial-minority commuting students," especially those from largely segregated neighborhoods, who "likely expect their time on campus to be an opportunity to interact *across* racial lines" (Deil-Amen 143-144, 142, 160; see also Zell; Karp). Here one can generalize to Basic Writing, as I do, Regina Deil-Amen's uncovering of the "traditional" college student as a "smaller and smaller minority" (136) among populations frequently steered toward remediation.

Today, as remedial designations are more critically interrogated, the "whether" questions now current across disciplines may feel stark to some instructors who have spent years of their professional lives inside the basic

writing classroom. They may confound in classrooms of graduate education in Basic Writing that approach the topic in view of history and through the lens of social justice. Problem-solving around these questions might mean permanently setting the main keywords of our discipline in scare quotes. (Think of Joseph Trimmer's 1987 finding of "700 different ways to identify [basic writers] across 900 colleges" [4]). How, then, might it still be possible to discourse students and their contexts from a *micro*-perspective, to properly see, know, and claim the students for whom we would advocate, in relation to a bracketed field?

The history of Basic Writing tells us that the question of who is the basic writer is foundational—an earmark of those conversations and debates identifying Basic Writing with the tensive politics and promise of 1960s Civil Rights movements and their retractive aftermaths. But like Mary Soliday has noted of identifications of students as basic writers more generally, it's a question in which we may find that, on some level, the actual students have gone missing. In "Defining Basic Writing in Context," Lynn Troyka observed "the matter of identity" (13) in searching out who is the basic writer makes it possible to say who basic writing *is for* and so what basic writing *does*— two keys for authority in our field. By 1987, Troyka saw the *what to do* of Basic Writing inductively linked to the *who* of basic writers as an urgent matter of disciplinary definitions. Searching needs and reasons to designate students as "basic" moved theory *past* Mina Shaughnessy's early-on, empathic urging that colleagues recognize students' capacity for the new opportunities, requiring great resources, and *toward* conceiving writing problems that might be generalizable to a national population (Troyka 13). Today the question arises in moves to combat additional limits on access and the advancement of opportunity. Given these facts, what does it mean to grasp the question in view of one of its other facets, turning toward graduate student mentorship and as a means to recognize actual students?

In this essay, I hope to make the case for reclaiming what I see as an important and tensive question for graduate students and emerging scholars in Basic Writing: who is the basic writer? New fast-track versions of writing support and college completion implicitly question basic writers, "Why are you here?" by retrospective reads of how well and soon they hit the ground running. Retention and persistence studies, by contrast, push to account for the stressors of keeping going for many college students, and instead ask, "Why *aren't* you here?" I suggest it is time to refocus our founding question to "*Who* are you *here*?" and "*Who* is Basic Writing *for*?" On some fundamental level perhaps we need to reclaim our question from an over-determined and

largely responsive history. Rich evidence of "student-presen[ce]" (Harrington 97) in the Basic Writing literature has clearly increased over the years, revealing many facets of *who*, a good thing. But as new arrangements for writing supports and their populations arise and (re)balance, who is to be included? And how do we speak toward questions we have not invited, in particular, furtive *whethers* targeting students of low-income; racially minoritized and first-generation students; and those of other non-traditional groups?

A special issue focused on graduate education in Basic Writing is the right place to re-discourse who is the basic writer, so long animating our profession, to recognize it as *ethos*, both for its troubling and advancing, and to pose it as a heuristic occasion for graduate student mentoring and professional development. Likewise, a special issue on graduate education in Basic Writing signals a recommitment of sorts. This is another turn in a unique field of endeavor, where the impetus to *story* our own profession sharply features (Adler-Kassner and Harrington)—a means to perceive and define for whom we work and what that focus means (Adler-Kassner, *The Activist WPA*). To "[start]. . . with the students," as Shaughnessy does to begin her *Errors and Expectations* (Otte and Mlynarczyk [47]), we know, today can be read against more extensive narratives of that time and setting (Horner and Lu; Molloy, "Diving In or Guarding"; Kynard; Brown), showing "early leaders" to be "led" (Otte and Mlynarczyk 48) as well by the same politically retractive influences they disclaimed. Still, to "[start]. . . with the students" might be, in fact, one of the current moment's best reminders to strategically resist macro-level views of students mainly figuring as *cohorts*, defined by institutional agendas and policy, and to decisively locate students' stories at the core of "theorized practice" (Buell 101).

Having also grown in appreciation for the safe space that was my own basic writing-graduate practicum many years ago, I acknowledge situating the graduate classroom as a potentially de-limited space, one that is affectively inward-facing, as it only-sometimes may be useful to think of conversations among mentors and colleagues in this way. At the same time, it may be helpful to understand these conversations, for many if not most of one's graduate students, as the first of their kind. Indeed, several authors of this special issue posit the graduate classroom as a space for first working out preconceptions of students wearing "basic writer" as a label. Linking the *who* of Basic Writing to graduate studies might be one course for rethinking our own part in mis- (and *missed*) representations of students, and ultimately, of our classrooms and their institutional frames. A provocative starting point, the question might be set out on Day One of a graduate seminar in order to

highlight what Basic Writing *is like*—i.e. a laboring space for understanding and impacting that definitional impulse to constantly restate the *for whom* and *what's needed in* what we do. It's also possible that such an approach might bring greater embodiment to our work—*a priori* or alongside disciplinary responsiveness to policy and institutional effects—to help ensure insightful and respectful notions of who the so-called "basic writer" might be.

Cultivating a professional life for graduate students means helping them to read the history of the field critically. Transmitting disciplinary knowledge requires nuance and, as Lynn Reid recommends, surfacing the storying *patterns* of scholarship can bring critical awareness to the helps and harms of their reproductions. As all articles of this year's special issue make clear, contentions of many stripes continue to move our field, each implying or driven by some view of the *who* and *what's needed* of our profession. Teaching this tangle, which is crucial, requires courage and inventiveness. Even so, to re-tune a question that packs in so much resonance is daunting—one, to suggest that the work is necessary and, two, to actually figure in that vital pedagogical promise. I read that promise this way: to help graduate students, new teachers, and emerging BW professionals see the long-arcing question of who is the basic writer implicit in and foundational to our professional intentions to account for (whom BW scholar Sarah Stanley calls) "the people in the room."

My first step will be to trouble what we might consider an *excess* of BW history as taught and received, the version which marks and joins Basic Writing's open admissions beginnings with conceptions of the basic writer as deficient (particularly in how these conceptions lead from *Errors*). I see this work at the point of our own fault lines as BW scholars for coming to grips—or to blows—with the many assumed identifiers of "basic," in which error has held so much sway. Next I will explore some scholarly efforts, past to present, for discovering and cultivating student presence in our Basic Writing literature, to better understand and interrogate motivations for searching out student presences to begin with. Finally, I would like to highlight some of the field's current refiguring of the question of who is the basic writer as a way to expand our sense of what it may mean to teach with and through this question in many contexts, practically and heuristically.

An Excess of History Tagged by *Errors*

The question of who is the basic writer threads the history of Basic Writing, characterizing many disciplinary tensions and concerns. When

traced to Basic Writing's beginnings as part of open admissions at CUNY, the question often links to Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations* as a telling of basic writers' language deficiencies, an overidentification, I propose, that helps to reify deficit models. Several authors of this special issue on graduate education construct courses to include Shaughnessy early on in the semester, but do not much indicate what stance they would take on *Errors.* How, and how critically, would the text be read?

Instructors of graduate courses might want to reflexively examine the political and heuristic functioning of *first*, whether it may be, for example, to collectively recollect and acknowledge the field moving on, and/or to mark or reinforce a stasis in order to return. Another function might be to incite reading with this awareness: that carrying a text—or question—deemed foundational *further* into history is necessarily onerous, intentional, and complex. How do we decide? While origin stories can be read to explain and justify social and political hierarchies (Wright; Bernal), more critical readings interrogating origins root out these structures, seek their bases, and work toward something new. It's possible with intentional readings of *Errors* to do both: to cite the basis of misperceptions of students as error-prone, at many removes from the academic capital necessary for college success, as well as to read *Errors* as inhering early rhetoric around a still-embedded *ethos* identifying Basic Writing's social justice mission. My guess is that so highlighting *Errors* in graduate studies reaches especially for this latter goal as value—a fraught and engaging move. Yet because that mission has been argued in view of or against its too-easy, often uncomfortable associations with *Errors*, continuing to include *Errors* in graduate studies requires real field- (and self-) consciousness. Where do we go *with it*? (How) can it continue to reflect and/or incite today's still evolving Basic Writing social justice mission?

As with any iconized, well-traveled text, reading *Errors* means reading around as well as through accrued readings while holding open their distances. For one, we could take a minute to question possibly over-identifying Shaughnessy with BW purposes and fault lines that assume student identities of deficiency. Such framing puts distance between the text and later field-defining work of scholars like Troyka who saw the need to move past students in order to define the *what to do* of BW classrooms. Even in Troyka's own centering of *Errors*, "diversity" is "Shaughnessy's most consistent message" (5), according to George H. Jensen whom Troyka cites to help elucidate "the problem of definition" (4).

Perhaps first readers were meant to hear not so much the problems of students as about the problems of teaching students, or of teachers *as*

problems, who were largely white and middle-class. At some point, by marking the distance between teachers' readiness to teach and students' now-readiness to learn, the keywords of Shaughnessy's text come to stand in for the errors of the field from that portion of it doing the resisting–asking *whose* error, *whose* erring? Where teacher matters are the larger issue, *Errors'* read is ornery: professionals delaying the project of open admissions are exhausting the social-professional capital needed for the endeavor. "Diving In" invites and assures, while *Errors* exhorts: time for faculty to step up and accept the *political* responsibility called *teaching*. So construed, the problems of writing become instruction's missed opportunities within teaching, problems of outreach, conveyance, and inclusion (Adler-Kassner, "2017 CCCC Chair's Address"), and not of isolated error. Likewise today's community college scholars writing on assessment link institutions' undue focus on nonstandard language use in placement practices to modes of "isolation" (Poe, Inoue, and Elliot; see also Kelly-Riley and Whithaus.). In this regard, *Errors* aims larger and smaller: larger in the matter of exhorting teachers to their professional mission; and smaller in the matter of errors, which are remediable, and frankly (it feels like someone saying), beside the point. The reader who might encounter the text in a graduate studies in BW seminar is left to decide: whether to regard the voluminous attention to error in *Errors* as evidence of a long-operative (over)identification of error and Basic Writing, or of error's troubling capacity to exceed far more vital teaching concerns.

Another frame for reconceptualizing the expression of a social justice initiative in *Errors* might be in its attempt to notice and account for student affect and motivation. In this sense, it is more potently "originary"—and functional—to Basic Writing and its claims. The early era of open admissions raged with affective realities for students, not only in students' capacities as agents to intentionally turn toward or away from (Ahmed) the new opportunities, but also in the conveyed sense that they themselves were being deeply moved, or *affected.* "[A]ffective variation" (Barrett And Bliss-Moreau) in *Errors* surfaces in the non-transitive and active *to affect*, or *affect*-ing, in students' wishing for, trying, and intending, and shows again in students being *affect*-ed, in other words, moved, moving, and impacted by the political, social, and economic realities of that time. Capturing an affective conflict and struggle, *Errors* draws a circle around many *shared* drives and capacities for learning without attention to these versus those, or to which students, because of this or that score profile, merit a share in the limited supports. This is not to say that we should accept the eliding of differences (as in "all students want X") uncritically, or to allow the guise of difference

insidiously generated by data-gathering to simply slide by (Henson and Hern). Rather an affective lens links students' wanting and intending to capacity itself. By stressing student *wanting*, in view of "what all students want," that they "might accomplish something in the world" (291) and so "improve the quality of their lives" (292), an *Errors* read to resonate affect returns the focus to what all seeking students are *owed.* Off the table are key, and later, discipline-facing questions: Whatever it was, or would be, that the field might ask students *to do*, or institutionally where they should land, was not to define who students *are*—competent individuals worthy of inclusion, instruction, and resources, and who, in turn, were ready to explore the promises of open admissions. The spotlight on students arriving "at the door" centralizes *expectancy*, an affective state incorporating readiness or trust that one's anticipations will be met. Obligations adhere to such states as they simultaneously agitate for those holding, and withholding, resources and opportunities to *respond*.

Attending likewise to BW's hidden claims to affect enhances the case for placement practices that more fully align open access institutions with their stated social justice missions. Recent attention to BW's opportunity costs, disparate impacts, and "fairness as equal to evidence" in assessment practices (Gilman; Henson and Hern) hits these notes precisely. As George Otte and Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk assert, early Basic Writing scholarship held the mere rooting out of error to be fundamentally offensive to the student, "an old place to begin a new discussion of writing" (Shaughnessy, "Introduction" 1; qtd. in Otte and Mlynarczyk 13), and contrary to professional endeavor. In her 1988 *JBW* article comparing basic writers at Harvard and CUNY, asserting writing "problems" to reveal shared "crucial difference[s] between. . . ways of [students] viewing their own work" (74), Cherryl Armstrong writes, "There is, after all, an egalitarianism about writing problems, and about writing potential" (78). Armstrong reflects a basic point our field has claimed—that by "looking *through* students' writing it may be possible to identify" that which "underl[ies]" (74) obvious error—in order to make more meaningful connections to (and about) the writers themselves; this is a notion in large part prior to pedagogies, processes, and the identifiers of "basic." As Armstrong describes:

> Shaughnessy may be said to have launched basic writing research on two—at times opposing—paths. Investigations into cognitive processes including studies by Perl, Lunsford, Sommers, Rose, Troyka, and Hays have outlined some of the thinking strategies of

basic (or, in Rose's study, blocked) writers. At the same time work by researchers including Bizzell, Bartholomae, Epes, and Kogen has traced basic writers' problems in rhetorical issues, to an unfamiliarity with the language or conventions of academic prose. (74)

Both directions seem to strain for an as-yet unacknowledged emphasis on student affect as the "something more" of the writer-self. But rather than holding these approaches to their partial moments in history, *post*-Shaughnessy and *pre*- our contemporary critiques of linguistic essentialism, as might occur in chronological studies of BW, a more cross-sectional view of BW from a *who is* and *who for* standpoint might refocus these "[i]nvestigations" (Armstrong 74) to reflect the kind of *wondering about* students that has been a Basic Writing mainstay.

Victor Villanueva picks up these affective strains in recounting his own formation into Basic Writing studies in the late 1970s and 1980s. On the one hand, theory's tight linking of basic writers and cognitive struggle, as a chronological view of BW history might reflect (and added to "a particular reading of classical rhetoric" [Villanueva, "Subversive Complicity" 37]), supports Villanueva's sense of the racism in BW which landed these writers "on the wrong side of the Great Cognitive Divide" (37). But as Villanueva also notes, how basic writing theory and institutions have used the findings of these early "investigations" into students' cognitive and rhetorical ability does not in itself sync with the basic writers of Shaughnessy's *Errors* who work purposely and with intention—as basic writing *rhetors*—wielding language of great nuance. Under this construction, the language of the academy pales in comparison with students' expressions due to its stiffness and lack of depth: in Shaughnessy's words, "writing [that] is but a line that moves haltingly across the page" (7). The *de facto* linking of cognitive struggle, rhetorical deficit, and basic writers, Villanueva argues, owes more to "composition folks [who] got caught up with developmental schemes" (46), and suggests more about "writing teachers *in their attitudes* toward basic writers" (46, emphasis mine) than it does about basic writers (including, in this view, basic writers under Shaughnessy).

These schemes were ones to "poke fun at" (Villanueva, "Subversive Complicity" 37) for the ways they tried to capture an order for writing, either in its learning or its teaching. Shaughnessy's *ethos* was to anticipate the political expediencies and language prejudice rising from within English departments and educational systems threatened by access and, later, to form a response, or structure (administration, testing, placement), from another

institutional standpoint for counter-narrating *bone fide*.

Recent scholarship diving into the archives of open admissions at CUNY and elsewhere continues to illuminate the material and affective turbulence of settings where access seeks roots ("CUNY Digital History Archive"; Molloy, "Human Beings Engaging"). *Errors* is one artifact of that turbulence heard and felt in what Patricia Laurence, an English instructor at City College at the time, called the "polyphony of the faculty" (24). *Errors*' foundational status makes it more difficult to hear it engaging the surround-sounds of BW counter-rhetoric since BW, focused on social justice, has been slow to claim those strains. Many teachers were vexed to observe, as they supposed, "the thick jeer" of student resistance to the necessity of "hard-core remediation" (Wagner qtd. in Lamos 64: Lamos 63-64), and they characterized students as disengaged (Center). By locating open access students at the "beginnings" of a new process-based landscape—wherein "all high-risk writers were best viewed *as the same kind of* 'beginners'" (Lamos 67, emphasis mine), *Errors* targeted teacher affect and resistance for their capacity to bring down the house on these counts. As new "national, institutional, and disciplinary" agendas emerged around literacy in the era, an "espous[sal of] mainstream interests and beliefs" linked to "standards and Standard English" (Lamos 55) spotlights an *Errors* jutting to the sidelines of emerging discourses that were implicitly and practically racialized. Yet it drums and drones persistently to convey the frustration of trying to communicate in a fractious, intolerant milieu. There are shaming elements here: supposedly aspirational professionals needing to be reminded of obligations and standpoints that should be known and felt. "[T]his obsession with error," "little tolerance for. . . errors," and "the power of the F" (*Errors* 8) read as reprimands, more shameful for their coming ten years after open admissions had begun.

Because the era spans a period of promise relatively short-lived, rhetorically and practically cut down by the perceived literacy crisis of the 1970s, endpoints gain on readings of *Errors* to associate it with aftermaths and ragged yields of Basic Writing programs. This may well be justified, but as a focal point among contentions in BW, *Errors* does not appear to have exhausted its reach toward discussion points that may continue to help redefine basic writing and the basic writer now and into the future. A critical stance on *Errors* still draws questions forward, important grist for graduate students and scholarship. While becoming central to Basic Writing, how central was *Errors* to contemporary and current literacy-crisis discourse? How far do we equate a response to crisis, one stuck to its frames, with *being* the crisis? And particularly apt for this moment of claiming social justice for

potentially refiguring placement policies, what possibilities, if any, inhere in *Errors* for rethinking our disciplinary relationship to error?

Toward this last point, David Stubblefield, in his recent dissertation, locates Error (his capitalization) among major "basic practical terms that have traditionally characterized the practice of teaching writing" for "novelty" as a value, so that, when rethought, they may become "viable sources of pedagogical possibility" (4). Among these terms, Error signals discourse itself as error, or "linguistic equivocation" (5). In other words, this Error is the basis that *is* discourse in its productively erring tendencies: its wandering, cross-referencing, overwriting, and double-meaning (to name a few). Then too, as if playing out some unexpected cue, Stubblefield engages Laurence, citing her *JBW* article, as part of his argument about Error's programmatic errancy—a concept that "rework[ed]," and was "reworking" (within), CUNY's 1960s open admissions context. In this view, Laurence's grasp on error and *Errors* is a grasp on Error in this ontological sense, where Error signals "the possibility of knowledge" that buoys all discursive acts and impulses. To (re)turn to "the [v]anishing [s]ite" of Laurence's (and Shaughnessy's) CUNY open admissions context, the Error (and not error, important for Stubblefield) in contention at that site was "the ground or meeting place for nascent ideas where questions about the *possibility* and the *limits* of normativity in the discipline flourished" (69), a term for drawing others into, and even more so to constitute, a discursive community. While seeming to inscribe a concept to define a discipline, Error (and perhaps *Errors* by extension) works "as public space where the latent theoretical and educational commitments of faculty members, departments, and divisions met and interacted" in order to ask essential, student-centered questions. Stubblefield cites Laurence for his set of these questions:

> Do we believe in these students? Can they learn? Can we teach them? These were the questions that beleaguered faculty asked in the 1970s, placing the mission of the university in question (Laurence 23). [Here open] larger questions about what is and is not possible inside of the discipline's current discourse. (Stubblefield 69)

These are some of the key questions of *Errors*.

This possible reframing of *Errors* may prove useful not only for loosening that text's characterizing hold on students—error-prone, error-defined—

and BW instruction, but also for conveying something about the accretion of meanings once associations become linked, one to the other and as a system, as certain personages, ideologies, or contexts are also ascribed to them. Assumptive thinking leaps forward at just such times, and graduate students must be encouraged to mark and scrutinize their own student frames for evidence of similar discursive impacts. Competing readings of *Errors* and of Shaughnessy offer time and reason to question whether certain field issues preoccupy the text in the same way, toward the same priorities, as they did for some readers as perceptions around basic writers and BW grew difficult to harmonize. We may agree with Darin Jensen that the often less-than-critical treatment of *Errors* in graduate comp-rhet courses pulls toward "disciplinary history" instead of leading BW professionals to "examine [*Errors* and Basic Writing history] as a 'living' body of work which graduate students may need to know about" (106-107). Jensen's read on *Errors* and Basic Writing history shows the potential of wider contexts for discussing access and language policy as these impact basic writing programs. I believe *Errors* to have rhetorical capacity enough for extending these discussions, as part of a "living body" of critical readings in Basic Writing for graduate studies by which to keep questions or *who is* and *who for* open.

Student-Present in the Scholarship: Still "Searching for Quentin Pierce"

Searching the BW literature for signs of student-present narratives and building conversations around them—inviting graduate students and new teachers to cultivate their own stories—is one way to effectively locate the question of who is the basic writer past theory and into the rapport-rich relationships of emerging graduate-to-professional BW community. We will learn from first instances: to seek for students and avoid "represent[ations of] ourselves" (Harrington 95). At the rim of proximity to our own potential for bias and partiality, we are in stronger critical positions to shift away from ourselves and try to focus better on our students. Like any other deliberative practice of mindfulness and intention, this decentering needs referencing and modelling. Graduate students can be helped to see and experience this practice as academic early on by exploring some of our field's key attempts to spotlight actual students.

One early iconic case study, exemplifying the inherent biases and potential in earmarking what is essentially our field's foundational question, is the story of Quentin Pierce. As such, it has standing for how a field continues

to define itself in and through student subjectivities. In "The Representation of Basic Writers in Basic Writing Scholarship, or Who is Quentin Pierce?" Susanmarie Harrington used Quentin's case, his interaction with teacher David Bartholomae as Bartholomae wrote about him in "Tidy House," in light of her main concern: the lack of helpful, intentional recognitions of basic writers in Basic Writing research. What we get is Harrington reading Bartholomae reading, not Quentin, but Quentin's essay—as only a shadow of Quentin's intentions. This vantage point conveys for Harrington much of Basic Writing's self-reflexive partiality, effectively overlooking Quentin. Roughly twenty-nine years after *JBW*'s inception and more than thirty years since CUNY's open admissions, instructors saw the primacy of textual analysis of student writing for feedback, and grasped many of the reasons that students find academic writing so difficult. What was needed was to hear more of students' voices, to extend representations of our work past those which mainly "represent ourselves" (95).

Bartholomae's student, Quentin Pierce, was such a voice, struggling to be heard. Even so, Harrington assessed that Bartholomae could only wonder at the source of his student's disaffection and anger, even rage. How likely was it that a basic writer, in curt sentences and expletives scrawled at the end of his essay, in a note to his professor, could *not* leave his teacher in awe of his intentions? "I don't care. I don't care" about this topic, Quentin wrote, "About a man and good and evil, I don't care about this shit fuck this shit, trash, and should be put in the trash can with this shit. Thank you very much. I lose again."

"[A] very skillful performance" was how Bartholomae described it (7, qtd. Harrington 94).

Harrington regretted that Bartholomae did not inquire after Quentin, did not reach to wonder more about Quentin and his intentions, rather than what was *to be done*—not for Quentin *per se*, but for students like Quentin, who troubled the basic writing classroom. To remark, she wrote:

> "Tidy House," like *Errors and Expectations*, is the story *of a teacher*, not the story of a student. . . Bartholomae returns to some thoughts about Quentin at the end of "Tidy House" to address the question of what will serve students—and what served Quentin in particular. . . But what we don't see is Quentin Pierce at work, except as represented through his teacher's reading. . . as Bartholomae noted in his initial response to the essay, it's hard to know what Quentin intended with his text. (94)

To counterpoint, Harrington modelled thinking and disposition that was more materially-oriented and affectively student-based, reflecting *wondering* in two related ways: she modelled wondering by not only thinking more about Quentin herself, but also by imagining what more-of-wondering about Quentin by Bartholomae might look like. For example, while valuing Bartholomae's attempt to find Quentin's intention *in his writing* (with Bartholomae seeing that he simply can't), Harrington pondered: Couldn't one engage Quentin as a partner in interpreting his own text? It was right to deliberate a bit longer in the *who* of Basic Writing before head-longing into the *what was to be done.* But there was no time for this, unfortunately; propped up by Quentin's end of essay note, "Tidy House" initializes Bartholomae's new and challenging curricula: *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts* and *Ways of Reading,* to which Quentin's challenge allowed a natural lead-in: "the essay had an idea—and. . . the writer called for the moves" (Bartholomae) to express it better, which *Facts* and *Ways* could help accomplish. Was Quentin's note to be read (reduced) to such a "teach me better" moment? For Bartholomae, there was little need to explore further, or to engage Quentin in a shared project of (intentional) investigation. Apparently a better book, a better plan for writing, reading, and connecting, would help students like Quentin as well as safeguard the basic writing classroom from such errant surfacing of affect in the future.

Today, Quentin's "performance" might be addressed by affect studies which look to uncover as-yet unassimilated emotions and energies such as arise in the peripheral spaces of a basic writing setting rife with affective *stuff.* It is here between and among subjects that responses to material and social constraints make their impact. Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg describe affect as the "*forces of encounter*" (2, 3) or "shimmers" that "[arise] in the midst of *in-between-ness*, . . imping[ing] or intrud[ing]" (1, 2) upon "bodies and worlds" (1), conveying an experience of something *other* imbuing it. Andrew Murphie draws on Felix Guattari's pinpointing of the concept: affect is what "make[s] up the relations within the temporary worlds we are constantly creating, and by which we are constantly being created. . . the complexity of the world in movement." Therefore, "Affect is much more powerful and central than we might have thought"; and so, it is crucial to culture (and not only to culture), but also "crucial to our relations, conscious, unconscious or non-conscious, as well as our sense of place, our own and other bodies. . . and to larger questions" of social and political being. This is not to say that Quentin's complexity of affect was a text to be mined; rather, as a quintessentially relational attribute, it suggests Ahmed's point

of a "turn[ing] toward" (31), a potential within and for relationship. Despite this, Quentin's affect is treated more as "attitude," an attribute ascribed to *individuals* and which here, in this case, sourly incurs upon the classroom. Basically, it is all we get of him in Bartholomae's rendering. What's more, we are implicitly cautioned to see Bartholomae as a target (and that we could become targets too). Thus isolated, affect's as-yet unassimilated standing in this BW classroom calls attention to the *who* and *what more of* Quentin that there remains to be understood.

By contrast, in 1999 Marilyn Sternglass provided a formidable book-length answer to the *who is* and *who for* questions of Basic Writing in *Time to Know Them*. Just as *Errors* may be said to anticipate many of the tensions and divergent lines of argument to encompass Basic Writing for years to come, so *Time to Know Them* provides case studies as models, and a methodology, for answering the question, who is the basic writer? Sternglass *wondered*, as many basic writing teachers *wonder*, what becomes of these students who contend with and against troublesome, confusing identities as basic writers? How do they grow with, through, and *past* them? Following a group of students through their academic landscapes, Sternglass discovered that "issues of race, gender and sexual orientation, class, and ideology. . . affect their approaches to undertaking academic tasks" (60) to an extent; yet students find their resources in diverse and complex ways.

In the *Journal of Basic Writing* issue of Spring 1999, the volume just prior to the one where Harrington makes her call for more "student-present" scholarship (Fall 1999), here for the first time, on the cover of the journal, the term "*basic writer*" appears in scare quotes (though this is not the first time the term is typographically called out and made suspect. See Gray-Rosendale's "Investigating Our Discursive History: *JBW* and the Constitution of the 'Basic Writer's' Identity"; see also Armstrong 69). In a solicited article for that issue, Sternglass moved in closer to one of her book's participant-subjects, a woman named Joan who eventually succeeds in graduating and obtaining a full-time counselor position in a methodone clinic. In this article, we also learn that this same student, under a different pseudonym, was similarly followed through four years (not Sternglass' six), only to be sadly denigrated, by James Traub in *City on a Hill*. The article extends from Sternglass's keynote address to the CUNY Association of Writing Supervisors marking the decision by CUNY's Board of Directors to end remediation at four of CUNY's four-year colleges—once again exemplifying student-present writing formulated prototypically "in response." But even as prototype, the article addresses the *who* and *who for* questions long-arcing in Basic Writing.

How was this done? By showing the contradictions and conflicts that inhere in basic writer identity construction not only by way of a real person, but also a person very real to her teacher, Sternglass, who greatly invested in her student. As a result, we learn a great deal about Joan and the complexities of BW affect, identity, and belonging. We learn: *Who is the basic writer*? For one, she is more than a novice or beginner—she is resourceful and determined. *Who is the basic writer*? She is someone who goes beyond conflict-infused and "incapacitating representations of students so labeled" (Gray-Rosendale, "Revising the Political" 27); she is a re-negotiator of her own identity. *Who is the basic writer*? She is someone who stays the course, beyond the number of years at which point it must be clear to all that, having run out of time, the student has failed. *Who is the basic writer*? She happens to be, in this particular case: poor, education-oriented, female-identified, self-sustaining, handicapped and self-enabling, urban, Black, raised by a single-parent, raised to be determined, and predisposed to an interest in psychology and to give back to her community. That is, she is a student with many stories, not just one.

In *Basic Writing*, Otte and Mlynarczyk note basic writing scholars' consistent interest in student-present research matched mostly to the frame of "conflict and struggle." I like this point for how it recognizes the affective knot of Min-Zhan Lu's "can able to" (451) referencing intention in error, and other instances of linguistic and rhetorical dissonance across the academy, as these reflect a much wider dynamic of the basic writer not always in sync with—not always *wishing for,* not always *wanting*—what the academy holds out as a good. Shaughnessy's take on students' intention—"wanting what all students want"—again cedes ground; since, from a Basic Writing standpoint, graduate students knowing to search for and recognize the ways in which students and the academy can and frequently do *dis*identify is crucial. This disposition will help new and emerging professionals in BW take deep account of the basic writing or open-access classroom, encouraging a wider lens on the unique literacy and social practices of students, to be explored in many ways: in conversation, class presentations, interviews, and more, as well as through their writing.

As with affect theory, today's perspectives on extra-literate practices distributed across the full spectrum of one's activities strain against basic writer identifiers. In his two-article study of Charles Scott, Jr., an undergraduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Kevin Roozen presents one of the best examples of one student's many literacies as actively linked and intersected along diverse communicative pathways, all dynamically impacting and repurposing one another, across time and

space. Drawing from a rich base of writing and social theory, Roozen captures Charles' success as basic writer, poet, stand-up comic, and journalist as it emerges from a de-limited, always expansive "nexus of practice" whose activities are "never. . . finalized or finalizable" (Scollon; qtd. in Roozen, "Journalism, Poetry" 10-11). These qualities bear their own affective *ethos* by how they inform one another as they encompass other ostensibly more privileged centralities—in this case, academic and standard English literacies. As Shaughnessy understood on some level, it is not possible (nor, programmatically are we finding it so necessary) to know basic writers as basic writers only. Encouraging the fullest "documented narratives" of literacy possible, Roozen's extended case study approach is inquiry into identity as well as literacy. Its example has already been working to prompt basic writing scholars to ask many as-yet unasked questions by which to better know so many Charleses, Joans, and Quentins.

Seeing More of "The People in the Room"

Many recent *JBW* authors have followed similar approaches, some directly influenced by Roozen's work with its reference to Ron Scollon's "nexus" of social practice and Paul Prior's "laminations," or layerings, of literacies; others by the ethnographic study of social contexts; or by narrative inquiry-based approaches borrowed from teacher education, to name a few. Emily Schnee and Jamil Shakoor's co-authored article on Jamil's progress through basic writing is one example which, as with Charles, presents basic writing subjectivity in the fullest measure possible: Jamil honestly shares his start-points, troubles, resentments and resistances, alongside periodic progress and boosts in confidence, until finally, success. Much like Sternglass, Schnee and Shakoor know better than to abstract "the basic writer" from one case study, despite their subject hitting such personal chords. Instead they present the *affective* view of inquiring after basic writers as I have argued for it here: that to know one basic writer by way of their differences is to know only that encountering other basic writers means discovering difference repeatedly and to question whether the descriptor of "basic" fits at all.

Wendy Pfrenger's recent "Cultivating Places and People at the Center: Cross-Pollinating Literacies on a Rural Campus" identifies the place-based context of subjectivities, whether writing consultants' or student-clients', that again, constantly "impinge or intrude" one upon another, impacting places and selves. Pfrenger follows several writing consultants who are deeply shaped by their rural geographies in adaptive, not constrictive ways; in turn,

they become the ones best able to mediate the academic environment for their student-clients. As with Schnee and Shakoor, subjectivities move and collide in their turn-taking, enacting a dialectic of merging and switching out—student to tutor/teacher, tutor/teacher to student.

Another recent author, Sarah Stanley, fosters a similarly dynamic collaboration around identities in "From a Whisper to a Voice: Sociocultural Style and Anti-Racist Pedagogy." Stanley takes a hard look at her own classroom and the experience of one student, Tejada, seized by the awareness of racialized impacts on identity for students of color who attempt to become audible interpreters of their own texts. Stanley identifies student feedback on writing as an area particularly fraught, and develops a pedagogy where this feedback can be made public, collaborative, and inquiry-based—an opportunity for both better elucidating feedback and supporting race-positive identity. At the article's center are descriptions of the "sentence workshop" Tejada facilitates, in which she relates her discomfort over an unwieldly, troublesome sentence she has written. It's a sentence about race, feeling marginalized, and her intention—her *wanting*—to find and have more of a voice. Together Tejada, her classmates, and her teacher carefully open the spaces of her hesitation: What is her intention behind her bracketing what Stanley calls, after Derrick Bell, her racial-realist self, of enclosing what might be an essential part of her identity and perspective within actual *parentheses*? Tejada's sentence begins: "I, (as part of a minority group) have witnessed and experienced how a single word or action on the part of those who are not categorized within the dominant culture, has. . ." With support, she comes to examine that self-diminishing rhetorical move and to articulate, "Oh, well. Like I said it's like. . . The way you feel. . . I'm sorry. . . I believe it relates to that because I, myself, have been in situations in which . . ." Reflecting on the workshop, she searches out a clearer sense of her hesitations and their social-political import:

> I notice that I wrote 'as part of a minority group' within a parenthesis, which seems as if I am refusing to express it completely or almost whispering it. . . Now that I think about it, I believe that in a way, I am expressing a form of silence by enclosing that fact. (19-20)

As successful as this pedagogy is for Tejada and others, Stanley reflects on coming to the insights that now (only lately) have consciously fostered it:

> As a white teacher of Basic Writing in the Fall of 2009, I was not equipped with the everyday reality of racial micro-aggression on a

college campus and did not encourage, as I would now, establishing a shared lens with students. I also believe that had I also been in closer proximity—that is, intimate daily living with the frustrations and emotional challenges of exclusion, discrimination, abuse, and aggression—our classroom could have been healthier and more transformative. I was too tightly bound to a curricular map—an effect of whiteness, in how I understood what it meant to teach who I was teaching—and this realization helps me to see how the term micro-aggression continues to resonate. (21)

As Cheryl C. Smith and I noted in our Editors' Column for that journal issue:

Stanley offers a case study from her own teaching history to showcase her development from "prioritize[ing] *my* pedagogical relationship" toward putting more emphasis on "the experiences of the people in the room" (italics in the original). Recognizing the value of "the people in the room" grounds her argument that "an impressionistic response that does not also include democratic discussion with students about intentions will not only limit learning or growth, but [we] believe it will lead us further away from, as Asao Inoue puts it, "socially just futures." (1)

What Stanley's pedagogy around "the people in the room" acknowledges is something close to discernible in a posited teacher-Shaughnessy, linked materially and imaginatively to a SEEK community of teacher-colleagues whom Sean Molloy has researched and recognized were clearly in mind of the *who* of BW before the *what to do*. The positioning of the teacher in ecological models such as SEEK is/ was one of lateral standing, encouraging of moments where teachers yield the space of authority so that teacher and student re-enter the instructional setting together. Stanley's teacher-voice becomes just another voice, here a tactically quiet one, among those of the other "people in the room." These others are the real impetus leading Tejada to discover something vital about herself.

And Keeping Them in Mind

It's a short step from grasping the importance of this new relational positioning—standing at the side of, in the same temporal moment—to understanding both the literal and figurative roots of advocacy, an act of "standing with." Far from reducing the space that's needed—as often happens in

contractions of space that surround the privileging of mainly standardized language practice, for example, or for predetermining access only for those students "likely to benefit" (Henson and Hern)—the question of who is the basic writer, and, in view of comp-rhet and social justice conversations, who is basic writing *for*, can be used for pedagogical- and *ethos*-shaping purposes to generate more socially just teaching on our parts and new and greater space for encompassing more of students' literate lives. Basic writing students and teachers may find ways to work as collaborators in their research and (self-) inquiry where a basic writing *ethos* of recognition for students' intentional lives widens to encompass teachers too, to inquire about literacy's engagements among them both.

As an editor, I have often been struck by moments in the editing process when authors come to sense the growth and change of their own subjectivities alongside those of the students they are writing about. This process is gently facilitated, frequently through small and simple invitations: for instance, to detail a conversation where voices are heard more subtly upon a second or third consideration; to reflect on and write about a wrong turn pedagogically; to trace back a pedagogical or professional starting point in order to grasp some up-to-this-minute previously unacknowledged influence. These opportunities stand as the core of qualitative thinking for scholars in their writing and, when fostered toward this purpose, can be so as well for the places of their teaching.

Fostering graduate students' scholarship in Basic Writing richly endows a personally evolving, humane professionalism; this is doubly the case when mentors write with graduate students as co-authors. In recent years, and this past year especially, *Journal of Basic Writing* has featured examples of veteran scholars and graduate students writing together, including the Schnee-Shakoor piece, which features a student of Basic Writing who later becomes a graduate student (though not in Basic Writing). To start (again) with Schnee and Shakoor, the article is essentially the mapping of a mentor-student relationship over time, marking turns and flash points in the co-authors' meta-discourse about that relationship and its impacts. Among critical topics is their own process of revision. This unique approach to writing matures as Schnee and Shakoor discover themes to their relationship, a main one being a basic writing student's progress given extended time. Many conversations between co-authors become part of the essay's fabric, as Schnee and Shakoor reflect upon reflections and also share aspects of their redrafting so that Jamil's progress—and awareness—as a changing writer (and Emily's as researcher) are experientially *felt* as well as documented. It is

one of the best recent examples in the journal of the "great focus on contextual construction of basic writers' student identities" continuing to evolve student-present literature in BW, particularly, as Laura Gray-Rosendale has noted of the same article, of dynamic identity construction "in response to various political and socioeconomic issues"—"*as [these constructions] occur*" ("Re-examining Constructions" 98) in real time.

It's also fitting that our special issue on graduate education includes its own examples of mentors writing with students. Tom Peele, Vivian Stoll, and Andréa Stella's co-authored article is a worthy sample. While offering a researched stance on corpus analysis of students' argumentative writing, their project highlights the impact of facilitating a large-scale study on emerging professional identities. As graduate students and researchers, Vivian and Andréa each step forward in distinct sections of the article to discuss a particular area of the study they managed or were impacted by. Going beyond the conventions of research reporting, they demonstrate the role of narrative in advancing the field of Basic Writing and in their own formations as teachers. Victor Villanueva and Zarah Moeggenberg's article, again capturing a relationship, is another sample, this time of paired perspectives on the field as it was and as it continues to evolve. Zarah's narrative takes up themes introduced by Victor in the article's uptake—scenarios of feeling displaced and unheard, while exhibiting push back at the same time. These themes resonate for Victor and Zarah in their personal stories as in the history of Basic Writing which these stories chart. Not least, Barbara Gleason's co-authored article on the CCNY's Masters in Language and Literacy is a model of inclusivity and writing as celebration, as Barbara draws repeated references to former students, including their motivations for joining the program, their personal letter-like reflections, and updates on their subsequent success. Helping to edit these articles along with my co-editor, Cheryl C. Smith, and, mainly, the two-volume's guest editor, Laura Gray-Rosendale, I was strongly reminded of an article I co-authored with my graduate intern Lara Rodriguez, some years ago, an experience that has not only sustained my editing work, but also remains a wonderful personal and professional memory.

It was years ago when I too was a student in a graduate practicum on Basic Writing at CUNY's College of Staten Island and was prompted by my teacher, Peter Miller, to first painfully reveal my own teacher-self as a condition for attempting to see my students. I was invited: *quickly list all your current students from memory* (and then to reflect on my rapport with the students whom my list had forgotten); and *locate and draw yourself in your classroom* (and then try to find words to explain what I had awkwardly and too much

revealed). As part of what was to form a critical *praxis*, I was encouraged to regularly query my students about their own stuck-spots, resistances, and frustrations, and to share these findings with my Basic Writing seminar peers. It was disturbing, so early on, to have felt taken to task, when after one such query inviting students to reflect on what it was like to try freewriting for *just five minutes straight* (no stopping, no self-censoring, only writing), a student wrote to me on a half-sheet of loose leaf and handed it in: "You want, everyone, to write, like you." What had I not noticed of the student before this incident, of myself, and of our contexts and circumstances on so many levels? It was another place to begin.

Diverse stakeholders with roles to impact the teaching or policy practices of BW leverage the question of *who for* in Basic Writing. Rarely is this question engaged in order to capture students' competence at the start-point, or the complexities of their lives and intentions. This is how we too often hear it—"in response" and through the screens of institutional or programmatic priorities. The arguable point that Shaughnessy's style of presenting these students to a mostly white, middle class teacher-audience was a proprietary and privileged one is a relevant "both/and." Long, impactful traditions of literacy movement tied to social justice were inspired contexts for Basic Writing (Kynard; Brown), though we do not glimpse that from *Errors.* By discoursing the basic writer so sympathetically, attuning students' claims to education to human aspiration in terms so easily "relatable," Shaughnessy offered her vision of the basic writer from a white Midwestern altruist's perspective, though neither Villanueva nor Laurence would say it was linguistically innocent. Yet that conveyed sense of having at least approached students closely in trying to know them, their motivations, their lives and their imagined lives, and the attempt to incite teachers' activist-professional growth, point to an exigence for rapport and affect in Basic Writing which is still necessary, practically and politically speaking, in continuing to build *ethos* for new teachers, emerging scholars, and the field.

Basic Writing is one area of comp-rhet inclusive of two-year and community college students and first-year writers where a question about students historically undergirds and still filters so much discourse, and which syncs so deeply with a sense of professional mission. Who is the basic writer? Given current austerity policies and metrics, it is hard to imagine the question no longer being weighted "in response" or used pre-emptively in our need to push back against what our students certainly are *not* (i.e. deficient, unequipped, disinterested). Nor do we want to get so much into it again among ourselves, debating too much about it as Troyka knew some time

ago, while there are stakeholders who see the need to fill in the answers for us. New teachers and scholars of BW need this question not only, as Susan Naomi Bernstein insists, to situate their careers in advocacy, first and foremost ("An Unconventional Education"), but also to see, meet, and teach "not who we think the students are or who we want the students to be, but the actual students" ("Occupy," p. 99). Recent calls to keep individuals at the heart of new reforms and guided-pathway tracks at open admissions institutions and two-year colleges (Sullivan "Ideas about Human Possibilities"; Tinto) likewise affirm the wanting and waiting of student expectancy, the *what we owe* to students, while asking that we revise our notions of "success" to better align with students' intentions for the educational opportunities they ultimately pursue (Tinto; Boylan, Calderwood, and Bonham).

At core, the question of who is the basic writer turns on understandings and observations about who are the basic writers in *my* particular classroom, different from others in *their* settings and circumstances, and mobilizing the classroom as a possibility space for student and professional identities to form. If held open as a deliberative *pedagogical* space for better seeing bodies, aspirations, and intentions in BW, we might know to drive past reifications of student identities as error-prone, and other isolations, in clearer interest of "the people in the room."

Acknowledgments

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